

1 State of Arkansas  
2 92nd General Assembly  
3 Regular Session, 2019  
4

# A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1615

5 By: Representatives Bentley, Barker, Beck, Boyd, Brown, Capp, Christiansen, Cloud, C. Cooper, Cozart,  
6 Crawford, Deffenbaugh, D. Douglas, Eaves, C. Fite, Gates, G. Hodges, Jean, Jett, L. Johnson, Lundstrum,  
7 McCollum, McNair, Penzo, Petty, Richey, Rushing, Slape, B. Smith, S. Smith, Sorvillo, Vaught, Wing  
8 By: Senator G. Stubblefield  
9

## For An Act To Be Entitled

11 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A FARM TO SCHOOL AND EARLY  
12 CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM; TO CREATE THE POSITION  
13 OF A FARM TO SCHOOL AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION  
14 PROGRAM COORDINATOR WITHIN THE ARKANSAS AGRICULTURE  
15 DEPARTMENT; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.  
16  
17

## Subtitle

19 TO ESTABLISH A FARM TO SCHOOL AND EARLY  
20 CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM; AND TO  
21 CREATE THE POSITION OF A FARM TO SCHOOL  
22 AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM  
23 COORDINATOR WITHIN THE ARKANSAS  
24 AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT.  
25  
26

27 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:  
28

29 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 18, is amended to add an  
30 additional subchapter to read as follows:

31 Subchapter 20 – Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program  
32

33 6-18-2001. Legislative findings.

34 The General Assembly finds that:

35 (1) Forty-seven (47) states have established farm to school  
36 programs to improve the health of children through the support of the



1 following three (3) core elements:

2 (A) School gardens;

3 (B) Food, nutrition, and agriculture education; and

4 (C) Procurement of local farm or food products for school  
5 meals and snacks in public and private educational institutions, early  
6 childhood programs, juvenile detention centers, residential childcare  
7 institutions, and other childcare learning facilities;

8 (2) A successful farm to school and early childhood education  
9 program can increase a student's physical activity, participation in school  
10 meals, and preference for fresh fruits and vegetables;

11 (3) A successful farm to school and early childhood education  
12 program can improve a student's academic achievement and student behavior;

13 (4) Other states that have created a full-time farm to school  
14 and early childhood education program coordinator position have seen an  
15 increase in educational opportunities related to agriculture;

16 (5) States with a full-time farm to school and early childhood  
17 education program coordinator have seen an increase in the procurement of  
18 local farm or food products for schools, which encourages a student's  
19 consumption of local farm or food products;

20 (6) Increasing the procurement of local farm or food products  
21 for schools has the added benefit of supporting the state's agricultural  
22 economy by providing an additional revenue source for local farmers;

23 (7) Farm to school activities support a nutritious school food  
24 environment;

25 (8) Students who participate in farm to school activities are  
26 more likely to be familiar with, have a preference for, and consume more  
27 fruits and vegetables at both school and home;

28 (9) Establishing a strong farm to school and early childhood  
29 education program provides support to Healthy Active Arkansas;

30 (10) Establishing healthy behaviors at an early age may prevent  
31 the onset of chronic disease and other health conditions later in life;

32 (11) The leading causes of death in Arkansas are heart disease,  
33 cancer, and stroke, which are illnesses often associated with dietary  
34 behaviors; and

35 (12) Investing in the health of children will help them to  
36 achieve greater educational attainment and lead to stronger communities.

1  
2 6-18-2002. Definition.

3 As used in this subchapter, "local farm or food products" means food  
4 products that are grown in Arkansas or packaged and processed in Arkansas, or  
5 both.

6  
7 6-18-2003. Farm to school and early childhood education program -  
8 Full-time coordinator position.

9 (a) A farm to school and early childhood education program is  
10 established within the Arkansas Agriculture Department for the purposes of:

11 (1) Improving student health;

12 (2) Developing an educated agricultural workforce;

13 (3) Enriching the local farm or food products system and  
14 supporting the state's agricultural economy through the support and increase  
15 of procurement of local farm or food products for public schools;

16 (4) Accelerating garden and farm-based education for students;

17 and

18 (5) Expanding the relationships between schools and agricultural  
19 communities.

20 (b)(1)(A) The department shall establish a full-time farm to school  
21 and early childhood education program coordinator position.

22 (B) The farm to school and early childhood education  
23 program coordinator shall be the administrative head of the farm to school  
24 and early childhood education program.

25 (2) The farm to school and early childhood education program  
26 coordinator shall:

27 (A) Address the issues of supply, demand, procurement, and  
28 consumption of local farm or food products in schools and early childhood  
29 programs; and

30 (B) Take reasonable steps to incorporate more agriculture  
31 and nutrition education into schools and early childhood programs.

32 (c) The farm to school and early childhood education program  
33 coordinator shall implement a statewide farm to school and early childhood  
34 education program in collaboration with stakeholders, including without  
35 limitation:

36 (1) The Child Nutrition Unit of the Department of Education;

- (2) The Department of Human Services;
- (3) The Department of Education;
- (4) The University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service;
- (5) The Department of Health; and
- (6) Healthy Active Arkansas.

(d) The farm to school and early childhood education program coordinator shall:

(1) Prepare an annual report, in collaboration with stakeholders, that details the program activities conducted in furtherance of the following three (3) core elements of the farm to school and early childhood education program:

- (A) School gardens;
- (B) Food, nutrition, and agriculture education; and
- (C) Procurement of local farm or food products for school meals and snacks; and

(2) Submit the annual report to the House Committee on Agriculture, Forestry, and Economic Development and to the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Forestry, and Economic Development.

SECTION 2. TEMPORARY LANGUAGE. DO NOT CODIFY. On and after February 15, 2020, the farm to school and early childhood education program coordinator shall submit the annual report as required under § 6-18-2003(d).

**APPROVED: 3/18/19**