ASSEMBLY, No. 5260

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JANUARY 12, 2021

Sponsored by:
Assemblyman RONALD S. DANCER
District 12 (Burlington, Middlesex, Monmouth and Ocean)
Assemblywoman AURA K. DUNN
District 25 (Morris and Somerset)

SYNOPSIS

Requires culinary arts courses in public and nonpublic schools to provide instruction on preparation of meals incorporating Jersey Fresh products.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/9/2021)

AN ACT concerning the use of Jersey Fresh products for culinary arts courses and supplementing chapter 6 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

a. Agriculture is New Jersey's third largest industry and generates over $1 billion in revenue annually.

b. New Jersey is one of the top producers of many popular fruits and vegetables enjoyed by Americans nationwide such as blueberries, cranberries, peaches, tomatoes, bell peppers, eggplant, cucumbers, apples, spinach, squash, and asparagus.

c. New Jersey continues to have a thriving agricultural industry thanks in part to the creation of the Jersey Fresh program.

d. Out of concern with the alarming rate of farm closures across the State, the Jersey Fresh program was created by the State Department of Agriculture to market and promote New Jersey produce and implement quality controls.

e. Farmers who wish to use the Jersey Fresh logo on their products must undergo a registration, licensing, and inspection process to ensure produce complies with United States Department of Agriculture guidelines.

f. Over time, the Jersey Fresh label has become synonymous with fresh, high-quality, and locally-grown produce.

g. Produce sourced from local farmers has been shown to taste better, provide more essential nutrients, support the local economy, reduce air pollution, and preserve open space.

h. To help improve student nutrition and instill healthy eating habits, the State Department of Agriculture sponsors the Jersey Fresh Farm to School program which works to incorporate over 100 different types of Jersey Fresh products into school lunches by bringing together schools and farmers to procure food for the student population.

i The program also makes resources available for educators on how food is grown, the value of eating fruits and vegetables, and promoting a greater appreciation for the environment.

j. Many schools across the State offer culinary arts courses which provide in-depth instruction on the fundamentals of food safety and sanitation, principles of good nutrition, and food preparation practices.

k. Participation in a culinary arts course not only teaches students important life skills, it also allows them to explore potential careers in the food service industry.

l. Students enrolled in these courses, regardless of whether they decide to pursue a career in the culinary arts after graduation, will greatly benefit from the opportunity to acquire a better

understanding of how Jersey Fresh products can be incorporated into a meal.

2. a. Each school district or nonpublic school offering a culinary arts course shall provide the students enrolled in the course with in-person instruction on the preparation of at least one meal made entirely with Jersey Fresh products each school year. If a school district or nonpublic school has suspended in-person instruction due to a public health emergency, pursuant to the "Emergency Health Powers Act," P.L.2005, c.222 (C.26:13-1 et seq.), or a state of emergency, pursuant to P.L.1942, c.251 (C.App.A.9-33 et seq.), as declared by the Governor, the school district or nonpublic school may provide for remote instruction on the preparation of at least one meal made entirely with Jersey Fresh products.

b. The Department of Education shall establish guidelines for school districts and nonpublic schools to use in developing the culinary arts instruction required pursuant to subsection a. of this section.

3. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply to the first full school year after the effective date of this act, except that the Department of Education may take such anticipatory action in advance thereof as may be deemed necessary for the timely implementation of this act.

STATEMENT

This bill requires both public and nonpublic schools offering culinary arts courses to provide in-person instruction to the students enrolled in those courses on the preparation of at least one meal made entirely with Jersey Fresh products each school year. If a school district or nonpublic school has suspended in-person instruction, due to a public health emergency or state of emergency declared by the Governor, the school may provide for remote instruction on how to plan a meal made entirely with Jersey Fresh products. Under the bill, the Department of Education will establish guidelines for schools to use in developing the instruction on preparing a meal made entirely with Jersey Fresh products.

Since its creation in 1984, the Jersey Fresh program has become synonymous with fresh, high-quality, locally grown produce. Studies have shown that locally grown produce tastes better, provides more essential nutrients, supports the local economy, reduces air pollution, and preserves open space. To improve student nutrition and instill health eating habits, the Jersey Fresh Farm to School program works to incorporate over 100 different types of Jersey Fresh products into school lunches while providing

resources for educators on how food is grown, the value of eating fruits and vegetables, and promoting a greater appreciation for the environment.

Many schools across the State offer their students culinary arts courses which provide in-depth instruction on the fundamentals of food safety and sanitation, principles of good nutrition, and food preparation practices. Participation in a culinary arts course not only teaches students important life skills, it also allows them to explore potential careers in the food service industry. Students enrolled in these courses, regardless of whether they decide to pursue a career in the culinary arts after graduation, have the potential to greatly benefit from the opportunity to acquire a better understanding of how Jersey Fresh products can be incorporated into a meal.