

SENATE BILL NO. 420

BY SENATOR THOMPSON

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AN ACT

To enact R.S. 17:195.1, relative to school nutrition programs; to require the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to develop and implement a farm to school program to promote the use of locally grown and raised agricultural products in school nutrition programs; to provide for the duties and responsibilities of the state Department of Education and the Department of Agriculture and Forestry with respect to the program; and to provide for related matters.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

Section 1. R.S. 17:195.1 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

§195.1. Louisiana Farm to School Program

A. The legislature finds that:

(1) Farm to school programs increase student access to healthy, locally grown fruits, vegetables, and other agricultural products.

(2) A state farm to school program will link Louisiana schools and farmers in order to provide school children with fresh and minimally processed agricultural products for inclusion in school meals and snacks, promote healthy eating habits, and increase the market for locally produced fruits, vegetables, and other agricultural products.

(3) Farm to school programs increase student awareness of the importance of agricultural activities through active learning opportunities such as farm visits, cooking demonstrations, tasting demonstrations, and school gardening and composting programs, and integrate nutrition and agricultural education into the school curriculum.

B.(1) The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture and Forestry, shall develop

1 and implement a farm to school program, to be administered by the state
2 Department of Education, for the purpose of assisting schools and school food
3 service personnel to identify and utilize all available resources to support and
4 increase the use of locally grown or raised agricultural products in school
5 nutrition programs.

6 (2) The Department of Education and the Department of Agriculture
7 and Forestry shall collaboratively:

8 (a) Provide an inventory of farming operations throughout the state by
9 region that links schools and school districts with farmers through the use of the
10 LSU AgCenter's membership in the MarketMaker network.

11 (b) Provide guidance to local schools to develop relationships with local
12 farmers to support requests that specific crops be produced for use in school
13 nutrition programs.

14 (c) Encourage schools and school districts to include local farmers, food
15 processors, and suppliers when procuring food products that fall under the
16 Federal Small Purchase Threshold set by 41 U.S.C. 403(11).

17 (d) Disseminate specific farm to school procurement guidelines for
18 farmers and schools regarding contracting with schools and school districts and
19 school food safety and liability insurance requirements.

20 (e) Disseminate information to schools and school districts regarding the
21 proper equipment required to prepare and process fresh food onsite.

22 (f) Create a plan to integrate classroom and hands-on activities related
23 to agriculture, food, health, and nutrition into the school curricula.

24 (g) Develop a Louisiana Farm to School Handbook to provide guidance
25 and resources to schools and farmers and other producers of agricultural
26 products to promote the use of local and regionally produced foods in school
27 nutrition programs and to develop and implement a successful farm to school
28 program.

29 C. The state Department of Education and the state Department of
30 Agriculture and Forestry shall consult with the Louisiana State University

1 Agricultural Center, the Southern University Agricultural Center, the
2 Louisiana Farm to School Alliance, and any other appropriate resource or
3 stakeholder group in implementing the provisions of this Section.

4 D. Implementation of the provisions of this Section shall be subject to the
5 appropriation of funds by the legislature or the availability of any other federal
6 funding, grants, gifts, or public or private donations which may be used for
7 coordination of resources for the farm to school program.

8 Section 2. This act shall be known and may be cited as the Louisiana Farm to School
9 Program Act.

10 Section 3. This Act shall become effective upon signature by the governor or, if not
11 signed by the governor, upon expiration of the time for bills to become law without signature
12 by the governor, as provided by Article III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If
13 vetoed by the governor and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become
14 effective on the day following such approval.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

APPROVED: _____