

## LEGISLATIVE BILL 396

Approved by the Governor May 25, 2021

Introduced by Brandt, 32; Briese, 41; Cavanaugh, J., 9; DeBoer, 10; Dorn, 30; Geist, 25; Gragert, 40; McCollister, 20; McKinney, 11; Murman, 38; Sanders, 45; Williams, 36; Wishart, 27; Hunt, 8; Brewer, 43; Day, 49; Blood, 3.

A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to schools; and to adopt the Nebraska Farm-to-School Program Act.

Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

Section 1. Sections 1 to 7 of this act shall be known and may be cited as the Nebraska Farm-to-School Program Act.

Sec. 2. For purposes of this act:

(1) Food means an agricultural commodity or product, whether raw or processed, that is produced and marketed for human consumption; and

(2) Program means the Nebraska farm-to-school program as established in section 3 of this act.

Sec. 3. A Nebraska farm-to-school program is established to be administered on a statewide basis by the State Department of Education.

Sec. 4. (1) The program shall provide for the purchase of locally and regionally produced or processed food in order to improve child nutrition and strengthen local and regional farm economies.

(2) The program shall link elementary and secondary public and nonpublic schools in this state with Nebraska farms in a manner that provides schools with fresh and minimally processed food for inclusion in school meals and snacks, encourages children to develop healthy eating habits, and improves the incomes of Nebraska farmers who will enjoy direct access to consumer markets.

(3) The program may include activities that provide students with hands-on learning opportunities, including, but not limited to, farm visits, cooking demonstrations, and school gardening and composting programs, and that integrate nutrition and agricultural education into the school curricula.

Sec. 5. The State Department of Education shall employ a coordinator to administer the program. The duties of such coordinator shall include:

(1) Identifying and promoting the critical ways for local communities to participate in the program and advise communities on needed strategies, plans, and action to administer the program;

(2) Establishing a partnership with public agencies and nonprofit organizations to implement a public engagement campaign and establish a structure to facilitate communication between farmers and schools;

(3) Providing leadership at the state level to encourage schools to develop and improve school nutrition plans using locally or regionally grown or locally or regionally processed food;

(4) Conducting workshops and training sessions and providing technical assistance to school food services, farmers, processors, and distributors regarding the demand for and the availability of Nebraska food products, and assisting persons seeking to participate in the program;

(5) Providing information regarding the program in an electronic format on the web sites for the State Department of Education and the Department of Agriculture; and

(6) Seeking financial or in-kind contributions to support the program.

Sec. 6. The Department of Agriculture and the State Department of Education shall cooperate in administering the program and shall each provide professional consultation and staff support.

Sec. 7. It is the intent of the Legislature to appropriate one hundred thousand dollars from the General Fund to the State Department of Education each fiscal year. Such funds shall be used for purposes of supporting the program, including, but not limited to, salaries, support, maintenance, and miscellaneous purposes.