

Prior 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. Further provided for the instructional strategies, guidelines, instructional materials, and professional development activities to be included in the plan. Provided that the plan shall be implemented upon appropriation of funds for that purpose. New law deletes the requirement that the plan be implemented upon the appropriation of funds and otherwise retains prior law.

New law creates the Agricultural Education Commission. Provides for the purpose, membership, compensation, and meetings of the commission. Provides for the commission's duties as follows:

- (1) Assist the state superintendent of education in the ongoing evaluation of agricultural education programs in elementary and secondary schools.
- (2) Review the state action plan for agricultural education and make recommendations related thereto.
- (3) Review the state's agricultural education delivery system and provide advice and guidance related thereto.
- (4) Assist in the development of partnerships and alliances with agriculture-related industries and other stakeholders.
- (5) Provide advice and support in the development and creation of certain agriculture immersion programs in elementary and secondary schools.

Provides that the commission shall be composed of the following members:

- (1) The state superintendent of education, or his designee.
- (2) The commissioner of higher education, or his designee.
- (3) The president of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System, or his designee.
- (4) The vice president for agriculture for the Louisiana State University System, or his designee.
- (5) The chancellor of the Southern University Agricultural Center, or his designee.
- (6) The director of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service, or his designee.
- (7) The commissioner of the Department of Agriculture and Forestry, or his designee.
- (8) The president of the Louisiana Agriscience Teachers Association, or his designee.
- (9) The president of the Louisiana FFA.
- (10) The chairman of the board of trustees for the Louisiana 4-H Foundation, or his designee.
- (11) The state executive director of the La. FFA, or his designee.
- (12) The president of the La. Farm Bureau Federation, or his designee.
- (13) The secretary of the Department of Economic Development, or his designee.
- (14) The executive director of the La. Workforce Commission, or his designee.
- (15) The president of the La. Association for Business and Industry, or his designee.
- (16) The president of the La. Association of Educators, or his designee.

(17) The president of the La. Federation of Teachers, or his designee.

Members shall serve without compensation but may be reimbursed for expenses as provided by the appointing authority.

Provides that the state superintendent of education shall call the first meeting of the commission no later than September 1, 2014, and a chairman shall be elected from among the membership at such meeting. Provides that the commission shall meet upon the call of the chairman, but not less than once quarterly.

The Department of Education shall provide staff support to assist the commission in performing its duties and responsibilities.

New 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.

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

Effective upon signature of governor (June 4, 2014).

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