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Pownal

Honorable members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs,
Children are always learning. While it may seem they are not listening, especially when you are trying to instruct them, if you make a mistake they are paying attention. If you make a mistake with a hammer, they are certainly listening and will repeat back your choice words. Some of the most valuable and impactful things we are taught don't happen in the classroom. They happen in places like the cafeteria. It may sound like a small idea to feed our children more local food and less highly processed additives that you can't pronounce and comes from who knows where with who know what effects on developing minds, but it truly is a great idea.

Local food brings the community, the real world and the natural world into our schools. When we eat local, our dollars go further because they are multiplied as they circulate in our local economy. As our farmer neighbor puts food on our table, we support and sustain them so they can put food on their family's table.

Where we get our food matters. Thanks to factory "farms", livestock account for around 14.5 percent of the world's greenhouse gases each year - roughly the same amount as the emissions from all the cars, trucks, airplanes and ships combined in the world.

What we bring to the table matters and can add years and quality to our children's lives, or take it away. Our food choices contribute to us having the most expensive healthcare system in the world. The number one cause of death in the United States is heart disease and the CDC says it costs us \$219 billion dollars each year in healthcare and lost productivity.

These are just some of the reasons I support more local food in our schools, the cost of not doing so is just too great.