**NEW PARTNERSHIP TO BRING FOOD EDUCATION TO URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY**

**Pilot Light and Urban School Food Alliance Team Up for Food Education Initiative to Promote Good Health and Nutrition**

WASHINGTON – As many children return to virtual learning and millions of families continue to struggle with access to healthy food, it's more critical now than ever to provide food education to young students and help them understand the importance of good nutrition. Today, [Pilot Light](https://pilotlightchefs.org/) and [Urban School Food Alliance (USFA)](https://www.urbanschoolfoodalliance.org/) join hands to provide this programming in urban school districts. Food connects us and has a deep impact on our culture, relationships, history and environment; this concept is deeply ingrained in Pilot Light and USFA’s missions. Pilot Light’s curriculum incorporates lessons that integrate food as a lens for traditional subjects, like math, reading, history and science, to ensure food and nutrition are included in everyday conversation. This partnership will expand Pilot Light’s food education program nationwide with the help of the diverse and large school district network of USFA, starting with programs in New York City, Los Angeles and Orlando.

“Food education is so important, especially right now. Through food, students can learn more about themselves and each other, and it brings people together, ” says Founding Chef of Pilot Light [Jason Hammel](https://www.chicagogourmet.org/page/JasonHammel). “We're excited to be working with the Urban School Food Alliance to help forge these connections for students and teachers in LA, NYC, and Orange County.”

Ten years ago, in the city of Chicago, Pilot Light sought to create a cohesive model and curriculum for food education in the classroom to encourage students to develop the critical thinking skills necessary to make healthy choices. In partnership with highly-motivated K–12 teachers with an interest in implementing food education lessons consistently in their classroom, the program has grown to engage more than [12,000 students across Chicago](https://pilotlightchefs.org/impact/our-impact/). Today, this curriculum has proven adaptable as teachers in NYC, Chicago, Orange County and LA are navigating virtual and socially distanced teaching. With lessons like “Eggs Around the World”, “Eating Pasta Together” and “Matter through Banana Bread”, students are learning how food is made and shared. Pilot Light’s lessons and resources are available to all at no cost on its [Food Education Center.](https://foodedu.pilotlightchefs.org/?utm_source=usfa&utm_medium=display&utm_campaign=usfa)

“As we celebrate National School Lunch Week and Farm to School Month, this partnership provides a great opportunity to shine the light on the importance of health and healthy school lunches and the connection food has in so many aspects of our lives," says Dr. [Katie Wilson](https://www.urbanschoolfoodalliance.org/dr-katie-wilson/), Executive Director of Urban School Food Alliance. "We must all work together to build strong and just local food systems to ensure that all children are being fed nutritiously. Our partnership with Pilot Light and continued collaboration with schools, teachers, farmers, and community advocates will allow us to continue investing in a strategy that encourages whole-community health."

Pilot Light and USFA are committed to boosting student achievement and educating young people about healthy choices and lifestyles. Creating a robust, equitable, quality-focused and integrated curriculum is critical during this pandemic. For many of our nation’s children, school and school meals are the best safety net we have to help children be healthy and successful not only in the classroom but also in their communities. Food systems and nutrition must be a part of the conversation as we talk about the future and our children’s wellbeing.

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**About Pilot Light**

Pilot Light is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that supports students as they learn and advocate for informed choices by bridging the lessons, they learn in their classrooms to the foods on their lunch trays at home and in their communities. Learn more about Pilot Light [at PilotLightChefs.org](https://c212.net/c/link/?t=0&l=en&o=2722505-1&h=1268140550&u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.pilotlightchefs.org%2F&a=PilotLightChefs.org).

**About Urban School Food Alliance (USFA)**

The Urban School Food Alliance was created by school foodservice professionals in 2012 to address the unique needs of the nation’s largest school districts. As a nonprofit 501©3 group, we share best practices for the health and wellness of students. Learn more about Urban School Food Alliance at [www.urbanschoolfoodalliance.org](http://www.urbanschoolfoodalliance.org).