

By: Strama

H.B. No. 3587

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to establishment of the Texas Early Learning Council.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 29, Education Code, is amended by adding Subchapter E-1 to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER E-1. TEXAS EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL

Sec. 29.171. DEFINITION. In this subchapter, "council" means the Texas Early Learning Council.

Sec. 29.172. TEXAS EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL: ESTABLISHMENT AND PURPOSES. The Texas Early Learning Council is an advisory council established to improve school readiness in this state.

Sec. 29.173. COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION. (a) The council is composed of 12 members as follows:

(1) two members representing Head Start agencies in this state, including the director of the Texas Head Start State Collaboration Office and one member appointed by the governor;

(2) one member representing the Department of Family and Protective Services, appointed by the commissioner of the Department of Family and Protective Services;

(3) one member representing the Department of State Health Services, appointed by the commissioner of the Department of State Health Services;

(4) one member representing the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services, appointed by the

1 commissioner of the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative
2 Services;

3 (5) one member representing the agency, appointed by
4 the commissioner of education;

5 (6) one member representing a school district in this
6 state who has expertise in early childhood learning, appointed by
7 the commissioner of education;

8 (7) one member representing a public institution of
9 higher education who teaches courses or engages in research
10 concerning school readiness, appointed by the commissioner of
11 higher education;

12 (8) one member representing local providers of early
13 childhood education and development services, appointed by the
14 governor;

15 (9) two members who have expertise in early childhood
16 learning, appointed by the governor; and

17 (10) one member representing parents of preschool
18 students, appointed by the governor.

19 (b) The members of the council annually shall elect one
20 member to serve as the presiding officer.

21 (c) Council meetings are held at the call of the presiding
22 officer.

23 (d) The council is administratively attached to the agency
24 but is independent of direction by the agency or the commissioner of
25 education. The agency shall provide administrative support and
26 resources to the council as necessary to enable the council to
27 perform its duties.

1 (e) The agencies represented on the council shall provide
2 periodic staff support of specialists as needed to the council.

3 (f) The council is not subject to Chapter 2110, Government
4 Code.

5 Sec. 29.174. SUNSET PROVISION. The council is subject to
6 Chapter 325, Government Code (Texas Sunset Act). Unless continued
7 in existence as provided by that chapter, the council is abolished
8 and this subchapter expires September 1, 2017.

9 Sec. 29.175. DUTIES. (a) In an effort to improve the
10 school readiness of young children in this state, the council
11 shall:

12 (1) develop effective, comprehensive standards for
13 early childhood learning and school readiness that recognizes but
14 may not be limited to the importance of literacy, numeracy, social
15 and emotional development, and the physical health of children,
16 including developing systems for rating and improving child-care
17 and early childhood learning programs;

18 (2) develop recommendations for outreach to and
19 communication with parents and guardians of young children,
20 including children in underrepresented or special populations,
21 concerning the availability of and need and best practices for
22 child care and early childhood learning, for the purpose of
23 increasing the overall participation of children in existing
24 federal, state, and local child-care and early childhood learning
25 programs;

26 (3) identify opportunities for and barriers to
27 collaboration and coordination among federally funded and

1 state-funded child development, child-care, and early childhood
2 learning programs and services, including collaboration and
3 coordination among state agencies responsible for administering
4 such programs;

5 (4) develop recommendations concerning statewide
6 professional development, including career advancement, for early
7 childhood educators;

8 (5) provide recommendations concerning the
9 establishment of a unified data collection system for public
10 child-care and early childhood learning programs and services
11 throughout this state;

12 (6) conduct a periodic statewide needs assessment
13 concerning the quality and availability of early childhood
14 education and development programs and services for children from
15 birth to school entry, including an assessment of the availability
16 of high-quality prekindergarten services for educationally
17 disadvantaged children in this state; and

18 (7) assess the capacity and effectiveness of public
19 and private institutions of higher education, including junior
20 colleges, in supporting the preparation of early childhood
21 educators, including the extent to which such institutions have in
22 place articulation agreements, professional development and career
23 advancement plans, and internships or similar opportunities for
24 students to work in a Head Start or prekindergarten program.

25 (b) The council shall hold public hearings and provide
26 opportunities for public comment concerning the activities of the
27 council, including the activities of the council in carrying out

1 duties under Subsection (a).

2 (c) Not later than November 1 of each year, the council
3 shall submit to the governor, the legislature, and the director of
4 the Texas Head Start State Collaboration Office a report concerning
5 the activities of the council, including the activities of the
6 council in carrying out duties under Subsection (a).

7 Sec. 29.176. COORDINATOR. The commissioner of education
8 shall coordinate the activities of the council.

9 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
10 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
11 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
12 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
13 Act takes effect September 1, 2013.