

By: Watson

S.B. No. 2021

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to creating the Texas Early Learning Council.

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

SECTION 1. Subtitle B, Title 3, Human Resources Code, is amended by adding Chapter 71 to read as follows:

CHAPTER 71. TEXAS EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL

Sec. 71.001. TEXAS EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL. In this chapter:

(1) "Board" means the board of the Texas Early Learning Council.

(2) "Council" means the Texas Early Learning Council.

Sec. 71.002. BOARD. (a) The board is composed of:

(1) the administrative head of the following agencies or that person's designee:

(A) the Texas Education Agency;

(B) the Health and Human Services Commission;

(C) the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services;

(D) the Texas Workforce Commission; and

(E) the Department of Family and Protective Services;

(2) a representative from the Health and Human Services Commission's nurse-family partnership program appointed by the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services

Commission;

(3) a representative from the Health and Human Services Commission's women's health program appointed by the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission;

(4) a representative from the early childhood intervention services program appointed by the commissioner of the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services;

(5) one member appointed by the lieutenant governor;

(6) one member appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives; and

(7) the following members appointed by the governor:

(A) an employee of the governor's office;

(B) an individual to represent federal children's programs and services; and

(C) 11 members from the public and private sectors who have an interest in early childhood care and education, including representatives from the following fields:

(i) early childhood education and development;

(ii) child care;

(iii) child advocacy;

(iv) parenting support;

(v) local community collaborations among early care and education programs and services;

(vi) maternal and child health;

(vii) children with special needs;

(viii) business and industry;

1                   (ix) labor; and

2                   (x) law enforcement.

3           (b) The governor shall request that the director of the  
4 regional office of the Administration for Children and Families of  
5 the United States Department of Health and Human Services provide  
6 the governor with a list of individuals, each of whom is eligible to  
7 serve as a representative appointed under Subsection (a)(7)(B).

8           (c) In appointing the members of the council, the persons  
9 making appointments must attempt to reflect the geographic, racial,  
10 and cultural diversity of the state.

11           Sec. 71.003. PRESIDING OFFICER. The governor shall  
12 designate a member of the board from the private sector to serve as  
13 co-presiding officer of the board with the member who is an employee  
14 of the governor's office.

15           Sec. 71.004. TERMS. The members of the board appointed by  
16 the governor, the lieutenant governor, and the speaker of the house  
17 of representatives serve for staggered six-year terms, with the  
18 terms of one-third of the members expiring on February 1 of each  
19 even-numbered year.

20           Sec. 71.005. COMPENSATION. The members of the board serve  
21 without compensation but are entitled to reimbursement for actual  
22 and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of official  
23 duties as provided by the General Appropriations Act.

24           Sec. 71.006. POWERS AND DUTIES. The council shall:

25                   (1) coordinate existing state programs and services  
26 for children from birth to age three in order to better meet the  
27 early learning needs of children and their families;

1           (2) implement the vision of a statewide, high-quality,  
2 accessible, and comprehensive early learning system to benefit all  
3 young children;

4           (3) address how the state can:

5                 (A) expand access to high-quality early  
6 childhood development programs for all at-risk children under three  
7 years of age; and

8                 (B) improve the quality of services offered to  
9 very young children and their families;

10           (4) inventory public and private early learning  
11 programs in the state and, if feasible, rate the effectiveness of  
12 each program;

13           (5) work with pre-K and elementary school educators to  
14 establish a link between elementary schools and programs for  
15 children from birth to age three, and from age three to age five;  
16 and

17           (6) link early learning programs to other early  
18 childhood providers, programs, and services, including specialized  
19 development and mental health services, pediatric and perinatal  
20 health services, and public benefit programs.

21           Sec. 71.007. ANNUAL REPORT. Not later than December 1 of  
22 each year, the council shall report to the governor and legislature  
23 on the council's progress towards its goals and objectives.

24           SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2009.