2026-2028
Farm to School Program

Background

- Dallas County Health & Human Services (DCHHS) is the lead grantee and fiscal entity for the Transforming School Nutrition through the Farm to School Program.
- DeSoto ISD participates as the district/programmatic partner, not the fiscal agent.
- The USDA federal award to Dallas County is $371,429; the full award is not a DeSoto ISD-controlled allocation.
- The project supports local foods, nutrition education, experiential learning, and student wellness across all 10 DeSoto ISD schools serving approximately 6,000 students.
- Project period: May 1, 2026 through June 30, 2028. Dallas County Commissioners Court approved the project, and implementation planning is underway.

Funding & Fiscal Structure

- Federal award to Dallas County / DCHHS: $371,429.
- DCHHS administers the federal award, partner coordination, approved project scope, and required USDA reporting.
- No new unreimbursed district operating cost is anticipated under the current implementation structure.
- Approved project-related Plant Services overtime is intended to be reimbursed by DCHHS and should be separately documented before reimbursement.
- District resource commitments, match or in-kind expectations, and payment/reimbursement methods will be documented in the final work plan or partnership agreement.

Benefits (Key Outcomes)

- Provides districtwide reach across all 10 DeSoto ISD schools and approximately 6,000 students.
- Increases student access to fresh, locally sourced foods through Child Nutrition programming.
- Strengthens nutrition education, student wellness, and healthy food awareness.
- Expands hands-on STEM, agriculture, CTE/P-TECH, and garden-based learning opportunities.
- Creates family and community engagement opportunities while strengthening county, farmer, vendor, campus, and district partnerships.



Program Components

- Increase local produce procurement through Child Nutrition and Whitsons, with DCHHS partner support.
- Establish or strengthen school gardens and greenhouses through a phased rollout based on campus site readiness, water access, irrigation needs, and maintenance capacity.
- Launch Farm-to-Families activities and other family/community food access opportunities.
- Integrate nutrition, gardening, agriculture, STEM, CTE/P-TECH, and classroom learning experiences.
- Provide staff training related to gardening, food safety, local sourcing, and implementation practices.
- Track participation, evidence, local sourcing, and implementation progress to support USDA reporting and long-term sustainability.

Partner Roles & Points of Contact

- DCHHS: federal award administration, partner coordination, approved project scope, resources/vendors, training, and required USDA reporting.
- Grants & Special Revenue: district coordination, compliance review, documentation, approvals, monitoring, and escalation of implementation risks.
- Child Nutrition / Whitsons: local-food sourcing, procurement, menu and kitchen feasibility, food safety, and meal/procurement data.
- Teaching & Learning / STEM / CTE / P-TECH: curriculum connections, student experiences, career pathways, and instructional integration.
- Campuses / Operations / Plant Services: site readiness, access, irrigation and water needs, maintenance, local implementation, evidence collection, and pre-approved reimbursable project support.

End Goals & Board Action

- Expand districtwide access to fresh, local foods and strengthen sustainable local-food procurement practices.
- Build hands-on agriculture, nutrition, STEM, and career-connected learning opportunities across district campuses.
- Maintain clear written ownership, procurement controls, reimbursement documentation, measurable outcomes, and sustainability planning.
- Board approval authorizes DeSoto ISD participation in the DCHHS-led partnership and allows the Superintendent or designee to execute the partnership MOU and related implementation documents consistent with district policy.
- The $371,429 federal award remains administered by Dallas County / DCHHS and is not presented as district-controlled grant revenue.

Thank you!