

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 1692
By: Lucio
Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Interested parties report that the lack of access to nutritious food often leads to children having a harder time focusing on their studies and experiencing increased behavioral problems. Additionally, they contend that poor nutrition often leads to illnesses that impact the health and wellbeing of Texas children. Unfortunately, chronic diseases, such as obesity and diabetes, are becoming more prevalent among the young population. Poor eating habits and lack of physical activity directly contribute to children having an increased likelihood of poor educational outcomes, which directly impacts the future of this state.

Currently, nutrition education is offered in most public schools traditionally as part of the curriculum for the "health classes," however, the portion of student participation at each grade level in nutrition education is unknown. Interested parties contend that it would greatly benefit the state to increase the level of nutrition education since studies have shown that eating nutrient rich foods such as fruits and vegetables leads to a decrease in chronic diseases and also increases concentration and participation in the classroom. It is through nutrition education that children are taught about the benefits of forming healthy habits.

Concerned stakeholders contend that to address the illnesses associated with poor nutrition, it would greatly benefit the state to focus on increasing awareness of nutrition in public schools. Undertaking such a nutrition education initiative would allow students to become better informed about the food they eat and would greatly assist them in developing healthy eating habits and lifestyles.

S.B. 1692 improves the nutrition education that our kids are receiving in school. It directs the Texas Education Agency to develop a task force to make short-term and long-term recommendations to the state to increase awareness of good nutrition to students K-12, assist students in developing healthy eating habits, and address illnesses developed from poor nutrition, including obesity and diabetes. Additionally, the bill directs the task force to identify and study the development of age-appropriate curriculum for nutrition education, asses existing nutrition education curriculum and resources, develop recommendations about nutrition coordinators, and report to the legislature regarding findings and recommendations regarding policy initiatives and reforms necessary to implement and increase nutrition education, awareness, and resources in public schools.

As proposed, S.B. 1692 amends current law relating to the creation of a nutrition education task force.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority previously granted to the Texas Education Agency, Department of State Health Services, and Department of Agriculture, is modified in SECTION 2 (Section 28.0042, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Sets forth legislative findings.

SECTION 2. Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 28, Education Code, by adding Section 28.0042, as follows:

Sec. 28.0042. NUTRITION EDUCATION TASK FORCE. (a) Requires the commissioner of education (commissioner) to create a nutrition education task force to develop policy recommendations regarding nutrition education in public schools, including how to increase awareness of students in kindergarten through 12th grade of good nutrition, assist students in developing healthy eating habits, and address illnesses developed from poor nutrition, including obesity and diabetes.

(b) Provides that the task force is composed of the commissioners of education, state health services, and agriculture, experts in nutrition, and any other health or education experts as determined by the commissioner, the commissioner of state health services, and the commissioner of agriculture.

(c) Requires the commissioner to serve as the presiding officer of the task force.

(d) Prohibits a member of the task force from receiving compensation for serving on the task force.

(e) Requires the task force to:

(1) identify and study the development of an age-appropriate curriculum for nutrition education in public schools that achieves certain goals;

(2) assess existing nutrition education curriculum, resources, and initiatives in public schools that address illnesses caused by poor nutrition, including obesity and diabetes;

(3) develop recommendations, initiatives, and reforms that can be implemented to improve the success of nutrition education, resources, and materials designed to assist teachers in preparing nutrition education lessons;

(4) work with appropriate state and federal officials to develop certain reforms;

(5) develop certain recommendations relating to increasing the effectiveness of nutrition coordinators; and

(6) in the report required under Subsection (h), make specific recommendations for legislative and other actions, including budget-related recommendations regarding policy initiatives and reforms necessary to implement and increase nutrition education, awareness, and resources in public schools in kindergarten through 12th grade.

(f) Requires that state agencies cooperate with the task force as necessary.

(g) Requires the task force to meet not less than once each month. Authorizes the task force to meet by telephone conference call, videoconference, or any similar telecommunication method.

(h) Requires the task force, not later than November 1 of each even-numbered year, to prepare a report on the task force's recommendations and provide the report in writing or electronically to the governor and members of the legislature.

(i) Requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA), Department of State Health Services (DSHS), and the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA), at least every three years, to review and, if necessary, revise any rules, recommendations, and policies implemented based on the task force recommendations.

SECTION 3. Requires the Nutrition Education Task Force established under Section 28.0042, Education Code, as added by this Act, not later than March 1, 2018, to develop and submit to TEA, DSHS, and TDA recommendations for implementation during the 2018-2019 school year.

SECTION 4. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2017.