



Legislator Meeting Agenda & Talking Points

Meeting agenda & tips:

- If you don't know the legislator, introduce yourself and let them introduce themselves to you. If you do know them, just have a brief greeting and proceed.
- Spend just a few minutes making some connection with the legislator (ask how their fall is going...if they have a contested race, ask them how that is going). Don't let this go on for a long time, but don't make it feel rushed, either.
- Thank them for meeting with you and provide a BRIEF background on Farm to School. Ask them how familiar they are with Farm to School, and adjust the amount of information you provide accordingly.
- Say you are a member or supporter of the MA Food for MA Kids Coalition. Tell them which town/city you live and/or work in. Say you would like to talk about why passing the Farm to School Grant bill is so important. *POTENTIAL TALKING POINTS BELOW*
- **Directly ask the legislator if they can help to move the bill forward.**
- LISTEN carefully to the legislator's response. Write down any comments and share them [in this form](#) later. Do NOT argue with the legislator or spend much time trying to persuade them. Just listen and take notes on how they respond.
 - If they ask a question and you know the answer, answer it. If you don't know the answer, DO NOT GUESS. Write the question down and say you'll get back to them. Send the question to Lisa at lisa@massfarmtoschool.org with the legislator's contact information and Lisa will follow up with the answer.
 - They might talk about how the bill has to be considered in the broader context of all requests. Say that you understand and simply remind them that you need the bill passed in order to do your work well.
- KEEP TRACK OF TIME. When you are getting to the 15 minute mark, start wrapping up. Thank the legislator for their time, note any follow-up you have promised, and let them know that someone from the Coalition will be in touch.
- AFTER YOUR MEETING, send a quick thank you email (you can bcc Lisa), and include the [Farm to School handout](#) as an attachment.
- Share your experience with MA-FTS using [this form](#).

Talking Points for Your Meeting with Legislators:

Pick one or two of the talking points below and add YOUR OWN reasons for supporting a farm to school grant program.

OVERALL THEME: Farm to School improves student health and academic achievement while strengthening the Massachusetts agricultural economy.

YOUR REQUEST: Help make a Farm to School Grant Program permanent in the next legislative session. A pilot Grant Program was established with \$1 million in COVID relief funds in the last legislative session. Please co-sponsor a bill when it is introduced this session.

A Farm to School Grant Program would ...

- ...provide eligible schools and early education and care programs with critical funds needed to expand farm-to-school activities, including:
 - purchasing and serving local foods in school meals
 - educating students on nutrition and food systems
 - providing garden-based learning opportunities
- ...empower schools to renovate their kitchens, train their staff, and inspire students
- ...support local farmers and fishers with financial opportunity
- ...help the lowest-income public schools where the needs are greatest

Farm to School Programs have educational, economic, and health impacts:

- Support students to develop healthy eating habits
- Keep purchasing dollars local
- Support effective teaching of core subject areas *and* social and emotional learning