

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

FIRST SESSION

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 185

Introduced by Brandt, 32; Cavanaugh, J., 9; McKinney, 11; Vargas, 7.

PURPOSE: Agriculture is the primary economic driver in Nebraska and the backbone of the economy. According to the Nebraska Department of Agriculture, twenty-five percent of jobs in the state are related to agriculture. A majority of these jobs exist in support of traditional livestock and crop production operations, but more than three hundred career fields exist to support agriculture. Twenty-first century career opportunities in food systems, technology, research, environmental conservation and sustainability, international trade and policy, and finance, require a highly technical educational curriculum in order for students to succeed. Such a curriculum could include the study of the farm to table movement, the culinary arts, and the environmental effects of food production. Nearly every academic subject can be viewed through the lens of agriculture. However, there is a lack of focus in the education system, especially for students in urban areas, about where food comes from and the skills and knowledge needed for careers in agriculture. This study shall examine the feasibility of, and interest in, an agricultural school or educational center in Nebraska, particularly in an urban location. An agricultural educational center or magnet school could provide a solution to the brain drain problem that has long siphoned young professionals away from our state in search of jobs elsewhere. Moreover, because of this state's unique geographic and historic connection to agriculture, providing educational opportunities in support of food systems will prepare students for careers right here in Nebraska.

The issues addressed by this interim study may include, but not be limited to, an examination of:

(1) The feasibility and interest in creating an agricultural school or educational center;

(2) The benefits of an agricultural school with a focus on economics, food, health, and environmental studies;

(3) The potential costs associated with creating an agricultural school or educational center and the process required to do so; and

(4) Possible criteria for determining the best locations for a Nebraska agricultural school or educational center.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA, FIRST SESSION:

1. That the Education Committee of the Legislature shall be designated to conduct an interim study to carry out the purposes of this resolution.

2. That the committee shall upon the conclusion of its study make a report of its findings, together with its recommendations, to the Legislative Council or Legislature.