



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David J. Valesky

## Sen. Valesky Joins Assemblywoman Russell to Introduce Bill to Help Schools Buy New York State Farm Products

DAVID J. VALESKY May 11, 2016

| ISSUE: **SCHOOLS, AGRICULTURE**

Albany, NY - Assemblywoman Addie J. Russell (D-Theresa) and State Senator David J. Valesky (D-Oneida) are sponsoring legislation that would bring more locally produced food into school cafeterias. The bill (A9379/S7525) would significantly increase reimbursements for school lunches when local food is used in their preparation.

“I am continuing to aggressively push the Farm to School legislation in the state Assembly and am looking forward to working with Senator Valesky in an effort to move this important program forward. We know this legislation will benefit our local farmers and producers by expanding their markets and benefit our children by bringing healthy, locally produced foods into their school cafeterias,” Assemblywoman Russell said.

“This legislation builds on the farm to table movement by incentivizing school districts to purchase New York State farm products,” Sen. Valesky said. “I support every opportunity to incorporate our state’s high quality agricultural commodities into school lunches.”

The farm-to-school initiative, known as the “Drive to 25,” would modify the state’s reimbursement formula for school lunches, increasing reimbursement rates by 5 to 25 cents per meal from the current 6 cents. The rate would be dependent on the percentage of locally

grown and produced products that school districts purchase each year.

The reimbursement rate for school lunches hasn't been increased in 40 years, and low reimbursement rates hinder schools' abilities to purchase Farm to School products, according to Russell, who chairs the state Assembly Task Force on Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy.

Russell noted this year's state budget includes a \$300,000 Farm to School pilot program that will provide North Country school districts with funding so they can provide fresh, local food grown and raised by New York State farmers. The Adirondack North Country Association will oversee the program.

"This pilot program will provide immediate assistance to North Country schools while simultaneously demonstrating the merits of a statewide program," Russell said.

"I am pleased to work with Assemblywoman Russell to advance a program that will provide healthy school lunches to our children and support Central New York's agricultural industry," Sen. Valesky said.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### **2015-S7525**

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- Introduced
  - ◦ In Committee Assembly

- In Committee Senate
  
- ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
  
- ◦ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
  
- Delivered to Governor
  
- Signed By Governor
  
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Relates to the reimbursement of schools for purchasing New York farm products

May 06, 2016

In Senate Committee [Agriculture](#)

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Do you support this bill?