Farm to School Innovator Series: Sourcing Locally with Shared Purchasing

September 16, 2026

Cindy Hu, MEd
Education Program Manager

Vince Caguin, MBA
Director of Strategy and Innovation



CENTER FOR ECOLITERACY

CALIFORNIA FOOD FOR CALIFORNIA KIDS®

Farm to School Innovator Series: Sourcing Locally with Shared Purchasing

September 16, 2026

Kristin Hilleman
Capistrano Unified School District
Director of Food and Nutrition Services

Tim Wilkinson
Shared Plate Strategies
Director of Procurement Strategy & Operations

Andrew Dickinson
Dickinson Family Farms
Vice President

CENTER FOR ECOLITERACY

CALIFORNIA FOOD FOR CALIFORNIA KIDS®

Live Interpretation
Community Language Cooperative

The Community Language Cooperative (CLC) provides interpretation services, focus groups, and inclusivity/diversity training to make community, academic and governmental events more accessible for all. We help remove barriers and broaden opportunities for participation and community engagement by non-English speakers and train organizations on implementation of inclusivity practices.



Agenda

- Welcome + Updates
- Sourcing Locally with Shared Purchasing
- Guest Panel
- Q+A
- Farm to School Poll
- Regional Breakouts
- Resources
- Closing



10 YEARS

CALIFORNIA FOOD FOR CALIFORNIA KIDS®



CALIFORNIA FOOD FOR CALIFORNIA KIDS®

171
SCHOOL DISTRICTS

40
COUNTIES

Farm to School Innovator Series

The Farm to School Innovator Series provides virtual gatherings for farm to school leaders focused on building resilient school food systems in California. Live interpretation into Spanish will be provided for the event series.



Sourcing Locally with Shared Purchasing

Piggybacking: What It Is

Using another agency's competitively awarded contract instead of running your own bid.

Why districts do it

- Fast: contract in weeks, not months
- Low admin: no solicitation, ads, or scoring
- Proven vendor and pricing
- Same terms as the lead agency

The fine print

- Original bid AND contract must have a piggyback clause
- You take it as-is: no changes to price, specs, or terms
- Vendor has to agree to serve you
- Their compliance problems become yours

Piggybacking: Four Steps

SHARED PLATE STRATEGIES

1 Verify

Piggyback clause present? Your district eligible?

2 Agree

MOU signed by you, the lead agency, and the vendor

3 Approve

Confirm the original bid was competitive and compliant. Board resolution.

4 Monitor

Track price, delivery, and service. Keep the file 3 years past contract end.

Farm to School Innovator Series: Sourcing Locally with Shared Purchasing

September 16, 2026

Kristin Hilleman
Capistrano Unified School District
Director of Food and Nutrition Services

Tim Wilkinson
Shared Plate Strategies
Director of Procurement Strategy & Operations

Andrew Dickinson
Dickinson Family Farms
Vice President

CENTER FOR ECOLITERACY

CALIFORNIA FOOD FOR CALIFORNIA KIDS®

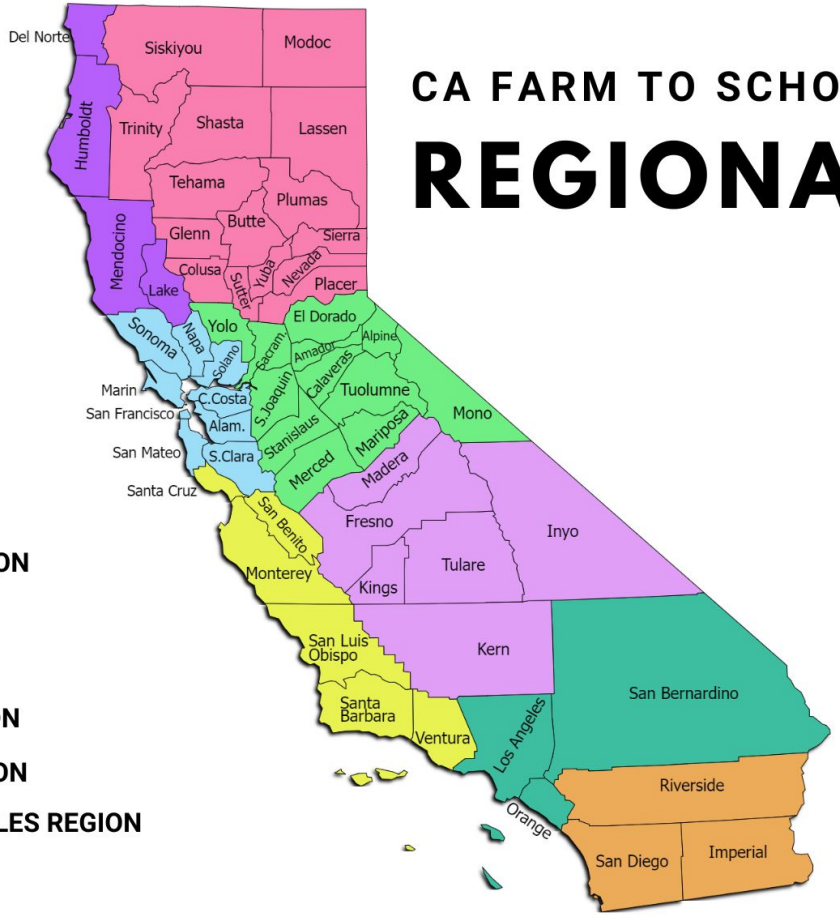
Guest Panel Discussion

Farm to School Poll

Regional Breakouts

CA FARM TO SCHOOL NETWORK

REGIONAL MAP



- SUPERIOR REGION
- NORTH COAST REGION
- BAY AREA REGION
- CENTRAL REGION
- SAN JOAQUIN REGION
- SOUTH COAST REGION
- GREATER LOS ANGELES REGION
- SOUTHERN REGION

Resources

Growing for Schools



Farm to School Procurement Checklist

CENTER FOR ECOLITERACY | CALIFORNIA FOOD FOR CALIFORNIA KIDS®

Farm to School Procurement Checklist

Every school meal is an opportunity. By sourcing California-grown fruits and vegetables, you can provide students with fresh, local meals while building connections to local agriculture.

Start with what you know. Consider a produce item you purchase regularly and explore how to source it from a local farm. With thoughtful planning, you can incorporate local purchasing while remaining compliant with federal and state procurement requirements.

Ask the right questions. Managing expectations from the outset is essential for building a strong and mutually beneficial relationship with local farmers and food producers.

Celebrate your wins. Every step of the process matters. Thank you for your dedication to nourishing students with fresh, local food.

Step 1: Review Internal Processes



- ☐ **Check for Conflict of Interest:** Do you, a department staff member, school administrator, or board member have a personal relationship with the farmer? Do any involved parties have a financial interest in the sale of these products?
- ☐ **Update Procurement Code of Conduct**
- ☐ **Define Payment Terms:** Can the farm accommodate delayed payments due to invoice processing timelines?
- ☐ **Secure District and Board Approval** (If applicable)
- ☐ **Obtain Completed Vendor Application** (If applicable)

Step 2: Prepare for Partnership

- ☐ **Assess Delivery Readiness:** What delivery conditions can the site accommodate? Will delivery be via van, pickup truck, or box truck? Will the delivery be on a pallet? Is there a loading dock? Does the truck have a lift gate? Or, can you pick up?
- ☐ **Understand Onsite Processing Abilities:** Do staff have the tools and training to wash and process fruits and vegetables? What about items larger than a ½ cup serving (e.g., melons)?
- ☐ **Determine Storage Capacity:** Is there enough storage space? Is there adequate cold storage?
- ☐ **Communicate Funding:** Clearly explain the grant terms and funding limits to the farmer.

Center for Ecoliteracy Resources

- Farm to School Innovator Series: December 2, 2026
- Growing for Schools
- Farm to School Procurement Checklist
- Digging In: Farm to School Activities, Case Studies, and Resources
- California Flavors, Sabores de California
- Nourishing Students Resources
- Fresh from California
- Farm to School Innovator Series Archive
- Center for Ecoliteracy Newsletter

Join the California Food for California Kids Network

California Food for California Kids is an initiative of the Center for Ecoliteracy that builds the capacity and commitment of public school districts to provide all students with fresh, locally-grown school meals and develop connections between the cafeteria, classroom, and garden.

Partner Organization Resources

California Department of Food and Agriculture

- Office of Farm to Fork California Farm to School Program
- CDFA Office of Farm to Fork: CA Farm to School Network Call – *Sep 24*
- California Farm to School Summit – *Oct 15*

National Farm to School Network

- Partner Meeting – *Oct 14*

LunchAssist

- The Lunch Break Webinar – *ongoing through Oct 2026*

REGISTER NOW



CALIFORNIA FARM TO SCHOOL SUMMIT



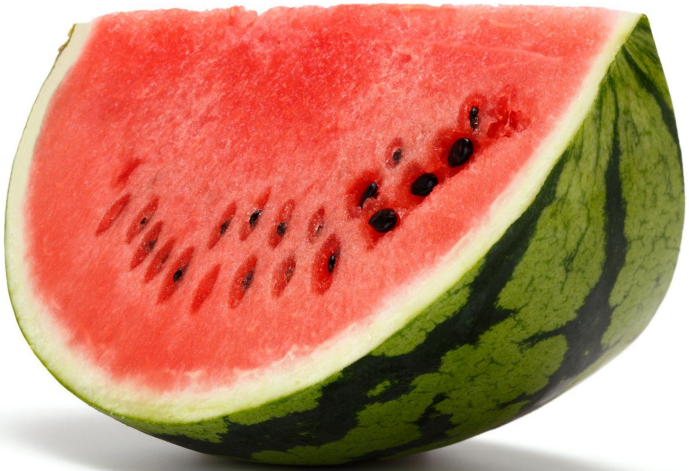




OCTOBER 14–15

Cultivating Farm to School Leaders

Funding for the Cultivating Farm to School Leaders project is made possible by the 2023 Farm to School Incubato Grant through the CDFA Office of Farm to Fork's Farm to School Program.



Thank you!



@center_for_ecoliteracy



@center-for-ecoliteracy



@center_for_ecoliteracy



@centerforecoliteracy



CENTER FOR
ECOLITERACY