

JAN 15 2025

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO SCHOOL MEALS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that setting a target
2 goal of thirty per cent of food served in public schools to
3 consist of locally sourced products, as established pursuant to
4 Act 175, Session Laws of Hawaii 2021, is of great benefit for
5 the health of Hawaii's students.

6 The legislature further finds that the Aina Pono program
7 has been considered a success, particularly in the Mililani and
8 Kohala school districts, with evidence showing increased student
9 meal participation, reduced food waste, cost savings, and a
10 significant rise in locally sourced food served in school
11 cafeterias. The program is seen as a positive step toward
12 educating students about fresh, local food options while
13 supporting local farmers.

14 The legislature further finds that diversifying school meal
15 offerings to include more fresh and minimally processed options
16 can enhance student health outcomes and provide an opportunity
17 to support local agriculture.



1 The legislature additionally finds that a plant-based diet
2 has been shown to reduce the chance of developing diabetes,
3 cardiovascular disease, and cancers, among other things.
4 Offering a variety of diets, including plant-based meals, can
5 also greatly increase demand for local greens and promote local
6 farming jobs and agriculture. Schools around the United States
7 have increased their offering of plant-based school lunches with
8 New York City offering daily plant-based meal options and
9 California's twenty-five largest school districts providing
10 vegan options on more than half of middle and high school menus.
11 Providing plant-based meals to students can promote not only a
12 healthy lifestyle for the State's youth but encourage students
13 to make environmentally conscious personal decisions.

14 The purpose of this Act is to:

15 (1) Require the department of education to authorize and
16 facilitate complex areas or individual department
17 schools to form their own farm to school meal programs
18 through partnerships to meet the local farm to school
19 meal goal of thirty per cent of food served in the
20 school to consist of locally sourced products by 2030;
21 and



1 (2) Authorize the department of education to establish a
2 plant-based meal program to provide a plant-based meal
3 as an option under the school meals program.

4 SECTION 2. Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
5 amended by adding a new section to part II, subpart C, to be
6 appropriately designated and to read as follows:

7 "§302A- Farm to school meals; complex areas; school
8 plans. (a) The department shall authorize and facilitate
9 complex areas or individual department schools to form their own
10 farm to school meal programs through partnerships with nonprofit
11 organizations or private entities in order for the school to
12 reach the local farm to school meal goal of thirty per cent of
13 food served in the school to consist of locally sourced products
14 by 2030, pursuant to section 302A-405.6.

15 (b) The department shall collaborate with the complex
16 areas or individual department schools and the farm to school
17 providers to ensure that each school meets the local farm to
18 school meal goal.

19 (c) The department may accept donations or grants from
20 individuals and other agencies, public and private, for the
21 purposes of supporting the farm to school meal programs.



1 (d) The department shall ensure that each individual
2 department school participating in their own farm to school
3 program maintain data and metrics to track their progress on
4 meeting the local farm to school meal goal."

5 SECTION 3. (a) Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year,
6 the department of education may establish a plant-based meal
7 program to provide a plant-based meal as an option under the
8 school meals program.

9 (b) As part of the program, the department of education
10 may establish a day within the school week to provide plant-
11 based options for school meals.

12 (c) If the department establishes a plant-based meal
13 program pursuant to subsection (a), the department shall:

14 (1) Submit an interim report on the progress of the plant-
15 based meal program to the legislature no later than
16 twenty days prior to the convening of the regular
17 session of 2027; and

18 (2) Submit a final report on the plant-based meal program,
19 including any findings, recommendations, and proposed
20 legislation, to the legislature no later than twenty



1 days prior to the convening of the regular session of
2 2028.

3 (d) The plant-based meal program shall cease to exist on
4 June 30, 2028.

5 (e) For the purposes of this section, "plant-based meal"
6 means a meal consisting of all minimally processed fruits,
7 vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds, herbs, and
8 spices and that excludes all animal products, including red
9 meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and dairy products.

10 SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.

11 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

12

INTRODUCED BY: 



S.B. NO. 235

Report Title:

Department of Education; Farm to School Meals; Department Schools; School Meals; Plant-based Option; Plant-Based Meal Program

Description:

Requires the Department of Education to authorize and facilitate complex areas or individual department schools to form their own farm to school meal programs through partnerships to meet the local farm to school meal goal of thirty per cent of food served in the school to consist of locally sourced products by 2030. Allows the Department of Education to establish a plant-based meal program no later than the 2026-2027 school year.

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

