



To whom it may concern,

At Lincoln County School District, we rely heavily on USDA meal reimbursement dollars to run our student nutrition programs. Current food and labor costs are barely covered. We only receive a small mandatory transfer from the general fund of approximately \$25,000. If we cannot cover our costs, the general fund must cover. Not a good choice to make between eating and learning.

We, as a district are fortunate to qualify, under current rules, for District wide CEP, giving all students free meals. However, this leaves little room to add better quality food or local products to our offerings.

Purchasing local foods builds community in a way I never imagined. In 2020, LCSD relied on local foods to be able to meet the high demand of meals needed when we had delivery interruptions or just could not get an item. We served over 1 million meals during this time. Meals that students waited at bus stops to pick up with parents that could not thank us enough. Those meals added a normalcy to the kids' day and kept people working, not only in our schools, but also those providing the food. Without our locals, this would not have been possible.

Adding local foods to our meals has also helped take the stigma out of "free lunch". It adds pride in students whose families work the farms or fisheries that provide the food. It teaches students food does not just come from the magic grocery store, but from hard work, from people who care for the land, sea and community.

When we purchase beef from a small rancher, it is a game changer for that family. They no longer rely on an add on Facebook that may or may not provide enough notice to sell all of the stock. We serve just over 3800 meals per day. Per DAY! Meals that, for some of our students, will be the only meals they will receive. Do these students not deserve to taste good quality food?


State Farm to School dollars also fund our school gardens. We have received funds to complete the four Newport area school gardens and are now working on Toledo gardens. This offers students a hands-on learning experience and when they bring the produce to the school kitchen and then see it in the school meals they are eating, they try it, they enjoy it, they support it. Gardens can be incorporated into all the subjects of learning. Counselors use the space to de-escalate behaviours, teachers use it to teach Math, Science, Health, etc. Students receive work skills to take into the future or into a garden on their own at home. Gardening teaches students to be good stewards of the planet, to respect the ecosystem, and not take for granted the next meal they eat.

Picture this:

A boat comes in to offload the catch of the day, let's say shrimp. Shrimp is processed at the Newport bayfront and delivered to the school warehouse. The shrimp are added to school meals and because it's a sunny day, they will eat lunch in the school garden. We use the fresh herbs and vegetables from the garden in those same meals. A garden that uses the sterilized shrimp waste fertilizer from the shrimp processor to grow big and beautiful. The students are excited because after lunch today, they will be grinding the corn they grew into cornmeal, grown from seeds they harvested and dried themselves. The cornmeal will be made into cornbread for tomorrow's lunch.

This is a reality made possible from State funded Farm to School dollars for Lincoln County SD. The funds provided the supplies to build the garden, the tables for eating and the curriculum for learning. The funds provided the shrimp in the meals and the ability to harvest from the garden to add flavor and nutrition. The funds bought the first pack of corn seeds. The funds bought small chairs for whole classroom learning.

This is Yaquina View Elementary, located just above the Newport bayfront that the boat just offloaded the shrimp to. Standing in the garden the students created, you see the Newport bridge and if you peek around the tree, you will see the processing plant the shrimp came from. I bet the student will be super excited to tell their parents, who just came home from fishing, all about the day they had at school!



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