

## **FARM TO SCHOOL BACKGROUND and OBJECTIVES**

The Office of State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) is responsible for administering all District of Columbia (DC) Child Nutrition Programs (CNPs) including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), Child and Adult Food Care Program (CACFP), and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). These CNPs occur at 65 School Food Authorities (SFAs) and 72 childcare facilities.

OSSE is also responsible for managing DC Farm to CNP activities. DC's Healthy Schools Act (HSA) of 2010 and the Healthy Tots Act (HTA) of 2014 have supported a decade of CNP-based programming including disseminating the Sprout it Out newsletter and promoting events that encourage local foods in CNPs. Additionally, HSA and HTA reimburse CNPs an additional five cents for locally grown food.

COVID-19 significantly disrupted CNP operations and supply chains. This project will enable OSSE to evaluate the effectiveness of DC Farm to CNP activities in mitigating challenges due to COVID-19, and in the years since the public health emergency, including:

- **Changing Meal Service Models:** Throughout the pandemic, CNPs have needed to shift meal service models based on changing health guidance. Effective implementation of DC Farm to CNP would ensure CNP staff have the skills needed to adapt CNP programming as needed.
- **Supply Chain Disruptions:** CNPs have also faced unreliable food deliveries as global and national supply chains have struggled to respond to worker shortages, transportation disruptions, and higher priority markets. Effective implementation of DC Farm to CNP cements relationships between CNPs and local producers and growers that can often withstand the uncertainty of larger food systems.

A thorough third-party process and outcome evaluation of DC Farm to CNP will **improve access to local foods in DC CNPs through comprehensive Farm to CNP programming that includes local procurement and agricultural education efforts** by identifying necessary changes in program implementation.