

1 H.827

2 Introduced by Representatives Ram of Burlington, Clarkson of Woodstock,
3 Donovan of Burlington, Grad of Moretown, and Masland of
4 Thetford

5 Referred to Committee on

6 Date:

7 Subject: Agriculture; education; Farm to School; universal meals pilot project

8 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to require the
9 Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets to establish as part of the
10 Farm-to-School Program a pilot project to assist eligible schools in operating a
11 universal meals program while also increasing school awareness of and
12 purchasing from local food producers.

13 An act relating to the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets establishing
14 a universal meals pilot project under the Farm-to-School Program

15 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

16 Sec. 1. UNIVERSAL MEALS PILOT PROJECT

17 (a) Establishment of program. The Secretary of Agriculture, Food and
18 Markets, in consultation with Secretary of Education, shall establish as an
19 addition to the Farm-to-School Program under 6 V.S.A. chapter 211
20 a Universal Meals Pilot Project (Project) to assist eligible schools in operating

1 a universal meals program while also increasing school awareness of and
2 purchasing from local food producers.

3 (b) Application. The Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets shall
4 accept applications from schools not currently providing universal breakfast
5 and lunch for participation in the Project. An application for participation in
6 the Project shall:

7 (1) identify the school or school district applying for participation,
8 including the name and contact information of a person responsible for the
9 school's application;

10 (2) summarize student participation in and school funding of the
11 school's existing lunch program;

12 (3) summarize the need for the school to participate in the Project;

13 (4) specify the number of students in the school;

14 (5) specify the number of students who are eligible for participation in
15 the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program under
16 7 C.F.R. parts 210 and 220;

17 (6) specify the number of students in the school who have been
18 identified as approved for free meals under the direct certification requirements
19 of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, codified in 42 U.S.C. § 1759a;

20 (7) submit data from the 2014 to 2015 and 2015 to 2016 school years
21 regarding the amount of local food purchased by the school, student test

1 scores, the number of nurse visits by children, the number of behavioral
2 referrals, and any other information that the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and
3 Markets determines is relevant to measuring success of the Project, as
4 specified in the application; and

5 (8) submit an estimate of the costs of using the Community Eligibility
6 Provision, derived from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and
7 Nutrition Service CEP Estimator.

8 (c) Eligibility for program. In order to qualify for participation in the
9 Project, a school shall:

10 (1) Have between 40 and 45 percent of students identified as approved
11 for free meals under the direct certification requirements of the Healthy
12 Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 on April 1 of the school year prior to intended
13 participation in the Project. Identified student percentage shall be calculated
14 according to guidance provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

15 (2) Submit a letter from the school district or municipality in which the
16 school is located committing the school district or municipality to paying
17 50 percent of the cost of providing universal meals to students in the school
18 during the duration of school participation in the Project.

19 (d) Award. The Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets shall approve
20 the participation of up to four schools in the Project. The Secretary shall select
21 schools for participation in the Project according to the following priorities:

1 (1) First priority shall be to those schools with the highest identified
2 student percentage within the 40 to 45 percent identified student percentage
3 (ISP) eligibility range. If more than one school has the same ISP, the school
4 with the higher number of students enrolled in free and reduced-price school
5 meals shall receive priority consideration for participation in the pilot.

6 (2) Second priority shall be to those schools who demonstrate, by a
7 method other than ISP or National School Lunch Program and School
8 Breakfast Program eligibility, a need to address child nutrition within the
9 school.

10 (e) State match. A school approved for participation in the Project shall
11 receive from the State an award sufficient to pay for 50 percent of the cost to
12 the school of providing universal meals to all students for two years.

13 (f) Conditions of participation. A school participating in the Project shall:

14 (1) develop a team consisting of, at the minimum, the school
15 superintendent, the school business manager, the school principal, the school
16 food service director or management, the school nurse, and one teacher, who
17 shall receive information or training from experts appointed by the Secretary of
18 Agriculture, Food and Markets and the Secretary of Education regarding
19 school nutrition programs and the Farm-to-School Program;

20 (2) commit to increasing by 10 percent the amount of food purchased
21 from local food producers for the school's nutrition program;

1 (3) collect data annually regarding the amount of local food purchased
2 by the school, student test scores during participation in the Project, the
3 number of nurse visits by children during participation in the Project, the
4 number of behavior referrals of children during participation in the Project, and
5 any other information that the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets
6 requires in the application as relevant to measuring success of the Project; and

7 (4) at the conclusion of the first year of the Project, commit to
8 submitting a sustainability plan to the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and
9 Markets detailing the leadership team's plans to continue providing universal
10 school meals after the end of the Project.

11 (g) Definition. As used in this section, "local food" means that the goods
12 being produced or purchased originated within Vermont or 30 miles of the
13 border of the State of Vermont.

14 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

15 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2016.