

Evaluation Report

Davis Farm to School Davis Joint Unified School District School Lunch Program School Year 2012 – 2013

Summary & Recommendations

**Prepared under contract with
Davis Farm to School
Yolo Farm to Fork**

by

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Executive Summary

With this report, UC Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (SAREP) evaluates four goals that comprise an agreement between Davis Joint Unified School District (DJUSD) and Davis Farm to School (DF2S):

- 1) increase farm fresh food in school food offerings;
- 2) reduce solid waste through a comprehensive district recycling program;
- 3) provide education opportunities to promote a healthy lifestyle and develop the whole child; and
- 4) engage the community and evaluate programs to provide information to the community.

Goal 1

Procurement. The purchasing records for school year 2012 – 2013 show that **52.7%** of produce purchases are sourced from local farmers, up from 2011 – 2012 (29.5%). DJUSD's primary produce vendor, FreshPoint, established more complete systems for identifying the source of the produce they procure.

Participation. Participation in the school lunch program is expressed as a percentage of enrollment. In 2012 – 2013, participation averaged about 21.7% overall for the lunch program, slightly less than the previous year (22.1%). Statistics indicate that school lunch participation has dropped statewide.

School Food Environment. A number of changes were made this year to improve the structure and environment of the school food program. Chief among them were changes to the menu to include more salad bars and "from-scratch" cooking; expansion of the taste testing program; and enhancement of the Nutrition Advisory Committee. Three professional development cooking classes were offered again this year as well as a part of a Yolo County Farm to School grant, and they were well received.

Goal 2

Recycling Is Simply Elementary (DavisRISE). The DavisRISE program has continued to expand and implement new processes for diverting waste. A waste reduction pilot project introduced in the previous year by Davis Farm to School was expanded to the other elementary schools and Harper Jr High. The district's DavisRISE Coordinator, Ximena Jackson from Cesar Chavez Elementary, continued to oversee this project. Between SY 2011-12 and 2012-13:

- Waste at the elementary schools was reduced by 33% total for the year.
- Harper Jr High reduced its waste stream by 50% for the year.
- The total number of (2-yard) bins was reduced from 15 to 8, and the weekly pick-ups were reduced from 24 to 16. This represents a reduction of total weekly waste from 48 cubic yards to 32 cubic yards.
- 1,595 gallons of waste were diverted weekly from nineteen 95-gallon containers.
- The ALL-Compost Program saved the district \$2,980 for the 10 months of the school year.

Harper Junior High's DavisRISE Coordinator, Carrie Juchau, developed extensive signage in order to give a more consistent and professional look to the recycling efforts at all participating schools.

Goal 3

Garden-based Education. Of the 6 schools reporting back, total garden income was \$10,400. DF2S awarded \$2500 in grants to these 6 schools¹; \$1250 was given in Nugget matching grants; the remaining income came from fundraising and donations. About 1340 students participated in some aspect of gardening at these 6 schools.

Farm Visits. The spring Farm Visits were popular and feedback was positive. About 250 second grade students visited 4 regional farms.

Goal 4

Community Connections. As in the past, DF2S sponsored and/or participated in a number of community events. Signature events included

- **Tour de Cluck:** This event gained nationwide press and once again was extremely popular. It drew over 700 participants statewide in the Bicycle Chicken Coop Crawl, and brought in approximately \$20,000 to support Davis Farm to School.
- **Village Feast:** The 8th Annual Village Feast, held under the sycamore trees in Central Park, August 2012, attracted about 300 participants and raised about \$18,000. This was the first year that the planning was solely under the DF2S umbrella. DF2S did not partner with Slow Food Yolo as in the past.

Program Development. School year 2012 – 2013 was the first complete year that Davis Farm to School operated under the umbrella nonprofit of Yolo Farm to Fork. In 2012 – 2013, the parent organization was still in its development stage, and strategic planning was a continuing process. Davis Farm to School remains its flagship program.

¹ Note: A total of \$5,000 in garden grants were awarded, but not all garden coordinators reported back. The figures here represent six report-backs (Harper, Emerson, DaVinci, Montgomery, North Davis, and Willett).

SUMMARY of RECOMMENDATIONS²

from School Year 2012 – 2013

DAVIS FARM to SCHOOL

Goal 1: School Food

Procurement:

- Continue regular check-ins with the new SNS Director, Dominic Machi regarding local purchasing.
- Encourage SNS to expand relationships with growers in the Yolo/Solano/Sacramento region.
- Support the new Garden-to-Cafeteria program (Harper Harvest) which is being rolled out this year.
- Support the SNS Director's new plans for outreach activities and engagement with the community.

Current Year Progress:

The new SNS Director is putting several new plans and activities in place:

- Machi is making strategic plans to purchase local products from a variety of local vendors, including dairy and grain products in addition to produce.
- He is interested in purchasing in bulk from local growers for freezing sauces, etc.
- He has already been involved in community outreach, e.g., 2 Tastings at the Davis Farmers Market; plans for a Health Fair in early April which will bring The Dairy Council on board

Professional Development:

- Continue to offer professional development cooking classes for food service staff.
- Make arrangements to conduct site visits to elementary school lunchrooms to evaluate the school food environment.

Current Year Progress:

- Classes will be offered again in 2013 – 2014 through a grant from Farm to School Yolo.

Marketing:

- Explore strategies for increasing the number of students who are eligible for Free & Reduce Priced meals to sign up for those meals. This could be through the PTA, parent groups, or the Nutrition Advisory Committee.

Nutrition Advisory Committee:

- Explore with SNS Director how he wants to use the Nutrition Advisory Committee. Assist him as appropriate.

Current Year Progress:

- The district has recently passed a district-wide Wellness Policy and plans to use this policy as the basis for future work in the area of overall health and well-being for children in the district. The district may or may not draw upon the Nutrition Advisory Committee as an entity to assist with implementation.

Taste Testing:

- Continue the Taste Testing program under the guidance of an experienced volunteer coordinator.
- Ensure that information, training and communication are adequate for volunteer taste testers and for food service staff at the school sites. Coordinate Taste Testing with Harvest of the Month offerings.
- Explore this program with the SNS Director: Dominic has some ideas about how to do this better, for example, involving students as taste testers.

Current Year Progress:

- DF2S has recently brought an experienced volunteer coordinator who has undertaken the job of coordinating Taste Testers. Thus far, she has recruited 8 volunteers.

² With "Current Year Progress" where particularly relevant.

Goal 2: DavisRISE

- Explore ways to integrate recycling and waste management more thoroughly into the curriculum.
- Hold dedicated meetings for RISE Coordinators on challenging issues such as recruiting volunteers.

Current Year Progress:

- Ximena Jackson, district RISE Coordinator has been working with others at school sites to ensure that the ALL Compost and DavisRISE programs are continuing to work efficiently and profitably.

Goal 3: Farm- and Garden-based Education

Garden

- Hold dedicated meetings for Garden Coordinators to discuss the issue of volunteer recruitment.
- Refresh DF2S plans to provide easy lessons/garden curriculum to involve more teachers.
- If possible, DF2S Program Coordinator should check in periodically with garden coordinators to assess progress and challenges. This might result in a better return of annual reports and give DF2S a clearer picture of needs for school gardens.

Farm Visits

- Begin communication with teachers in the fall about the spring tours.
- Reassess the structure and content for the farm visits, particularly the pre-trip classroom visits.
- Review the curriculum connections between the farm visits and classroom. Ensure that appropriate lessons are being presented in the pre-trip sessions.
- Clear instructions and expectations need to be laid out for volunteers.
 - Volunteers need to be thoroughly trained.
 - Internship expectations need to be very clearly explained and discussed at the beginning of the internship.
- Pursue farmer training to help them with appropriate on-farm activities for students.

Current Year Progress:

- Every odd-numbered year, DF2S hosts a Walkabout, during which DF2S Garden representatives and Chair meet with Maintenance and Operations to conduct site visits at all the school sites in order to determine what is needed for the gardens.
- This year, there has been a concerted effort to integrate the garden and recycling needs.
- In addition, DF2S has acquired the volunteer services of a Landscape Architect to help with schools' gardening projects.
- Under the direction of Carrie Juchau, the Harper Harvest Garden-to-Cafeteria project is well under way, and will become a model for connecting school gardens and Student Nutrition Services.
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Goal 4: Community Connection and Engagement

Recommendations are similar to the previous year:

- Continue to take advantage of statewide and national opportunities for promoting the Davis Farm to School program.
- Develop relationships with local and Yolo County organizations through Yolo Farm to Fork.
- Continue our signature fundraising events: The Village Feast and Tour de Cluck.