

By: Kleinschmidt

H.B. No. 1840

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the establishment of an interagency farm-to-school coordination task force.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Chapter 12, Agriculture Code, is amended by adding Section 12.0026 to read as follows:

Sec. 12.0026. INTERAGENCY FARM-TO-SCHOOL COORDINATION TASK FORCE. (a) To promote a healthy diet for schoolchildren and the business of small to mid-sized local farms and ranches, the interagency farm-to-school coordination task force shall develop a plan to facilitate the availability of locally grown food products in public schools.

(b) The task force is composed of:

(1) a representative of:

(A) the department, appointed by the commissioner;

(B) the Texas Education Agency, appointed by the commissioner of education; and

(C) the Department of State Health Services, appointed by the commissioner of that department; and

(2) at least one representative of each of the following groups, appointed by the commissioner:

(A) fruit and vegetable producer organizations;

(B) school food service organizations;

1 (C) food distribution businesses;

2 (D) child nutrition and advocacy organizations;

3 (E) parent organizations;

4 (F) educational institutions that conduct
5 research in the areas of agriculture and nutrition; and

6 (G) health nutrition educators who serve school
7 districts.

8 (c) A member of the task force serves at the will of the
9 official who appointed the member.

10 (d) The representative of the department serves as
11 presiding officer. The task force may elect other necessary
12 officers from its members.

13 (e) The task force shall meet at the call of the presiding
14 officer.

15 (f) The agency whose commissioner appoints a member is
16 responsible for the expenses of a member's service on the task
17 force. A member of the task force is not entitled to additional
18 compensation for serving on the task force.

19 (g) Each appropriate agency or group represented on the task
20 force shall provide the personnel and resources necessary to
21 implement a task force measure under this section.

22 (h) Subject to available funding, the task force shall:

23 (1) design education resources on nutrition and food
24 education to be used by schools and school districts;

25 (2) expand food-focused experiential education
26 programs;

27 (3) create a grant program funded by the department

1 that allows schools and school districts to recover the costs
2 associated with purchasing locally grown food products;

3 (4) develop a database of available locally grown food
4 products for use by school food service agencies that includes
5 contact and purchasing information for the products;

6 (5) design and implement training programs to enable
7 local farmers and ranchers to market their products to schools and
8 school districts, including programs related to:

9 (A) crop production;

10 (B) marketing of crops;

11 (C) postharvest handling of crops;

12 (D) food safety;

13 (E) business management;

14 (F) liability and risk management; and

15 (G) other topics deemed appropriate by the task
16 force;

17 (6) advise schools and school districts on methods by
18 which a school or school district may improve its facilities to
19 allow for the use of minimally processed, fresh, and locally
20 produced foods in school meals;

21 (7) provide technical assistance to school food
22 service agencies to establish procedures, recipes, menu rotations,
23 and other internal processes that accommodate the use of locally
24 grown foods in public schools;

25 (8) offer advanced skills development training to
26 school food service employees regarding the proper methods of
27 handling, preparing, and serving locally grown foods; and

1 (9) conduct any other activity considered by the task
2 force as necessary to achieve its goals under this section.

3 (i) The task force may solicit and accept gifts, grants, and
4 donations from public and private entities to use for the purposes
5 of this section.

6 SECTION 2. (a) Not later than December 1, 2009, the
7 Department of Agriculture shall establish the interagency
8 farm-to-school coordination task force as required by Section
9 12.0026, Agriculture Code, as added by this Act.

10 (b) Not later than February 1, 2010, the commissioners of
11 the Department of Agriculture, the Texas Education Agency, and the
12 Department of State Health Services shall appoint members of the
13 interagency farm-to-school coordination task force, as required by
14 Section 12.0026, Agriculture Code, as added by this Act.

15 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2009.