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Foundation of Agricultural Education as Part of the Illinois Educational System

Senate Bill 255 passed and signed into law on September 19, 1986, creating Public Act 84-1452 and Chapter 122, Section 2-3.80 of the Illinois School Code stating: The General Assembly recognizes that agriculture is the most basic and singularly important industry in the State, that agriculture is of central importance to the welfare and economic stability of the State, and that the maintenance of this vital industry requires a continued source of trained and qualified individuals for employment in agriculture and agribusiness. The General Assembly hereby declares that it is in the best interests of the people of the State of Illinois that a comprehensive education program in agriculture be created and maintained by the State's public school system in order to ensure an adequate supply of trained and skilled individuals and to ensure appropriate representation of racial and ethnic groups in all phases of the industry. It is the intent of the General Assembly that a State program for agricultural education shall be a part of the curriculum of the public school system preK through adult, and made readily available to all school districts which may, at their option, include programs in education in agriculture as a part of the curriculum of that district.

House Bill 4986 passed amending Public Act 84-1452 and the Illinois School Code on January 20, 2006, stating: Provides that a school district that offers a secondary agricultural education program that is eligible for state and federal funding must ensure that, at a minimum, the following are available to its secondary agricultural education students: (1) an instructional sequence of courses approved by the State Board of Education; (2) a State and nationally affiliated FFA chapter that is integral to instruction and is not treated as an extracurricular activity; and (3) a mechanism for ensuring the involvement of all secondary agricultural education students in formal, supervised agricultural-experience activities and programs.

The seven major branches of the Illinois Agricultural Education Plan are: PreK-8 Agricultural Literacy, 6-12 Agricultural Education Programs, Community College Agricultural Education Programs, University Education in Agriculture, Teacher Education Programs in Agriculture, Agricultural Workforce Knowledge, Skill, and Talent Development, and Public and Consumer Agricultural Awareness and Advocacy.