**Mohammed Choudhury**
State Superintendent of Schools

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| **BILL:** | Senate Bill 121 | **DATE:** | January 25, 2022 |
| **SUBJECT:** | Maryland Farms and Families Fund, Maryland Food and Agricultural Resiliency Mechanism Grant Program, and Maryland Farm–to–School Meal Grant Pilot Program – Alterations and Establishment | **COMMITTEE:** | Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs |
| **POSITION:** | Support | | |
| **CONTACT:** | Ary Amerikaner<br>410-767-0090<br>ary.amerikaner@maryland.gov | | |

**EXPLANATION:**

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) supports **Senate Bill 121 – Maryland Farms and Families Fund, Maryland Food and Agricultural Resiliency Mechanism Grant Program, and Maryland Farm–to–School Meal Grant Pilot Program – Alterations and Establishment,** which would require MSDE to administer the Maryland Farm–to–School Meal Grant Pilot Program. The grants would be available to public schools participating in US Department of Agriculture (USDA) child nutrition programs and implemented as a pilot during school years 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 (fiscal years 2024 and 2025).

MSDE supports, and is encouraged by, farm-to-school efforts in school meal programs. MSDE routinely confers with the USDA on farm-to-school strategies and resources and includes farm-to-school programming in training for local school systems. MSDE also received a 2021 USDA farm-to-school grant to assess barriers to procurement, develop a long-term sustainability plan and provide farm-to-school curricula to schools.

The Department looks forward to working closely with local school systems and the Maryland Department of Agriculture to implement a move towards more sustainable environmental practices within our public school system and providing locally sourced components of school meals.

We respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate **Senate Bill 121.** Please contact Ary Amerikaner, at 410-767-0090, or ary.amerikaner@maryland.gov, for any additional information.