

State of Arkansas
92nd General Assembly
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A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1615

By: Representatives Bentley, Barker, Beck, Boyd, Brown, Capp, Christiansen, Cloud, C. Cooper, Cozart, Crawford, Deffenbaugh, D. Douglas, Eaves, C. Fite, Gates, G. Hodges, Jean, Jett, L. Johnson, Lundstrum, McCollum, McNair, Penzo, Petty, Richey, Rushing, Slape, B. Smith, S. Smith, Sorvillo, Vaught, Wing
By: Senator G. Stubblefield

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A FARM TO SCHOOL AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM; TO CREATE THE POSITION OF A FARM TO SCHOOL AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM COORDINATOR WITHIN THE ARKANSAS AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO ESTABLISH A FARM TO SCHOOL AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM; AND TO CREATE THE POSITION OF A FARM TO SCHOOL AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM COORDINATOR WITHIN THE ARKANSAS AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 18, is amended to add an additional subchapter to read as follows:

Subchapter 20 – Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program

6-18-2001. Legislative findings.

The General Assembly finds that:

(1) Forty-seven (47) states have established farm to school programs to improve the health of children through the support of the



following three (3) core elements:

(A) School gardens;

(B) Food, nutrition, and agriculture education; and

(C) Procurement of local farm or food products for school meals and snacks in public and private educational institutions, early childhood programs, juvenile detention centers, residential childcare institutions, and other childcare learning facilities;

(2) A successful farm to school and early childhood education program can increase a student's physical activity, participation in school meals, and preference for fresh fruits and vegetables;

(3) A successful farm to school and early childhood education program can improve a student's academic achievement and student behavior;

(4) Other states that have created a full-time farm to school and early childhood education program coordinator position have seen an increase in educational opportunities related to agriculture;

(5) States with a full-time farm to school and early childhood education program coordinator have seen an increase in the procurement of local farm or food products for schools, which encourages a student's consumption of local farm or food products;

(6) Increasing the procurement of local farm or food products for schools has the added benefit of supporting the state's agricultural economy by providing an additional revenue source for local farmers;

(7) Farm to school activities support a nutritious school food environment;

(8) Students who participate in farm to school activities are more likely to be familiar with, have a preference for, and consume more fruits and vegetables at both school and home;

(9) Establishing a strong farm to school and early childhood education program provides support to Healthy Active Arkansas;

(10) Establishing healthy behaviors at an early age may prevent the onset of chronic disease and other health conditions later in life;

(11) The leading causes of death in Arkansas are heart disease, cancer, and stroke, which are illnesses often associated with dietary behaviors; and

(12) Investing in the health of children will help them to achieve greater educational attainment and lead to stronger communities.

6-18-2002. Definition.

As used in this subchapter, "local farm or food products" means food products that are grown in Arkansas or packaged and processed in Arkansas, or both.

6-18-2003. Farm to school and early childhood education program – Full-time coordinator position.

(a) A farm to school and early childhood education program is established within the Arkansas Agriculture Department for the purposes of:

- (1) Improving student health;
- (2) Developing an educated agricultural workforce;
- (3) Enriching the local farm or food products system and supporting the state’s agricultural economy through the support and increase of procurement of local farm or food products for public schools;
- (4) Accelerating garden and farm-based education for students;

and

(5) Expanding the relationships between schools and agricultural communities.

(b)(1)(A) The department shall establish a full-time farm to school and early childhood education program coordinator position.

(B) The farm to school and early childhood education program coordinator shall be the administrative head of the farm to school and early childhood education program.

(2) The farm to school and early childhood education program coordinator shall:

(A) Address the issues of supply, demand, procurement, and consumption of local farm or food products in schools and early childhood programs; and

(B) Take reasonable steps to incorporate more agriculture and nutrition education into schools and early childhood programs.

(c) The farm to school and early childhood education program coordinator shall implement a statewide farm to school and early childhood education program in collaboration with stakeholders, including without limitation:

- (1) The Child Nutrition Unit of the Department of Education;

- (2) The Department of Human Services;
- (3) The Department of Education;
- (4) The University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service;
- (5) The Department of Health; and
- (6) Healthy Active Arkansas.

(d) The farm to school and early childhood education program coordinator shall:

(1) Prepare an annual report, in collaboration with stakeholders, that details the program activities conducted in furtherance of the following three (3) core elements of the farm to school and early childhood education program:

- (A) School gardens;
- (B) Food, nutrition, and agriculture education; and
- (C) Procurement of local farm or food products for school meals and snacks; and

(2) Submit the annual report to the House Committee on Agriculture, Forestry, and Economic Development and to the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Forestry, and Economic Development.

SECTION 2. TEMPORARY LANGUAGE. DO NOT CODIFY. On and after February 15, 2020, the farm to school and early childhood education program coordinator shall submit the annual report as required under § 6-18-2003(d).

APPROVED: 3/18/19