



General Assembly

January Session, 2023

Raised Bill No. 6842

LCO No. 5042



Referred to Committee on EDUCATION

Introduced by:
(ED)

AN ACT CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A LOCAL FOOD FOR SCHOOLS INCENTIVE PROGRAM AND EXPANSION OF THE CT GROWN FOR CT KIDS GRANT PROGRAM.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

- 1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2023*) (a) As used in this section:
- 2 (1) "Local farm" means a farm, farmers' cooperative, food hub or
3 wholesale distributor located in Connecticut.
- 4 (2) "Regional farm" means a farm, farmers' cooperative, food hub or
5 wholesale distributor located in New York, Massachusetts, Rhode
6 Island, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine.
- 7 (3) "Locally sourced food" means food grown or produced at, or sold
8 by, a local farm, and includes, but is not limited to, value-added dairy,
9 fish, pork, beef, poultry, eggs, fruits, vegetables and minimally
10 processed foods.
- 11 (4) "Regionally sourced food" means food grown or produced at, or
12 sold by, a regional farm, and includes, but is not limited to, value-added

13 dairy, fish, pork, beef, poultry, eggs, fruits, vegetables and minimally
14 processed foods.

15 (5) "Eligible board of education" means a local or regional board of
16 education that is participating in the National School Lunch Program.

17 (6) "Eligible meal program" means a meal program provided by an
18 eligible board of education to its students or a meal provided as part of
19 such board's participation in the National School Lunch Program,
20 School Breakfast Program, Seamless Summer Option, After School
21 Snack Program, Summer Food Service Program or the At-Risk
22 Afterschool Meals component of the Child and Adult Care Food
23 Program administered by the United States Department of Agriculture.

24 (b) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, and each fiscal year
25 thereafter, the Department of Education, in consultation with the
26 Department of Agriculture, shall administer the Local Food for Schools
27 Incentive Program. Such program shall provide reimbursement
28 payments to eligible boards of education for the purchase of locally
29 sourced food and regionally sourced food that may be used as part of
30 such board's participation in an eligible meal program. An eligible
31 board of education shall be entitled to receive reimbursement payments
32 in accordance with the guidelines developed pursuant to subsection (e)
33 of this section and in an amount equal to (1) one-half of such board's
34 expenditures for locally sourced foods, and (2) one-third of such board's
35 expenditures for regionally sourced foods.

36 (c) (1) The department shall receive requests from eligible boards of
37 education for reimbursement payments under the program in a manner
38 similar to how the department receives applications under section 10-
39 215b of the general statutes.

40 (2) Each eligible board of education shall (A) maintain a record of
41 such board's expenditures for all locally sourced food and regionally
42 sourced food, as well as documentation confirming the place of origin
43 of such food, as prescribed by the department, and (B) submit, upon
44 request of the department, such records and documentation to the

45 department for review.

46 (d) Any locally sourced food or regionally sourced food for which an
47 eligible board of education seeks reimbursement payments under this
48 section, shall comply with the nutrition standards established by the
49 department pursuant to section 10-215e of the general statutes.

50 (e) The department shall develop guidelines for the implementation
51 of the program. Such guidelines shall (1) establish a maximum
52 reimbursement amount based on total student enrollment for each
53 eligible board of education, (2) assist eligible boards of education in
54 participating in the program, and (3) promote geographic, social,
55 economic and racial equity, which may include a preference for socially
56 disadvantaged farmers, as defined in 7 USC 2279(a), as amended from
57 time to time, or small farm businesses.

58 (f) The department shall develop a survey to be distributed annually
59 to any eligible board of education that receives reimbursement
60 payments under this section. Such survey shall be designed to collect
61 information to assist the department in implementing and improving
62 the program.

63 (g) In addition to the reimbursement payments otherwise provided
64 pursuant to this section, the department may, within available
65 appropriations, provide supplemental grants to eligible boards of
66 education. Such supplemental grant funds may be expended for the
67 purpose of purchasing kitchen equipment, engaging with school
68 nutrition or farm-to-school consultants or training relating to the
69 processing, preparation and serving of locally sourced food and
70 regionally sourced food. In awarding supplemental grants under this
71 subsection, the department shall give priority to an eligible board of
72 education for a town designated as an alliance district pursuant to
73 section 10-262u of the general statutes.

74 (h) The department may accept gifts, grants and donations, including
75 in-kind donations, for the administration of the Local Food for Schools
76 Incentive Program and to implement the provisions of this section.

77 (i) Any unexpended funds appropriated for purposes of this section
78 shall not lapse at the end of the fiscal year but shall be available for
79 expenditure during the next fiscal year.

80 (j) Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, for the fiscal year
81 ending June 30, 2024, and each fiscal year thereafter, the amount of
82 reimbursement payments payable to eligible boards of education shall
83 be reduced proportionately if the total of such reimbursement payments
84 in such year exceeds the amount appropriated for such reimbursement
85 payments for such year.

86 (k) Not later than January 1, 2024, and annually thereafter, the
87 department shall submit a report on the Local Food for Schools
88 Incentive Program to the joint standing committee of the General
89 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education, in
90 accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.
91 Such report shall include, but need not be limited to, an accounting of
92 the funds appropriated and received by the department for the
93 program, descriptions of the reimbursement payments made under the
94 program, and an evaluation of the program.

95 Sec. 2. (*Effective July 1, 2023*) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024,
96 the Department of Education shall hire one full-time employee to
97 administer the Local Food for Schools Incentive Program described in
98 section 1 of this act. Such employee shall be responsible for (1)
99 identifying and promoting the critical components of individual farm-
100 to-school programs and advising the Commissioner of Education on
101 strategies to implement the program, (2) supporting partnerships with
102 public and nonprofit organizations to establish a structure to facilitate
103 communication between farmers and school district officials, (3)
104 conducting workshops, training sessions and technical assistance to
105 school food service directors, school personnel, farmers, produce
106 distributors and processors regarding the demand for and availability
107 of Connecticut farm products, and (4) identifying grants, donations and
108 other funding sources to assist in funding the program.

109 Sec. 3. (*Effective July 1, 2023*) The sum of two hundred fifty thousand
110 dollars is appropriated to the Department of Education from the
111 General Fund, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, for (1) the
112 development of the Local Food for Schools Incentive Program described
113 in section 1 of this act, (2) the hiring of the full-time employee described
114 in section 2 of this act, and (3) entering into contracts for program
115 evaluation and the provision of technical assistance to eligible boards of
116 education and local farms, as such terms are defined in section 1 of this
117 act.

118 Sec. 4. (*Effective July 1, 2024*) The sum of one million five hundred
119 dollars is appropriated to the Department of Education from the
120 General Fund, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, for the
121 administration of the Local Food for Schools Incentive Program
122 described in section 1 of this act, provided two hundred fifty thousand
123 dollars of such appropriated funds shall be used for supplemental
124 grants described in subsection (g) of section 1 of this act.

125 Sec. 5. (*Effective July 1, 2023*) The sum of one million dollars is
126 appropriated to the Department of Agriculture from the General Fund,
127 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, for administration of the CT
128 Grown for CT Kids Grant Program described in section 10-215l of the
129 general statutes.

130 Sec. 6. (*Effective July 1, 2024*) The sum of one million dollars is
131 appropriated to the Department of Agriculture from the General Fund,
132 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, for administration of the CT
133 Grown for CT Kids Grant Program described in section 10-215l of the
134 general statutes.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2023</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2023</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2023</i>	New section
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2024</i>	New section

Sec. 5	<i>July 1, 2023</i>	New section
Sec. 6	<i>July 1, 2024</i>	New section

Statement of Purpose:

To establish the Local Food for Schools Incentive Grant Program and to increase funding to the CT Grown for CT Kids Grant Program.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]