

SENATE, No. 1151

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 3, 2020

Sponsored by:

Senator M. TERESA RUIZ

District 29 (Essex)

SYNOPSIS

Directs Department of Agriculture to establish "NJ Whole Food" pilot program; appropriates \$1,000,000.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **AN ACT** concerning the use of whole food in school breakfast and
2 lunch and making an appropriation.

3

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

6

7 1. a. The Department of Agriculture shall establish a pilot
8 program to increase the consumption of whole foods in school
9 cafeterias by providing school districts with breakfast and lunch
10 prepared using whole food, to be known as the "NJ Whole Food"
11 program. The department shall operate the pilot program for two
12 full consecutive school years.

13 b. In establishing the pilot program pursuant to this section, the
14 department shall:

15 (1) identify no fewer than three school districts or charter
16 schools in the State that the department considers to be appropriate
17 for the pilot program;

18 (2) solicit appropriate vendors to participate in the program;

19 (3) hire additional staff as necessary to prepare breakfast and
20 lunch using whole food;

21 (4) purchase any equipment necessary for the preparation of
22 breakfast and lunch; and

23 (5) establish methods for measuring the health, learning, fiscal,
24 and other benefits to students and school districts of using whole
25 food in school breakfasts and lunches.

26 c. The department may enter into a contract with a caterer,
27 distributor, or other appropriate entity in order to implement the
28 provisions of the program.

29 d. No later than three years after the effective date of this act,
30 the department shall submit a written report to the Legislature
31 pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1)
32 summarizing the program established pursuant to this section,
33 providing information on whether the program provided health and
34 learning benefits to students and cost-savings to school districts,
35 and providing recommendations for legislative action to increase
36 the consumption of whole food in school cafeterias, including
37 whether or not to make the program permanent.

38 e. For the purposes of this section, "whole food" means food
39 that has been minimally processed or refined and is free from added
40 sugar, additives, or other artificial substances.

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42 2. There is appropriated to the Department of Agriculture the
43 sum of \$1,000,000 from the General Fund in order to implement the
44 provisions of this act.

45

46 3. This act shall take effect immediately, and shall expire upon
47 the submittal by the department of the report required pursuant to
48 subsection d. of section 1 of this act.

STATEMENT

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3 This bill requires the Department of Agriculture to establish the
4 "NJ Whole Food" program, a two-year pilot program to increase the
5 consumption of whole foods in school cafeterias. The bill
6 appropriates \$1,000,000 for this purpose.

7 Under the bill, the department would identify no fewer than three
8 school districts or charter schools in the State that the department
9 considers to be appropriate for the pilot program. The department
10 would also solicit appropriate vendors to participate in the program,
11 hire additional staff as necessary to prepare school meals, and
12 purchase any equipment necessary for the preparation of school
13 meals. The department would be required to establish methods for
14 measuring the health, learning, fiscal, and other benefits to students
15 and school districts of using whole food in school breakfasts and
16 lunches. The department may enter into a contract with a caterer,
17 distributor, or other appropriate entity in order to implement the
18 program.

19 No later than three years after the effective date of this act, the
20 department would submit a report to the Legislature on the "NJ
21 Whole Food" program, including recommendations for future
22 legislation. The program will expire upon submission of the report.