

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1421

To amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to establish the Food and Nutrition Education in Schools Pilot Program, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 28, 2021

Mr. BOOKER (for himself and Mr. CORNYN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

A BILL

To amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to establish the Food and Nutrition Education in Schools Pilot Program, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Food and Nutrition
5 Education in Schools Act of 2021”.

1 **SEC. 2. FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS**
2 **PILOT PROGRAM.**

3 Section 18 of the Richard B. Russell National School
4 Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1769) is amended by adding at the
5 end the following:

6 “(1) **FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS**
7 **PILOT PROGRAM.**—

8 “(1) **PURPOSE.**—The purpose of this subsection
9 is to provide local educational agencies with per-
10 sonnel dedicated to implementing integrated, hands-
11 on food and nutrition education in schools with the
12 goal of increasing acceptance and consumption of
13 healthy, high-quality meals and snacks by students.

14 “(2) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—Not later than 180
15 days after the date of enactment of this subsection,
16 the Secretary shall establish a pilot program, to be
17 known as the ‘Food and Nutrition Education in
18 Schools Pilot Program’ (referred to in this sub-
19 section as the ‘pilot program’), under which the Sec-
20 retary shall award grants to local educational agen-
21 cies for—

22 “(A) projects that hire qualified, full-time
23 food and nutrition educators to carry out pro-
24 grams in schools that have the goal of improv-
25 ing student health and nutrition; and

1 “(B) projects that fund school gardens or
2 other evidence-based interventions relating to
3 student health and nutrition, aligned with the
4 latest school nutrition standards, to create
5 hands-on learning opportunities for students.

6 “(3) JOINT PARTNERSHIPS.—The Secretary
7 shall encourage, to the maximum extent practicable,
8 joint partnership projects under the pilot program
9 among—

10 “(A) local educational agencies;

11 “(B) nonprofit organizations, including
12 out-of-school-time youth development providers;

13 “(C) postsecondary institutions that offer
14 programs on nutrition, food preparation, or ag-
15 ricultural science;

16 “(D) food-service businesses (such as local
17 farms, restaurants, and food distributors);

18 “(E) beginning farmers and ranchers (as
19 defined in section 2501(a) of the Food, Agri-
20 culture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990
21 (7 U.S.C. 2279(a)));

22 “(F) veteran farmers and ranchers (as de-
23 fined in that section);

24 “(G) socially disadvantaged farmers or
25 ranchers (as defined in section 355(e) of the

1 Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act
2 (7 U.S.C. 2003(e)); and

3 “(H) State and local government agencies.

4 “(4) COORDINATION.—In establishing the pilot
5 program, the Secretary shall consult and ensure co-
6 ordination with the heads of other appropriate Fed-
7 eral agencies and programs that deliver nutrition
8 education.

9 “(5) PROJECT PROPOSALS.—

10 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall
11 annually solicit from local educational agencies
12 the submission of project proposals for grants
13 under the pilot program.

14 “(B) REQUIRED ELEMENTS FOR PROJECT
15 PROPOSAL.—A project proposal submitted
16 under subparagraph (A) shall include—

17 “(i) a statement of the purposes of
18 the project;

19 “(ii) a description of—

20 “(I) the entity or individual with
21 overall responsibility for the project;

22 “(II) the qualifications of that
23 entity or individual;

24 “(III) community stakeholder en-
25 gagement for the project;

1 “(IV) the logistics of the project;

2 and

3 “(V) the methods to be used to

4 evaluate student learning, such as

5 through a project, presentation, or

6 other form of assessment;

7 “(iii) a proposed budget for the funds

8 and time required to carry out the project;

9 “(iv) information regarding the source

10 and amount of any matching funding avail-

11 able for the project;

12 “(v) an implementation plan, includ-

13 ing efforts by the school food authority as-

14 sociated with the local educational agency

15 to integrate activities carried out under the

16 project with other efforts by schools to pro-

17 mote student health and nutrition;

18 “(vi) information that demonstrates

19 the clear potential of the project to con-

20 tribute to implementing integrated, hands-

21 on food and nutrition education in schools,

22 aligned with the latest school nutrition

23 standards, with the goal of increasing ac-

24 ceptance and consumption of healthy, high-

25 quality meals and snacks;

1 “(vii) a description of a mechanism
 2 that will be used to broadly share project
 3 results and implementation strategies; and

4 “(viii) any other information that the
 5 Secretary considers necessary.

6 “(C) CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL.—The Sec-
 7 retary may award a grant for a project proposal
 8 submitted under subparagraph (A) if the
 9 project—

10 “(i) incorporates evidence-based prac-
 11 tices proven to increase healthy food con-
 12 sumption by students;

13 “(ii) includes hands-on, experiential
 14 learning;

15 “(iii) implements school gardens, taste
 16 tests, student engagement, or other farm-
 17 to-school practices;

18 “(iv) demonstrates the commitment of
 19 the local educational agency—

20 “(I) to improving the nutritional
 21 value of school meals;

22 “(II) to carrying out innovative
 23 programs that improve the health and
 24 wellness of schoolchildren, such as
 25 farm-to-school programs; and

1 “(III) to accounting for the cul-
 2 ture, input, and needs of the commu-
 3 nity;

4 “(v) provides for project oversight by
 5 a qualified nutrition professional; and

6 “(vi) meets any other requirement es-
 7 tablished by the Secretary.

8 “(D) PRIORITY.—To the maximum extent
 9 practicable, in awarding grants under the pilot
 10 program, the Secretary shall give priority to
 11 projects that—

12 “(i) serve schools or districts—

13 “(I) in which not less than 40
 14 percent of students qualify for free or
 15 reduced-price meals under this Act or
 16 the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42
 17 U.S.C. 1771 et seq.); or

18 “(II) that include neighborhoods
 19 with high rates of childhood obesity or
 20 other diet-related diseases;

21 “(ii) provide programming in summer
 22 months; and

23 “(iii) are joint partnership projects as
 24 described in paragraph (3).

25 “(6) ADMINISTRATION.—

“(A) DIVERSITY.—In awarding grants under the pilot program, the Secretary shall ensure that projects are located in diverse demographic, geographic, rural, urban, and suburban settings.

“(B) INDIAN TRIBES.—The Secretary shall ensure that not fewer than 1 project receiving a grant under the pilot program—

“(i) is located on an Indian reservation; or

“(ii) serves a school in which the majority of the students are members of an Indian tribe.

“(7) REPORTS.—

“(A) REPORTS TO SECRETARY.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—A local educational agency that receives a grant under the pilot program shall periodically submit to the Secretary a report that includes any information that the Secretary determines is necessary to evaluate the progress and success of the project, including evidence of student learning under the project, to ensure positive results, assess problems, and foster improvements.

1 “(ii) AVAILABILITY TO THE PUBLIC.—
 2 Reports under clause (i), and any other
 3 documents of the local educational agency
 4 relating to a project carried out using a
 5 grant awarded under the pilot program,
 6 shall be made available electronically to the
 7 public in a timely manner.

8 “(B) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—Not later
 9 than 5 years after the date of enactment of this
 10 subsection, and annually thereafter, the Sec-
 11 retary shall submit to Congress a report that
 12 includes—

13 “(i) a description of the results and
 14 effectiveness of each project carried out
 15 under the pilot program;

16 “(ii) an examination of the impact of
 17 each project on—

18 “(I) student diet and dietary
 19 practices;

20 “(II) student performance and
 21 behavior;

22 “(III) food consumption;

23 “(IV) changes in cafeterias and
 24 the school food environment;

1 “(V) school meal participation by
2 students; and

3 “(VI) other indicators as deter-
4 mined by the Secretary;

5 “(iii) demographic data on the schools
6 and communities served by the pilot pro-
7 gram;

8 “(iv) a summary of the activities con-
9 ducted by each local educational agency
10 after receiving a grant under the pilot pro-
11 gram and the number of children served by
12 that local educational agency; and

13 “(v) recommendations on how the
14 pilot program may be improved and wheth-
15 er funding for the pilot program should be
16 continued.

17 “(8) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—
18 There is authorized to be appropriated to the Sec-
19 retary to carry out this subsection \$10,000,000 for
20 each of fiscal years 2021 through 2025.”.

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