INTRODUCTION
The Farm to School Promotional Strategy Guide provides resources and tools for school nutrition service professionals to effectively market and promote their school meal and Farm to School programs. According to a 2018 needs assessment of food service leads from San Diego County school districts conducted by the Farm to Institution Center (F2I Center) at Community Health Improvement Partners (CHIP), shifting family and community perceptions of school meals was reported as the primary need across the county. The goal of this strategy guide is to effectively engage school district communities and broader audiences to better support and grow Farm to School programs.

This guide contains a variety of resources, videos, and example templates for school districts to effectively promote their Farm to School programs. Farm to School activities include school gardens, nutrition education, and sourcing fruits and vegetables from local farmers. The strategy guide is divided into 5 topic areas: 1) Creating a Message, 2) Identifying a Brand, 3) Social Media Promotion, 4) Storytelling, and 5) Engaging Your Community. Each topic includes how-to materials and examples to support the needs of each district.

IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING
A successful marketing and communications strategy is ultimately an investment into the future success of school nutrition and Farm to School programs. Promoting current activities in the three areas of Farm to School programming (i.e., school gardens, nutrition education, and local food procurement) provides key opportunities to raise awareness and engage district communities in these efforts.

Through a successful marketing and promotion campaign, your district will:
• Increase engagement and education on Farm to School programs
• Support healthy eating habits among students and families
• Increase school meal participation, generating more funding and investments for Farm to School and nutrition-related activities
• Build external support and generate advocates for your program
• Generate buy-in from district superintendents and leadership
• Engage a broader audience including students, families, teachers, and school administrators
KNOWING YOUR AUDIENCE

When information is exchanged across a diverse group of people, it is possible each person will interpret a message in a slightly different way. Given this, it is important to think of your target audience when developing your communications materials.

Communication is defined as the transferring of information from one place, person, or group to another.\(^1\) Successful communication focuses on a variety of factors in which the audience may interpret your message. It is important to carefully consider who you are communicating with from your community. Your message may change depending on whether you are directing your message to students, staff, parents, school administrators, etc. It is important to consider the recipients’ languages, emotions, cultures, and locations when creating your message.

The communication strategies outlined in this Farm to School Promotional Strategy Guide focus on creating clear communication on goals, announcements, messaging, and promotion of Farm to School and school meals across diverse mediums. Tools and resources for messaging include social media posts, flyers, business cards, press releases, photography, videography, and presentations. When creating your communication materials, keep your audience in mind to foster success in conveying your ideas.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CREATING A MESSAGE

INTRODUCTION TO MESSAGING
Creating effective messaging is important for building your school district’s Farm to School promotional strategy. In designing what messages are the most effective for your audience, you will first want to consider what makes your Farm to School program unique, important, and useful for your audience. Remember to consider your audience when drafting messages used to promote your school district’s school meal and Farm to School programs.

MESSAGING CHECKLIST:

- **Identify key messages:** If you try to communicate too much information, you may lose your audience’s attention. First identify what information you want to convey about your school meal or Farm to School program. To get started, identify the top three highlights you want to share through marketing and promoting your program (see Staff Brainstorming Activity below). Keep these messages short (fewer than 12 words).

- **Identify emotions to convey:** In creating a communication plan, it is important to think about what emotions you want to convey to your audience. Emotions can help to direct the colors, images, and design you use for your materials. Think about what emotions you want your audience to feel when they think about your school districts’ Farm to School program. What messages or images could you include to create these emotions?

- **Identify your audience:** Your message may shift depending on who you are speaking to. Students, families, and staff each respond to different messages depending on what they care about and value (see Tips to Get You Started below for ideas). You will want to consider who you are marketing to, what your audience values, and what language your audience will respond to in drafting your messaging.

- **Select communication methods:** Your audience will respond to your messaging depending on how the information is conveyed. Consider what method is most effective in sharing the message you want to get across. For example, if you want to convey that you have a variety of fruits and vegetables available in your cafeteria to students, perhaps consider offering taste tests or posting colorful pictures of the variety of options available.
**ACTIVITY**

**MESSAGING IN ACTION: STAFF BRAINSTORMING ACTIVITY**

1. Pass out notecards to each of your staff members.

2. Have each person write down three things they want to highlight about the district’s school meal or Farm to School program. Take a few minutes to have each person share.

3. As a group, finalize the top three highlights you want to share in your messaging. Write these three options down on a white board or poster paper.

4. As a group, discuss how you want to share each of the top three messages to different audiences. How might you share these differently with your students, families, and staff?

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**TIPS TO GET YOU STARTED**

**What is Important to Students?**

- Food that tastes good
- Food that has a variety of different options
- Activities that are fun and engaging
- Health and environmental benefits (particularly for older students)

**What is Important to Families?**

- Food that is of value (i.e., inexpensive)
- Food that has high nutritional quality for students
- Food that is convenient
- Food options that their student(s) enjoys

**What is Important to Staff and Administrators?**

- Academic performance: Students who eat breakfast perform better academically
- Student behavior: Eating breakfast is linked to fewer absences and behavior improvements
- Student success: Farm to School programs build skills such as teamwork, cooperation, and creativity.

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Farm to School Collective: Example Resources

- Farm to School Collective Promotional Video

Additional Resources:

- [School Breakfast Program Marketing Strategy - USDA](#): Guide to developing a marketing plan, including instructions on how to define your objective, target your audience, and create your image.

- [Menu Planner for School Meals: Marketing School Meals for Success! - USDA](#): Guide to marketing school meals, including considerations for messaging for different audiences (For more information on messaging, visit pg. 233-235).

- [Health and Academic Achievement - CDC](#): Resource outlining different audience-specific messages, including benefits of farm to school programs for different audiences. (For more information on messaging, visit pg. 4-7).
INTRODUCTION TO BRANDING:
A brand is not the product itself, but rather how people feel about that product, service, or organization. Brands can be thought of as the look given to products or services and can take on an identity of their own (e.g., Nike, Apple, Coca Cola, etc.). A brand identity is made up of: 1) what your values are, 2) how you communicate your product/service, and 3) what you want people to feel when they interact with your product/service.\(^1\) You can think of your branding as the personality of your services or the emotion your services elicit.

BRANDING CHECKLIST:

- **Keep it simple:** When designing your materials, focus on keeping the message simple. It is important to think through what you want to communicate beforehand and how you can best simplify your message. Effective messaging should be clear and concise without too much information.

- **Be consistent:** Your materials should use a similar font, color, and style to create a consistent theme and to avoid confusion. Branding consistency helps your audience easily recognize what you are promoting. Branding will often take the form of a recognizable symbol which your audience can easily identify (e.g., the Nike “swoosh” or the apple used by Apple computers).

- **Repeat your message:** Reiterate the information you want shared. Often, audiences will need to hear the same message a few times before comprehending the information you share. For example, if your department, program, or district has a tagline, be sure to include it on your presentations, flyers, and materials.

- **Focus on your audience:** Continue to keep your audience in mind when new promotional materials are created. Consider the audience’s culture, language, and preferences in designing your materials. If your school meal and Farm to School programs are serving a diverse audience, you will want to think about how to make your materials easily comprehensible.

- **Have fun:** Your promotional materials should be exciting and engaging for your audience. Consider including fun materials for your audience to interact with and stay engaged (e.g., competitions, taste tests, activities, etc.).

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1. Explain to your staff that your brand is much more than a picture or logo, it is fulfilling a promise to your customers/community. As a team, discuss the following questions:
   - what are you committed to?
   - in what ways are you transforming other peoples’ lives?
   - what emotions do you want people to feel when thinking about your program?

2. Your brand is your ability to fulfill a promise to your ideal customers/communities. Keeping responses to the above questions in mind, what photos could you choose to represent your brand quality? Are there color tones that suit your overall image? Is there a motto or mission statement you would like to emphasize?

3. Develop several options and try your brand out! Approach a few different people who are in your target audience (i.e., students, families, and staff members) with examples of your flyers, posters, and images to see what they think. What type of reaction did you get? Pay attention to the body language and any signs of confusion. What questions are your target audience asking? Make note if something needs further clarification.

4. When creating graphics or looking for pictures for content, try using online platforms and computer programs to find the best picture for your post. We recommend checking out: Canva, Piktochart, and Microsoft Publisher. Be careful to avoid images with restricted use due to copyrights and look for options under public domain, meaning they are free to use without restrictions. You can also pay for stock images or create your own.

5. Roll out your brand! Be sure to keep your “look” and materials consistent. Remember, branding is an ongoing activity. You can always brainstorm or adjust if needed.2

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TIPS TO GET YOU STARTED

After coming up with your branding, you will want to think about how to best showcase your school meal and Farm to School programs. To get you started, we have listed a few different content ideas for your promotion/branding strategy.

Photo ideas:
- Students smiling and holding a fruit or vegetable
- A school meal tray highlighting a healthy meal option served in the school meal program
- Students choosing from a selection of meal items (e.g., salad bars, etc.)
- Students in a school garden harvesting produce or planting seedlings

TIP: For photographs, keep in mind the subjects you are using. Check your district policies to determine permissions or any waivers needed for photographing students and families. For images of food, make sure the food looks fresh and colorful and that everyone is using proper food safety practices.

Video ideas:
- Students explaining why they enjoy school meals
- Parents advocating for school meal programs and the benefits of school meals
- Students in a garden program planting or harvesting fruits and vegetables
- School nutrition service staff explaining why they enjoy their jobs

Virtual or distance learning ideas:
- Zoom event displaying Harvest of the Month fruit or vegetable
- Showcase school nutrition service staff - highlight messages to students during remote learning
- Images or videos of school meal drive-through pick-up
- Videos or recordings highlighting “school food heroes” (e.g., staff and school nutrition service workers)
- Take-home flyers, business cards, and notes included in meal distribution bags/boxes
- Take-home seed packets or small garden kits for students to plant at home

Farm to School Collective: Example Resources
- Social Media Instagram Template Design 1: Farm to School at Home
- Social Media Instagram Template Design 2: Farm to School Champions
- Farm 2 School Collective Promotional Video

Additional Resources:
- Photographing School Food - Center for Ecoliteracy: Guidebook for making California school meals look great, including tips on lighting, composition, and choosing a background.
- Define Your Brand Message - DIY Marketers: A great list of activities you can do with your team to help define your brand.

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1 For additional tips and resources on photographing school food, visit Center for Ecoliteracy's Photographing School Food Guide
2 For an interactive calendar on the San Diego Harvest of the Month seasonal produce, visit UCSD Center for Community Health’s Harvest of the Month Calendar

A Resource of the Farm 2 School Collective | www.farmtoschoolcollective.org
INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL MEDIA PROMOTION

Social media is a great way to stay connected with your students, families, and community members to further market your school meal and Farm to School programs. Social media provides key opportunities to keep your community informed of the amazing work being done within your district. Additionally, social media platforms can garner new interest from people who may not be aware of your work. Lastly, social media platforms help to humanize the work you are doing. By showing the hard work behind your programs, you can generate more support and interest in Farm to School and school meal programs.

SOCIAL MEDIA CHECKLIST:

- Choose your platform(s): Select which social media platform(s) are the best fit for promoting your Farm to School program. Consider creating your own social media account for your school's Farm to School or school nutrition service program. In some instances, you may opt to use the school district's social media accounts. If your district has a Communications Department, consider connecting to create a plan for which platform(s) to use to reach a broader audience.

- Complete your profile: Complete your bio or “About” section with your school district's name, contact information, website, and essential information about your program. Finish your profile by adding photographs and visual materials. You may also choose to incorporate your mission and vision for your program. Be sure to keep your brand in mind! See Identifying a Brand section of Promotional Strategy Guide for additional tips.

- Follow others: Following other school districts, local businesses, and community organizations on these platforms creates a larger audience for your work, and can provide you with the inspiration or ideas needed to start posting. Suggestions include your school district's social media pages, the National Farm to School Network, the Farm 2 School Collective, the Farm to Institution Center, local farmer businesses, Farm to School support organizations, and local community businesses.

- Regularly check your pages: Make sure you set up a plan to monitor your mentions, notifications, and private messages. It is important to be timely in responding to any comments or messages, especially if you receive a complaint or inquiry.
Develop your posts: Once your page is set up, look into what content you can post. Check out the Farm 2 School Collective website (www.farmtoschoolcollective.org) for tips, tools, and social media resources for you to use on your platforms. Engage with your partners and audience by liking, commenting, and reposting their social media content. Using hashtags and tagging/mentioning other accounts can help your page gain more attention and followers. Example hashtags include: #f2smonth, #farmtoschool, #schoolfood and #schoollunchprogram.

Promote your social media page: Continue to promote your social media channels through community events, presentations, newsletters, etc. Consider the audience you are looking to target when promoting your social media channels. For example, if you would like to engage more parents and families, you can promote at a Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meeting or Back to School Night events.

ACTIVITY
SOCIAL MEDIA IN ACTION: HOW TO ADDRESS A COMPLAINT

1. Respond quickly, ideally within the same day the complaint was made. Even if you do not have a solution, acknowledge the issue so they know you are looking into it. Letting people know you are looking into the concern helps to reduce negative feedback.

2. If possible, take the conversation offline. Ask if you could set up a call or speak in person. A conversation in person can help clarify and keep the situation from escalating. As an example, one San Diego County school district responded to a parent complaint on their child’s school meals by inviting the family to tour their central kitchen operation. As a result of this gesture, the parent later became an advocate for their school meal program.

3. De-escalate the situation by replying back in a conversational tone. Include the person’s name and let them know how you plan to fix the issue. If it is a mistake, take ownership and be sure to personalize your message. If the conversation is taken offline or to a private message, take this as an opportunity to go above and beyond and share new information and highlight the benefits of your program.

4. Lastly, do not take it personally (we know this can be challenging!). Negative comments on social media are not directed at you as an individual, but are usually based on the situation a person is in. Reach out to another staff member if you are struggling with negative comments on social media and brainstorm as a team on how to best address this moving forward.

TIPS TO GET YOU STARTED

There are many different social media tools to promote your Farm to School programming. To get you started, we have highlighted a few of the top communications platforms with simple tips and resources.

**Instagram:**

- Instagram is a picture-based and visual content platform, which involves posting videos or pictures on your page or story.
- Use your Instagram “story” to post videos, pictures, surveys, and other engagement activities for 24 hours. For more information on how to use your Instagram Story, visit: [https://bit.ly/3i3NBY4](https://bit.ly/3i3NBY4).
- If you have a story you are proud of or multiple stories that can fit in a similar category, consider saving these as “highlights” to be viewed on your profile.
- Keep in mind that weblinks are not clickable in Instagram captions, but one weblink is allowed in the bio section of your profile.
- We recommend using Bit.ly to shorten weblinks or Linktree to share more than one weblink on your page’s profile. In your caption, inform your audience that they can click the link in your bio to access additional information.

**Facebook:**

- Having a Facebook Business Page makes it easier for people to discover and interact with you online. Facebook Business Pages can be used to share updates, upcoming events, pictures, and videos.2
- Before creating your Facebook Business Page, you must create your own personal Facebook profile if you do not have one already set up.
- Your Facebook Business Page can only be created under an individual account and will not have a separate login from the user who created it. Your Business Page can be created and accessed through your personal Facebook profile under “Your Pages”.
- If other staff members will be updating and posting on behalf of your Facebook Business Page, you will need to add their personal Facebook account as an “Admin” or “Editor” to this page. This can be done by selecting “Page Roles” under “Page Settings”.
- The “Publishing Tools” page is where you can draft, schedule, and view previously published posts. Be sure to tag others in your pictures when appropriate so they can see and share your posts.
- Weblinks are allowed in captions and posts, which can be helpful in directing viewers to specific webpages or resources.
- Your “Insights” page tracks the engagement received, which can help you gain a better understanding of your audience.

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Twitter

- Twitter allows you to share meal service information and updates through pictures and links on your posts, also called a “tweet” or “tweets”.
- Hashtags are used to connect social media content to a specific topic, event, theme, or conversation. Using hashtags can allow your posts to be easily discovered by others.
- Try to stay on top of topics that are important to your audience. Tweets can serve as an educational opportunity or a space to have a conversation.
- Twitter messages are intended to be short and concise with a 280-character limit. This is great for holding short, direct conversations to engage your audience.
- Search relevant hashtags to see who else is tweeting in this industry.

YouTube

- A YouTube channel can be used as a central hub to store all of your videos.
- While this platform might not be used in the same way as other social media platforms, sharing your channel’s links with your audience is a great way to get them engaged.

Peachjar

- This platform is commonly used by school districts to send flyers and newsletters to families as colorful digital flyers.
- Peachjar can also streamline the process internally for flyer and newsletter creation, which includes support for distribution to families, students, and communities.

Farm to School Collective: Example Resources

- Farm to School Champion: Sample Instagram Post
- Cajon Valley’s School Nutrition Department: Sample Facebook Post

Additional Resources

- Checklist: 10 Social Media Marketing Basics for Budding Businesses - Sprout Social: Complete list of social media platforms and how best to use these tools for marketing.
- How to Handle Customer Complaints via Social Media - Social Media Examiner: Step by step guide on how to handle a customer complaint over social media.
- How to Use Instagram Stories to Build Your Audience - Hootsuite: Learn the basics on how to use Instagram Stories.
- How to Write a Good Twitter Bio: Tips, Ideas, and Examples - Hootsuite: Learn the basics on how to write a creative Twitter bio.
- How to Create a Facebook Business Page in 7 Easy Steps - Hootsuite: Learn the basics on how to create a Facebook Business Page.
- Peachjar Information Page - Peachjar: Learn about the Peachjar platform and how it works to keep parents informed.
- Social Media 101: How to Successfully Promote Your School Nutrition Program - PrimerEdge: Tips on how to create a social media account for your school nutrition program.
INTRODUCTION TO STORYTELLING:
Storytelling is a great method for creating and communicating content that inspires and moves people to support your school meal and Farm to School programs. Good storytelling includes content that triggers the response you are looking for, with imagery and a narrative that connects with your target audience. It unlocks an emotional or empathetic response in the brain, which helps listeners to remember details and take action. Using storytelling can be a powerful tool to make your content memorable. Storytelling is not just about the language you use, but can also include visual content to share your message in a compelling way.

STORYTELLING CHECKLIST:

1. **Develop a plan:** Identify what information you will need for your story. Who do you need to talk to? Are there any photographs or information you need to gather for your story? Establish a timeline for when you would like your story developed and how you want to promote your story. For example, are you interested in posting in your school’s newsletter or connecting with a media outlet (e.g., local newspaper, tv channel, etc.)?

2. **Create a format:** Draft an outline for your story. Your story should include a character (i.e., the protagonist), a conflict or obstacle, and a clear conclusion which demonstrates change. In addition, your story should answer the question “so what?” (why is this important to your audience?) and “now what?” (what would you like people to be inspired to do?).

3. **Start writing:** Just start writing! You can always edit your language once you have something written on the page. Be sure to include imagery to captivate your audience. Keep in mind the central message and emotions you want to convey. If needed, narrow the scope of your story to include only the necessary details.

4. **Review your draft:** Thoroughly review your drafted story for any edits. Have a staff member read through your story to give feedback. If possible, have someone from your target audience read through and share what message(s) they took away.

5. **Promote your story:** Post to multiple platforms to better market your story to your audience. If sharing with a news or media outlet, you will want to create a press release to share. Be sure to include photographs and visual content which include people (e.g., students, families, staff, teachers, school nutrition service staff, etc.) to better connect with your readers. Consider your audience’s culture when publishing and use language your community or target audience can connect with.

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2 For more information on how to write a press release, visit: https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/press-release-template-h
1. Identify stories about Farm to School in your community by asking the following questions:
   - Are there any upcoming Farm to School events we would like to highlight?
   - What changes have occurred in my community that I want to share?
   - Are there any people who are going above and beyond in their role?
   - Are there any students or families who are positively impacted by our work in Farm to School/school meal distribution?

2. Identify champions or individuals to highlight in your community by asking the following questions:
   - Who are the people or “champions” of Farm to School at my district?
   - Are there any teachers or staff who are advocates for Farm to School or school meal programs at my district?
   - Are there any parents who are active within my school community who are interested in student wellness, Farm to School, or school meal programs?

3. Once a story is identified, set up an interview or conversation with your Farm to School champions to get meaningful quotes and messages. Here is a list of example questions to ask:
   - What changes have you made (or seen) in Farm to School over the past year?
   - How has Farm to School impacted your students and families? Can you share any stories?
   - Why do you think Farm to School is important?
   - What do you enjoy the most about our Farm to School program? Why?

4. Take pictures or videos to support your story! Examples include pictures of school food champions, colorful fruits and vegetables, and student artwork.
Storytelling Outline: Key Components

• **Challenge** - What obstacles are in the way? Why haven't our goals been achieved?
• **Solution** - What important lessons were learned? Discuss key insights.
• **Impact** - Describe the impact on communities and individuals. Use data and numbers if appropriate to support your story.
• **So what?** - What does your story mean for your audience? What is the one concept or big idea you want your audience to remember?
• **Now what?** - What changes do you want your audience to make given the story? What goals need to be accomplished?

Storytelling Language: Key Components

• **Central character(s)** - Include people for your audience to connect with.
• **Emotional hook** - Include stories that are relevant and connect with your audience.
• **Imagery** - Insert sensory details to help paint a picture for your audience.
• **Surprising factor** - Incorporate something that catches your audience off-guard. Examples include sharing something that went wrong or a surprising learning experience.
• **Immediacy** - Include relevant information which drives your audience to act.
• **Accessible to audience** - Use language and pictures your audience will connect with. Post on platforms that are accessible to your audience.

Farm to School Collective: Example Resources

• [Farm to School Champion Stories](#)
• [COVID-19 Press Release](#)

Additional Resources:

• [Your Brand Storytelling Checklist - BrandTrust](#): Guide on essential storytelling tips, including the three elements of storytelling and your brand's story arc.
• [How to Use Brand Storytelling to Break Through - StorySoft](#): Complete list on why storytelling is important to market your brand.
• [School Nutrition Outreach Toolkit - Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction](#): Toolkit on how to market school food, including information on key messages, news releases, and storytelling.
• [How to Write a Press Release- HubSpot](#): Information and templates for writing a press release.

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INTRODUCTION TO ENGAGING YOUR COMMUNITY:
Your promotional and marketing strategy would not be complete without considering how you are engaging your community and audience. Engaging your community includes considering who is impacted by your school meal and Farm to School programs. When examining how to best format your message or marketing plan, you will want to consider what messages will resonate with your community. An effective communications strategy will include opportunities for your audience (e.g., students, families, staff, administration, community members, etc.) to be involved and aware of your messaging. Do not be afraid to think outside the box. You can be very creative when engaging your community to make a lasting impact (e.g., taste tests, competitions, videos, etc.).

ENGAGING YOUR COMMUNITY CHECKLIST:

☐ **Use your school calendar:** Review your school calendar to find ways to engage your school community throughout the year. Are there school events where you can promote your school meal and Farm to School programs? Examples include Back to School Nights, Farm to School Month (October), National Nutrition Month (March), and School Lunch Hero Day (first Friday in May).

☐ **Be responsive to your audience:** As you communicate with your audience, be sure to listen and take notes on feedback and responses. Take the time to engage in a conversation and respond to questions. Remember to be positive and encouraging when discussing your school meal and Farm to School programs.

☐ **Engage your advocates:** Do you have a community member who is proud of your school meal and/or Farm to School program? Be sure to invite them to different promotional events. Staff members can be great advocates for your program.

☐ **Invite new people to events:** Brainstorm with your staff and think outside the box on who could attend school events to better promote your school meal and Farm to School programs. Feel welcome to include student voices or other members of the community.

☐ **Remember to have fun:** Be creative with your promotional materials and events to better engage your community. Do not be shy about taking pride in your work. For example, one of the Farm 2 School Collective school districts creates unique posters to promote their new menu items to students by using puns and fun images. Remember to be creative and have fun with your Farm to School promotion.
Surveys can be a great tool to better engage your community and receive feedback on how to improve your school meal and Farm to School programs. You can use Google Forms, SurveyMonkey, or another online platform to create your survey.

In drafting your survey questions, think about what it is you want to know from families and students. Keep questions neutral rather than including your opinion in the prompt.¹

Keep language simple and easy to read. Be aware of the languages your audience speaks and translate your survey into multiple languages if needed. Consider having another staff member read through the survey or get feedback from your target audience (i.e., a family member or student) before promoting.

Promote your survey! Use your district webpage, Peachjar, or other school district newsletter platforms to promote your survey to parents and students. You can also use a QR code on your materials for families to scan to access additional resources or information.

Look through the survey feedback and do not be afraid to address negative comments. Remember not to take any comments personally. For a step by step guide on how to address negative comments, read through the Social Media in Action: How to Address a Complaint in the Social Media Promotion section of the Farm to School Promotional Strategy Guide.

Identify feedback you can use to further promote your Farm to School program. For example, if parents and/or family members mention they want to see more fruits and vegetables on the menu, you can use this to your advantage. For example, "95% of parents surveyed mentioned it was important to have fruits and vegetables on the school menu. In response, we have added more options to our salad bar!"

Showcase your results! You can present results from your data at parent and staff meetings to highlight your program. Be sure to share with your audience what feedback you received and the positive ways you are working to grow and improve your program.

¹For a list of suggestions for drafting survey questions, visit Survey Monkey's Guide to Writing Good Survey Questions
TIPS TO GET YOU STARTED

Engaging your community starts with coming up with a list of activities or engagement opportunities throughout the year. Get together with your team to brainstorm ways to promote your programs all year. Here are some ideas to get you started:

**Student Engagement**
- Taste tests
- Posters in cafeterias or classrooms
- School announcements
- Contests or events
- Surveys on school meal preferences
- Social media
- Friendly competitions/contests
- Teacher encouragement

**Staff and Administration Engagement**
- Letters or email messages
- Invitations to taste test events
- PowerPoint presentations during staff meetings

**Family Engagement:**
- Flyers or take-home materials
- Events (e.g., Back to School Night)
- Articles in newsletters
- Automated phone messages
- Parent meetings
- Parent-teacher conferences
- Surveys

**Farm to School Collective: Example Resources**
- [Example Survey Questions - Students, Parents, Staff](#)
- [Sample Survey - Students](#)
- [Sample Survey - Parents](#)

**Additional Resources:**
- [Menu Planner for School Meals: Marketing School Meals for Success! - USDA](#): Guide to marketing school meals, including considerations for messaging for different audiences. (For more information on engaging different community audiences, visit pg. 233-235).

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REFERENCES:
PROMOTIONAL STRATEGY GUIDE


