

House File 851 - Reprinted

HOUSE FILE 851
BY COMMITTEE ON STATE
GOVERNMENT

(SUCCESSOR TO HSB 173)

(COMPANION TO SF 525 BY
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE)

(As Amended and Passed by the House March 19, 2025)

A BILL FOR

1 An Act relating to student nutrition, including by modifying
2 the curricula provided to students enrolled in kindergarten
3 through grade twelve to include instruction related to
4 nutrition, modifying provisions related to the agriculture,
5 food, and natural resources component of the career and
6 technical education instruction provided to students
7 enrolled in grades nine through twelve, and modifying
8 provisions related to school meal programs, and including
9 effective date and applicability provisions.
10 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1 Section 1. Section 256.11, subsections 2, 3, and 4, Code
2 2025, are amended to read as follows:

3 2. a. The kindergarten program shall include experiences
4 designed to develop healthy emotional and social habits and
5 growth in the language arts and communication skills, as well
6 as a capacity for the completion of individual tasks, and
7 protect and increase physical well-being with attention given
8 to experiences relating to the development of life skills and,
9 subject to [section 279.80](#), age-appropriate and research-based
10 human growth and development. The kindergarten program shall
11 also include instruction related to nutrition that emphasizes
12 all of the following:

13 (1) The importance of animal-based protein, dairy,
14 vegetables, and fruit.

15 (2) The nutritional benefits of animal-based protein,
16 dairy, vegetables, and fruit.

17 (3) The role that animal-based protein, dairy, vegetables,
18 and fruit play in a balanced diet.

19 b. A kindergarten teacher shall be licensed to teach in
20 kindergarten.

21 c. An accredited nonpublic school must meet the requirements
22 of [this subsection](#) only if the nonpublic school offers a
23 kindergarten program; provided, however, that [section 279.80](#)
24 shall not apply to a nonpublic school.

25 3. a. The following areas shall be taught in grades
26 one through six: English-language arts, social studies,
27 mathematics, science, health, physical education, traffic
28 safety, music, visual art, and, subject to [section 279.80](#),
29 age-appropriate and research-based human growth and
30 development. The health curriculum shall include all of the
31 following:

32 (1) The characteristics of communicable diseases.

33 (2) Instruction related to nutrition that emphasizes all of
34 the following:

35 (a) The importance of animal-based protein, dairy,

1 vegetables, and fruit.

2 (b) The nutritional benefits of animal-based protein,
3 dairy, vegetables, and fruit.

4 (c) The role that animal-based protein, dairy, vegetables,
5 and fruit play in a balanced diet.

6 b. Computer science instruction incorporating the standards
7 established under section 256.7, subsection 26, paragraph
8 "a", subparagraph (4), shall be offered in at least one grade
9 level commencing with the school year beginning July 1, 2023.
10 ~~The health curriculum shall include the characteristics of~~
11 ~~communicable diseases.~~

12 c. The state board as part of accreditation standards shall
13 adopt curriculum definitions for implementing the elementary
14 program.

15 4. a. The following shall be taught in grades seven and
16 eight: English-language arts; social studies, including
17 instruction related to civics; mathematics; science;
18 health; age-appropriate and research-based human growth and
19 development; career exploration and development; physical
20 education; music; and visual art.

21 (1) Career exploration and development shall be designed
22 so that students are appropriately prepared to create an
23 individual career and academic plan pursuant to section
24 279.61, incorporate foundational career and technical
25 education concepts aligned with the six career and technical
26 education service areas as defined in subsection 5, paragraph
27 "h", incorporate relevant twenty-first century skills to
28 facilitate career readiness, and introduce students to career
29 opportunities within the local community and across this state.
30 This subparagraph shall not apply to the teaching of career
31 exploration and development in nonpublic schools.

32 (2) The health curriculum shall include all of the
33 following:

34 (a) Age-appropriate and research-based information
35 regarding the characteristics of sexually transmitted diseases.

1 (b) Instruction related to nutrition that emphasizes all of
2 the following:

3 (i) The importance of animal-based protein, dairy,
4 vegetables, and fruit.

5 (ii) The nutritional benefits of animal-based protein,
6 dairy, vegetables, and fruit.

7 (iii) The role that animal-based protein, dairy,
8 vegetables, and fruit play in a balanced diet.

9 b. Computer science instruction incorporating the standards
10 established under [section 256.7, subsection 26](#), paragraph "a",
11 subparagraph (4), shall be offered in at least one grade level
12 commencing with the school year beginning July 1, 2023. ~~Career~~
13 ~~exploration and development shall be designed so that students~~
14 ~~are appropriately prepared to create an individual career~~
15 ~~and academic plan pursuant to [section 279.61](#), incorporate~~
16 ~~foundational career and technical education concepts aligned~~
17 ~~with the six career and technical education service areas as~~
18 ~~defined in [subsection 5](#), paragraph "h", incorporate relevant~~
19 ~~twenty-first century skills to facilitate career readiness,~~
20 ~~and introduce students to career opportunities within the~~
21 ~~local community and across this state. The health curriculum~~
22 ~~shall include age-appropriate and research-based information~~
23 ~~regarding the characteristics of sexually transmitted diseases.~~

24 c. The state board as part of accreditation standards shall
25 adopt curriculum definitions for implementing the program in
26 grades seven and eight. ~~However, [this subsection](#) shall not~~
27 ~~apply to the teaching of career exploration and development in~~
28 ~~nonpublic schools.~~

29 Sec. 2. Section 256.11, subsection 5, paragraph h,
30 subparagraph (1), subparagraph division (a), Code 2025, is
31 amended to read as follows:

32 (a) Agriculture, food, and natural resources, which
33 shall include instruction relating to food production and the
34 benefits of local sourcing.

35 Sec. 3. Section 256.11, subsection 5, paragraph j,

1 subparagraph (1), Code 2025, is amended to read as follows:

2 (1) One unit of health education which may include personal
3 health; food and nutrition; environmental health; safety and
4 survival skills; consumer health; family life; age-appropriate
5 and research-based human growth and development; substance
6 use disorder and nonuse; emotional and social health; health
7 resources; cardiopulmonary resuscitation; and prevention
8 and control of disease, including age-appropriate and
9 research-based information regarding sexually transmitted
10 diseases. The one unit of health education shall include
11 instruction related to nutrition that emphasizes all of the
12 following:

13 (a) The importance of animal-based protein, dairy,
14 vegetables, and fruit.

15 (b) The nutritional benefits of animal-based protein,
16 dairy, vegetables, and fruit.

17 (c) The role that animal-based protein, dairy, vegetables,
18 and fruit play in a balanced diet.

19 Sec. 4. Section 256E.7, subsection 2, paragraph g, Code
20 2025, is amended by adding the following new subparagraphs:

21 NEW SUBPARAGRAPH. (01) The educational standards
22 established in section 256.11, subsections 2, 3, and 4, and
23 section 256.11, subsection 5, paragraph "j", subparagraph (1),
24 related to instruction on nutrition.

25 NEW SUBPARAGRAPH. (3) The educational standards
26 established in section 256.11, subsection 5, paragraph "h",
27 subparagraph (1), subparagraph division (a), related to
28 instruction relating to food production and the benefits of
29 local sourcing.

30 Sec. 5. Section 256F.4, subsection 2, Code 2025, is amended
31 by adding the following new paragraphs:

32 NEW PARAGRAPH. *Op.* Be subject to and comply with the
33 requirements of section 256.11, subsections 2, 3, and 4, and
34 section 256.11, subsection 5, paragraph "j", subparagraph (1),
35 related to instruction on nutrition in the same manner as a

1 school district.

2 NEW PARAGRAPH. *r.* Be subject to and comply with the
3 requirements of section 256.11, subsection 5, paragraph
4 "h", subparagraph (1), subparagraph division (a), related to
5 instruction relating to food production and the benefits of
6 local sourcing in the same manner as a school district.

7 Sec. 6. NEW SECTION. 283A.14 Application for waiver —
8 updated nutritional guidelines — joint committee.

9 1. The general assembly finds and declares all of the
10 following:

11 *a.* The nutritional needs and cultural preferences of
12 the students in Iowa might be better served by localizing
13 nutritional standards.

14 *b.* Unique regional food sources, including corn, pork, and
15 dairy, are not adequately addressed by federal guidelines.

16 *c.* Flexibility in nutritional standards can enhance the
17 ability of schools to provide meals that are both nutritious
18 and appealing to students, which may increase student
19 participation in school breakfast and lunch programs.

20 2. Within ninety days after the effective date of this Act,
21 the department of education shall apply for a waiver under the
22 provisions of the federal National School Lunch Act of 1966, 42
23 U.S.C. §1751 et seq., and the federal Child Nutrition Act of
24 1966, 42 U.S.C. §1771 et seq., to request all of the following:

25 *a.* An exemption from sodium limits, whole grain
26 requirements, and fruit and vegetable variety stipulations in
27 school breakfast and lunch programs.

28 *b.* Permission to substitute or modify federal requirements
29 with state-specific nutritional guidelines that align with
30 Iowa's dietary recommendations or cultural food practices.

31 3. If the waiver applied for by the department of
32 education under subsection 2 is granted, the department of
33 education shall adopt updated guidelines for what constitutes
34 a nutritionally adequate meal. The department shall consult
35 with the department of agriculture and land stewardship,

1 experts in nutrition, educators, parents, local farmers, and
2 other stakeholders during the process of adopting updated
3 guidelines for what constitutes a nutritionally adequate meal.
4 The guidelines for what constitutes a nutritionally adequate
5 meal may reflect local preferences, regional food sources,
6 including corn, pork, and dairy, and cultural considerations.
7 The guidelines for what constitutes a nutritionally adequate
8 meal must satisfy all of the following requirements:

9 *a.* Be at least as stringent in promoting health and
10 preventing chronic diseases as the federal guidelines.

11 *b.* Maintain a commitment to nutritional health and student
12 well-being.

13 *c.* Prioritize the following food groups, in the order
14 listed:

15 (1) Animal-based protein, including but not limited to
16 beef, pork, poultry, fish, and eggs.

17 (2) Dairy products, including but not limited to milk,
18 cheese, and yogurt.

19 (3) Vegetables, including but not limited to local and
20 seasonal produce.

21 (4) Fresh fruit or dried or frozen fruit when fresh fruit is
22 not seasonally available.

23 4. If the waiver applied for by the department of education
24 under subsection 2 is granted, the department of education
25 and the department of agriculture and land stewardship shall
26 establish a joint committee to do all of the following:

27 *a.* Oversee the implementation of the guidelines for what
28 constitutes a nutritionally adequate meal.

29 *b.* Review the outcomes associated with the guidelines for
30 what constitutes a nutritionally adequate meal.

31 *c.* Study the nutritional science associated with the
32 guidelines for what constitutes a nutritionally adequate meal
33 and seek feedback from schools, parents, and agricultural
34 stakeholders related to the guidelines.

35 *d.* Provide recommendations to the department of education

1 related to changes that may need to be made to the guidelines
2 for what constitutes a nutritionally adequate meal.

3 5. If the waiver applied for by the department of
4 education under subsection 2 is granted, the department of
5 education shall submit to the general assembly an annual
6 report, beginning on or before the first June 30 after
7 the implementation of the new guidelines, which describes
8 the impact of the guidelines related to what constitutes a
9 nutritionally adequate meal, including information related
10 to school breakfast and lunch program participation, student
11 health outcomes, feedback from school districts, progress
12 in implementing the guidelines, challenges associated with
13 implementing the guidelines, and recommendations for further
14 enhancement of the guidelines.

15 6. If the waiver applied for by the department of education
16 under subsection 2 is granted, the department of education
17 shall conduct an evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the
18 guidelines for what constitutes a nutritionally adequate meal
19 compared to the comparable federal standards within five years
20 after the effective date of the waiver.

21 Sec. 7. EFFECTIVE DATE. The following, being deemed of
22 immediate importance, takes effect upon enactment:

23 The section of this Act enacting section 283A.14.

24 Sec. 8. APPLICABILITY. The following apply to school years
25 beginning on or after July 1, 2026:

26 1. The section of this Act amending section 256.11,
27 subsections 2, 3, and 4.

28 2. The section of this Act amending section 256.11,
29 subsection 5, paragraph "h", subparagraph (1), subparagraph
30 division (a).

31 3. The section of this Act amending section 256.11,
32 subsection 5, paragraph "j", subparagraph (1).

33 4. The section of this Act amending section 256E.7,
34 subsection 2, paragraph "g".

35 5. The section of this Act amending section 256F.4,

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1 subsection 2.