

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Success Stories

What is FFVP?

The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) is a federal grant program that provides funding for eligible elementary schools to offer students a variety of fresh produce outside of the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs (NSLP/SBP). Nutrition education provided at the local level supports the success of the program. The main goal of FFVP is to expand students' access to a variety of fruits and vegetables, increase produce consumption, and promote healthy food choices.

FFVP Impacts

Why does this program matter and what changes have you seen as a result of the program? Food Service Directors from around Washington share their observations.

- "Families appreciate the additional exposure to fresh items for their students. Many of the items served are not commonly found in the home kitchen. Teachers love serving the students their snack items and also enjoy the educational piece to the program. We tried upwards of a dozen varieties of Washington apples, fresh berries (a favorite), colorful carrots and "spicy" leafy greens. We challenged our students to try new things and they are so proud of themselves when they do!"

-Amy Belknap, Darrington School District

- "The kids have so much fun trying new items and sometimes realizing that they like something new or that they've never heard of. Our students especially like when we add the rainbow carrots, potatoes, and cauliflower. They also enjoy when we offer all of the different berry varieties. Our most challenging item was jackfruit, but it was quite entertaining to see the staffs' faces when they saw it. It was much larger than any of us anticipated."

-Shannon Richardson, Mt. Baker School District

- "One of the biggest accomplishments in our FFVP operations last school year was introducing our Transitional Kindergarten (TTK) students to a wide variety of new and unfamiliar fruits and vegetables using the "brave bite" method. Each week, teachers presented a fruit or vegetable that most students had never seen or heard of. Students were encouraged to take a small "brave bite," and teachers modeled the behavior by trying the item alongside them, creating a fun and supportive environment. This initiative took place in our TTK classrooms throughout the school year and was driven by the goal of building food curiosity and openness at a young age. It was amazing to watch hesitant students transform into enthusiastic taste testers."



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-Ashlie Auckland, Winlock School District

- "The most surprisingly well-received item last year was raw Brussels sprouts, which actually sparked a lighthearted fight among students over who would get the last serving. At the beginning of the school year, many of our elementary students were reluctant to try vegetables. When unfamiliar items were offered—especially anything green—we often heard groans or polite refusals. But as the Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program continued, something began to shift. The daily exposure, combined with fun facts shared by our teachers during snack delivery, started to build trust and curiosity. One day in early spring, we served raw Brussels sprouts. Staff fully expected them to be pushed aside or politely ignored—but instead, students were asking for more. One student said, "They taste like cabbage candy!" and others started trying to trade their fruit for more sprouts. It was a surprising and joyful moment that captured what the FFVP is all about: helping kids develop a real interest in trying new fruits and vegetables. Watching students ask for more raw Brussels sprouts was the clearest sign that the program is making a lasting impact."

-Staci Gloyn, Washtunca School District

- "It is an important part of student's education and it also prepares them for selecting fruits and vegetables from the salad bar during lunch service. I would say the best part of this program is it is fully been embraced by our teachers and admin and there are few programs in which we have 100% support. The nutrition education slides are appreciated by our teachers. One of our staff members saw a student with their parent at the store and mentioned the new varieties of fruits and vegetables their student could identify and asked them to buy for the family. Huge win!"

-Laurie Ozanich, Selah School District

- "One creative way we incorporated nutrition education was by creating a 'Snack & Share' bulletin board in the cafeteria during the spring semester. Each week when a new fruit or vegetable was served through FFVP, we added fun facts, origin maps, and student quotes about the item. For example, when we served blood oranges in April, we included where they're grown, how they get their red color, and a photo of a student giving a big thumbs-up with the caption: 'It tastes like fruit punch!' The bulletin board quickly became a popular stop for both students and staff. Teachers began using the info as a conversation starter, and students looked forward to seeing their comments displayed. It encouraged tasting, curiosity, and pride—and brought real visibility to the FFVP effort beyond the classroom. We found that when students felt their voice mattered, they were more open to trying unfamiliar produce—and even excited to talk about it."

-Susan Wildey, Prescott School District