
The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Jeanne C. Johnston.

DIGEST

Nevers (SB 125)

Present law requires the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) to approve a state action plan for a nonmandatory comprehensive agricultural education program for kindergarten through grade 12 in the state's public schools. Further provides for the instructional strategies, guidelines, instructional materials, and professional development activities to be included in the plan.

Proposed law retains present law.

Proposed law creates and provides relative to the Agricultural Education Commission as follows:

- (1) The purpose of the commission is to provide guidance and advice to the state superintendent of education and BESE regarding agricultural education programs and activities in elementary and secondary schools.
- (2) The commission shall be composed of 15 members, as follows:
 - (a) The state superintendent of education, or his designee.
 - (b) The commissioner of higher education, or his designee.
 - (c) The president of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System, or his designee.
 - (d) The vice president for agriculture for the Louisiana State University System, or his designee.
 - (e) The chancellor of the Southern University Agricultural Center, or his designee.
 - (f) The director of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service, or his designee.
 - (g) The commissioner of the Department of Agriculture and Forestry, or his designee.
 - (h) The president of the Louisiana Agriscience Teachers Association, or his designee.
 - (i) The president of the Louisiana Future Farmers of America Association.
 - (j) The chairman of the Board of Trustees for the Louisiana 4-H Foundation, or his designee.

- (k) The state executive director of the Louisiana Future Farmers of America Association, or his designee.
 - (l) The president of the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation, or his designee.
 - (m) The secretary of the Department of Economic Development, or his designee.
 - (n) The executive director of the Louisiana Workforce Commission, or his designee.
 - (o) The president of the Louisiana Association for Business and Industry, or his designee.
- (3) Commission members serve at the pleasure of the appointing authority and vacancies shall be filled in the manner of the original appointment.
 - (4) Commission members serve without compensation but may be reimbursed for expenses as provided by the appointing authority.
 - (5) Requires the state superintendent of education to call the first meeting of the commission no later than September 1, 2014, and provides that a chairman shall be elected from among the membership at the first meeting.
 - (6) The commission shall meet upon the call of the chairman, but not less than once quarterly.
 - (7) The Department of Education shall provide staff support to assist the commission in performing its duties and responsibilities.
 - (8) Provides for the commission's duties as follows:
 - (a) Assist the state superintendent of education in the ongoing evaluation of agricultural education programs in elementary and secondary schools.
 - (b) Review the state action plan for agricultural education and make recommendations to the state board regarding changes in policy or curricula deemed necessary to ensure that the state's agricultural education programs and initiatives are responsive to the needs of students and the agricultural community.
 - (c) Continually review the state's agricultural education delivery system and provide advice and guidance to the state superintendent of education regarding content standards and curricula, development of agriculture-related industry-based certifications, professional development opportunities for agricultural educators, and other strategies designed to promote agricultural literacy and student awareness of the wide array of educational and career opportunities in agriculture-related fields.

- (d) Assist in the development of partnerships and alliances with agriculture-related industries and other stakeholders.
- (e) Provide advice and support in the development and creation of agriculture immersion programs in elementary and secondary schools that allow students to develop an understanding of the importance of agriculture and agriculture-related fields and occupations to the state, the nation, and the world.

Proposed law requires BESE to create a pilot program to provide for the establishment of agricultural education immersion programs that provide students with a high quality educational program that integrates agriculture-related instruction throughout all disciplines included in the curriculum. Further provides that agricultural immersion programs shall:

- (1) Provide an articulated, sequentially structured, total agricultural education program that prepares students for entrance into a postsecondary educational program or other certification that leads to a career.
- (2) Provide each student with an academically rigorous curricula, work-based learning experiences, and student leadership opportunities within an agricultural context.
- (3) Integrate agriculture throughout the curriculum in a systematic manner that prepares students for successful careers in a wide array of agriculture-related industries and occupations, including food and crop science, soil science, animal science, fiber production, farm production, renewable resources, agricultural research, and agribusiness management and marketing.
- (4) Provide dual-enrollment opportunities that allow students to earn college credit hours that can be transferred to a postsecondary institution and industry-based certifications that qualify a student for employment upon graduation from high school.

Present law provides that the state action plan for agricultural education shall be implemented upon appropriation of funds for that purpose.

Proposed law provides instead that implementation of the agricultural education immersion pilot program required by proposed law shall be implemented as expeditiously as possible through any source of funding made available for that purpose.

Effective upon signature of the governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Amends R.S. 17:185.4; adds R.S. 17:185.5 and 185.6 and R.S. 36:651(G)(4))