

Regular Session, 2014

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 94

BY SENATOR HEITMEIER

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT. Requests the Department of Agriculture and Forestry and the Department of Education to implement a Farm to School Program and to assist schools with local procurement options for fresh fruit, vegetables, meats, and seafood.

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A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Department of Agriculture and Forestry and the Department of Education to cooperatively implement a statewide Farm to School Program that assists schools with local procurement options for fresh fruit, vegetables, meats, and seafood.

WHEREAS, across the country an increasing number of schools and school districts have begun to source more foods locally and to provide complementary educational activities to students that emphasize food, farming, and nutrition; and

WHEREAS, this nationwide movement to enrich children's bodies and minds while supporting local economies is often referred to as the farm to school program; and

WHEREAS, the farm to school program encompasses efforts that bring local or regionally produced foods into school cafeterias; hands-on learning activities such as school gardening, farm visits, and culinary classes; and the integration of food-related education into the regular, standards-based classroom curriculum; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Agriculture supports such efforts through its farm to school program, which includes research, training, technical assistance, and grants; and

WHEREAS, according to the United States Department of Agriculture data, almost

1 four thousand school districts across the nation are participating in farm to school activities
2 and at least forty-six states have passed related legislation; and

3 WHEREAS, farm to school programs have become increasingly popular over the last
4 decade for their ability to increase access to healthy, fresh foods and strengthen local
5 economies; and

6 WHEREAS, stakeholders and policymakers can support a farm to school program
7 by issuing guidelines for farmers and schools, forming farm to school task groups,
8 conducting farm to school program pilots, encouraging schools to give local preference for
9 food purchases, developing farm databases, appropriating funds for farm to school
10 employees, and more; and

11 WHEREAS, farm to school programs require leaders in education and agriculture
12 to work together in order to meet these goals; and

13 WHEREAS, only sixteen school districts in Louisiana have reported participating
14 in farm to school program activities, but even in these schools, only fifteen percent of the
15 money spent on school food was used for local food purchases on items such as fruit, milk,
16 vegetables, seafood, and baked goods; and

17 WHEREAS, Louisiana is blessed with almost thirty thousand farms spanning eight
18 million acres of land; and

19 WHEREAS, in 2012, the National School Lunch Program served over ninety million
20 lunches to Louisiana students; serving fresh locally produced products would be more
21 nutritious for the students, and assist local farmers.

22 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
23 urge and request the Department of Agriculture and Forestry and the Department of
24 Education to cooperatively study and implement a statewide farm to school program that
25 assists schools with local procurement options for fresh fruit, vegetables, meats, and seafood.

26 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in order to provide guidance to the legislature
27 and the State Board of Secondary Education, the Department of Agriculture and Forestry and
28 the Department of Education shall establish a study group consisting of five employees of
29 the Department of Agriculture and Forestry appointed by the commissioner and five
30 employees of the Department of Education appointed by the superintendent.

1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study group shall convene stakeholders to
2 identify barriers and existing resources for a statewide farm to school program, including the
3 following:

- 4 1. Conduct a thorough inventory of small and large farmers and crops across the
5 state.
- 6 2. Develop specific farm to school standards and guidelines for farmers and
7 schools.
- 8 3. Develop a plan to provide discounts to small farmers for insurance
9 requirements that will enable them to participate in a farm to school program.
- 10 4. Develop a plan to increase the number of processing sites that prepare and
11 package food products.
- 12 5. Develop a plan to ensure that schools have proper equipment to prepare food
13 onsite.

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this study group shall report its findings to the
15 Legislature and the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education no later than
16 February 1, 2015.

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to
18 commissioner of the Department of Agriculture and Forestry, the state Superintendent of
19 Education, and the president of the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Alan Miller.

DIGEST

Heitmeier

SCR No. 94

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Establishes a study group composed of five employees of the Dept. of Agriculture and Forestry appointed by the commissioner and five employees of the Dept. of Education appointed by the superintendent.

Requires the study group to report its findings to the legislature and BESE no later than February 1, 2015.