



4600 Valley Road
Suite 306
Lincoln, NE 68510
402-475-1411
<https://lwnnebraska.org>

January 18, 2022

Senator Lynne Walz
Members of the Education Committee
State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

RE: LB 758 (Brandt) Change provisions to include early childhood education programs in the Nebraska Farm-to-School Program.

Support

Dear Chair Walz and Members of the Education Committee:

The League of Women Voters of Nebraska supports the inclusion of early childhood education programs in the Nebraska Farm-to-School Program based on two primary League stances. First, the League has a longstanding history of supporting accessible and high-quality early childhood programs. Second, the League has given more recent attention to agricultural policy, identifying locally sourced food as a key component. In recent years, League chapters have supported farm-to-school initiatives at the state level, including in Minnesota and Illinois.

The Nebraska Farm-to-School Program Act, adopted last session as LB396, offers children an opportunity to eat locally produced nutritious food, learn where their food comes from, and through school gardens and other activities experience agriculture and growing food themselves. The program had wide support from the agricultural, educational and environmental sectors, with no opposition at the committee hearing. Since then, it has been an economic opportunity for local producers, school districts and communities and, in 2020-21, had an \$1.6 million impact in the state. Expanding the program to include early childhood education programs will benefit children in the early years crucial to their development, celebrate and share Nebraska's agricultural tradition, and economically support food producers in our state.

It is for these reasons we hope to see this bill that coordinates efforts across industries and organizations expanding to include early childhood education programs.

Please advance LB 758 to full floor debate. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Konecky, Education Policy Action Team
Rachel M. Gibson, Director of Education Policy
League of Women Voters of Nebraska