



## ***Healthy Schools for Healthy Lives Act*** **Fact Sheet**

### *Situation Analysis*

- Currently, child nutrition programs are spread across the Department of Education and the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, creating challenges, inconsistencies and inefficiencies. For instance, the School Lunch, Breakfast and Summer Programs are administered by the Florida Department of Education, while the commodity Food Distribution, Disaster Feeding and EFAP are managed by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

### *Proposed Solution*

- The *Healthy Schools for Healthy Lives Act* is a bill that will be sponsored by Senator Gary Siplin in the Florida Senate and will be filed by committee in the Florida House of Representatives.
- The *Healthy Schools for Healthy Lives Act* will consolidate all state-level school food and nutrition programs under one state agency, increasing the capability of school food and nutrition programs to collectively make a positive impact on the well-being of Florida's children.
- The *Healthy Schools for Healthy Lives Act* will empower the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to educate students on health and nutrition and ensure they have access to the healthy and nutritious products abundant throughout our state.

### *Expected Impact*

- Through the school food and nutrition programs, the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services can instill a value and appreciation for fresh and nutritious foods in students, leading to a lifetime of healthy eating habits.
- As the state agency responsible for supporting the industry that produces Florida's healthy and nutritious foods, the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is

the most experienced and best positioned to manage Florida's school food and nutrition programs.

- With school food and nutrition programs as part of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, there is an opportunity for increased coordination between the families and businesses providing Florida's fresh produce and the school programs providing food for Florida's next generation. Through existing relationships and distribution networks with the Department, Florida farmers are able to easily source high-quality local produce to schools.
- The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services has already demonstrated a commitment to child nutrition through existing programs, like [Fresh From Florida Kids](#), [Extreme Cuisine](#) and [Farm to School](#), that educate children and families about healthy eating. Combining these important efforts with existing programs from other agencies will enable schools to more effectively reach Florida's students with the valuable lessons and practices of healthy eating.
- The Department works closely with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Federal entity that administers the National School Lunch Program, National Breakfast Program, Summer Food Service Programs, Commodity Food Distribution Program, Disaster Feeding and Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP). In January, the USDA proposed changes to school meal standards which would add more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk to school meals. Florida's Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is the logical choice to continue USDA's initiatives on healthy eating at the state level.
- Expanding access to healthy and nutritious foods through school programs is one example of the efforts by Commissioner Putnam and the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to expand access to Florida's locally grown, fresh fruits and vegetables to those who are unable to access or afford healthy eating options.

For more information about the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, visit [www.FreshFromFlorida.com](http://www.FreshFromFlorida.com) or follow Commissioner Putnam on Facebook, [www.facebook.com/adamputnam](https://www.facebook.com/adamputnam), or Twitter, [@adamputnam](https://twitter.com/adamputnam).

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