

Breakout session Notes & Highlights

Farm to School Online Workshop for K-6 Educators (& Friends!) Webinar
May 21, 2020

Round 1 Breakout Rooms

Participants had a discussion around the following prompts:

- Current Farm to School work you are doing with your students
- Successes with remote instruction and engagement you are experiencing
- How you might use or adapt something you've seen so far today with your students.

(Participants assigned to breakout rooms by grade levels)

PreK/Kindergarten

Small garden at Preschool. Very hands on with preschool. Children are happy in the soil. Having children put in what they want in the garden to help their interest level. grant from local organization, putting in raised beds, made maple syrup, grind wheat and made bread. Need ideas on how to have someone facilitate the garden work. bagging up seeds to go home to students. Sent home grass seeds. Wheat: Idea to go to a mill and video for children. seed bombs" sent home wildflower seeds to have children put in mud and throw. had children draw new leaves "one thing that is new." It is about the observation, not the quality of the drawing. draw a rock, dandelion, etc. using google classroom, children very active, drawings, scavenger hunts, plants last week, challenges to students. beanpole teepee idea. children are being graded so seeing a lot of participation. All students have access to computers.

1st Grade

Looking to learn and observe from the rest of the group.

Seed kits have been sent out to all the students in the district that requested it. Also doing videos on how to plant and maintain the project. Funded through a FTS grant. Difficult to get classroom educators to engage during these times. Doing weekly handouts to be sent home with the school meals highlighting harvest of the month and other FTS activities.

Looking forward to getting back to the school and starting new gardens. Sending home gardening kits so they can bring the plants back to the center to transplant. Finding it difficult to know when to push classroom educators around FTS or when are they too overwhelmed.

Looking to be more engaging. More live streaming. Planning to open for summer activities and just looking to make sure we run a safe fun programming.

2nd Grade

Various stages of FTS implementation. Some are able to get "garden bags" out to families/students with compost, seeds, popsicle sticks, science journals to track growth and partnership with nature museums doing virtual lessons. One school does trout farming during the school year and video/virtual lesson of the trout life cycle for students, also collaborating with a local science center. FTS coordinator reporting many districts not doing FTS right now, some distribution of seed starting supplies, but many districts not integrating FTS into virtual learning. Some use food distribution sites as a way to get materials to students.

3rd Grade

Garden-based learning challenges and opportunities; Sent seeds home, students are keeping seed observation journals; Sending out articles and videos; Adjusting and adapting garden plans (reconsider what to plant, to focus on fall harvest items); Trouble-shooting summer maintenance will be even harder this year; Discussion on how best to coordinate volunteers; Remote learning focus has been on care and compassion, checking in with students, making sure they know they are loved and cared for - short activities are great, extensive or complex lessons and themes not really a priority right now

4th Grade

Not currently posting lessons

FB site for farm to school and sustainability

Egg hatching experience youtube live feed - was successful

Sharing things from different sites

Farm to School coordinator - interim director of food service

School based gardens, observation beehive, hydroponics, two goats, chicken

20acre production farm for the district

½ the district has a school based garden

Aim is to have gardens in every school, city grants money to build the gardens

Not currently doing farm to school

Posting nature scavenger hunt

Garden team working on different days to keep the garden going

Pk-4 only one with a garden

How to integrate it into ¾ curriculum

2 times/week in the garden

Working on integrating into ELA and math

Food service is working with local farms

Looking to become a model for other schools in the district

Working with food corp

Sending materials home
Seeds and containers
Students are participating in home experiments
So challenging

5th Grade

-grow kits sent to students through meal sites, pea shoots for sprouting at home, video tutorial, research projects on plants of choice for students without plants/growing space/etc., difficult/low returns to seek formal evaluation from students, difficult to send materials to students, all of us want to involve families, seed donations have been helpful

2nd Round of Breakout Rooms

Participants had a discussion around the following prompts:

- Strategies your community is coming up with to make sure everyone is fed
- Role of school and educational institutions in that process
- School gardens and logistics in the age of Covid-19
- Looking ahead to the fall - strategies/brainstorming around what this will/could look like

(Random participant groups - not broken out by grade level)

Breakout Room 1

Prioritized food distribution in our districts - meal drop off sites and bus routes
Student farmers market - will happen this month and student will receive deliveries of boxes

Unsure what summer farm to table will look like because summer program will be virtual

Who will take care of garden during the summer is unsure

Breakout Room 2

Difficult not to be more involved in the purchasing at the cafeteria right now.

Difficult to get on campus.

Many meals are now serving less local and so many challenges with transporting the food.

Worried about schools stopping meals and local food shelves being swamped.

Breakout Room 3

Difficult finding a cohesive plan for everyone. Gardens are simpler-deal with crop rotation and companion planting, sustainability-teachers bearing brunt of the FTS work, not a lot of support from folks-hesitation from folks and even getting access to get into the school. What to plant? Plant a lot of single/harvest late season crops, and flowers to keep it looking nice. Wish there was better infrastructure. Community garden trying to help figure out school gardens system-moving food. Working with groups who do this already, Rescuing food from gardens. Relying on partners a lot. Grow as much good as we can. All on a few people since access is limited.

Breakout Room 4

District made a commitment to feeding everyone and is distributing food. A lot of pre packaged food, Food is typically a way to distribute fresh produce, figuring out how to do that now. The food self recently started distributing more fresh produce. Another school also delivering 2 or 3 days of breakfast and lunch so they would only have to deliver a few says a week. Salad kits (including potting soil, salad mix seeds, growing instructions) set to families. Local distributors have donated a lot. Unclear yet if moving ahead with planting school garden and one crop is given to the school cafeteria, but have not planted yet because we are unsure about capacity/ system of cafeteria will be in the Fall.

Breakout Room 5

Sending meals out, families come to the school for meals, meals sent to families via bus

Staff is grateful for the opportunity to do pick up and see students and families for a bit

Meals coming through food service - through June 26

No question about the role of schools - we feed the kids

Breakout Room 6

South Carolina- district was providing 3 hot meals a day for pick up, then switched to delivery to drop site-- pick up 3 days per week for more days. Concerned about the plan that students will be served in classrooms in the fall, that this will mean more packaged foods instead of fresh salad bars and the like. Vermont (I think?) the district has been providing meals bussed to drop sites, Friday meals have enough food for the weekend. California garden dealing with surplus produce - took some time to find a place to take it, that can accommodate freshly harvested raw produce. Thinking about planting crops that are more shelf stable for future such as shelling beans and winter squash.

Breakout Room 7

Working on transitioning to summer meals (may be a gap during that time?), grant programs through local Rotary club, private Waldorf school received large donation to start a big garden focused in supporting immigrant community (1/3 - immigrant community, 1/3 - school district families, 1/3 - freeport community services), school food

service for public schools are likely going into debt at this time because of high food costs (for grab and go meals) and hazard pay for employees, meal sites are important!

Breakout 8

Garden donations during weekly food pickup. Gardens growing differently (cover cropping, heavy mulching, sheet mulching now for fall planting), safety recommendations and policy/guidelines examples. Most families are coming for food pickup so connect with them then. Figuring out what plants to buy. Starting seedlings at home so there is something for the garden when they're allowed back on school grounds. Some gardens are expanding their growing space to grow for the pantries, some are growing different foods (that have to be cooked, or that are storage crops)

Breakout 9

The school districts are doing breakfast, lunch and dinner from school sites and school bus stops in more economically disadvantaged areas which are open to students and any community members who are in need, other districts are just providing breakfast and lunch free to all students but not for community members, school gardens are providing food to local food pantries but not being used much in the schools cafeterias/meals