



Farming programs hitting public schools

August 22, 2015

For some, big changes are coming to your child's school lunch. Currently, educators are trying to figure out what lunchtime staples will stay and go.

Farming's part of the school day at Waikiki Elementary. All students participate in the school's food farm program. Farm/garden programs are becoming very popular in public schools. They're sprouting up on 75 percent of campuses in Hawaii.

"Two ways kids eating behavior changes – and both involve playing with their food, as much as my mom said never play with your food – growing it and cooking it are two ways kids eating behaviors change," said Dexter Kishida, DOE.

Just a few weeks ago, in an effort to introduce children to different foods, Governor David Ige signed a bill establishing a Farm to School program in the state. The program means a menu makeover for the next school year.

"We need to make sure students are connecting and understanding where their food comes from and why it matters," said Lydi Morgan, Hawaii Farm to School & School Garden Hui.

Currently, about 80 percent of the food served in public school cafeterias is shipped from the mainland. The goal under the new farm to school bill is to increase the amount of local food showing up on those lunch trays.

The DOE feeds 100,000 students every day, so part of the equation is figuring out how much local food will cost. Right now, a team of educators is working with the Governor's office to solve any problems, but educators also point out another benefit to the Farm to School program.

“It’s sort of like friends – the more you hang around them, the more you like them. The more you hang around vegetables, the more you eat it,” said Kishida. “If a child chooses not to eat a tomato, the next five kids don’t eat a tomato.”

You could say they’re growing healthier kids at Waikiki Elementary with their food farm program, one bite at a time.

Video Embedded

<http://www.kitv.com/news/farming-programs-hitting-public-schools/34858534>