

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 801
By: Kolkhorst
Education
6/3/2021
Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Agricultural education programs are essential to teaching students about agriculture, food, and natural resources. Most importantly, these programs ensure that young students understand where food comes from before it reaches the grocery store. It is also vital that our youth understand the value of agriculture, which serves a foundational role in the Texas economy. While Texas agriculture education programs are offered as an option in Texas middle and high schools, they are not necessarily emphasized in elementary schools.

S.B. 801 expands the opportunities for elementary students to understand and appreciate agriculture education in an age-appropriate way. S.B. 801 requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA), in coordination with the Texas Department of Agriculture and nonprofits with expertise in agriculture education, to develop agriculture education programs for elementary students. S.B. 801 also requires TEA to develop a list of agriculture education programs that may be used by elementary schools and requires the list to be available to schools at no cost to school districts and charter schools.

S.B. 801 amends current law relating to the development of an agriculture education program for public elementary schools.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter Z, Chapter 29, Education Code, by adding Section 29.926, as follows:

Sec. 29.926. AGRICULTURE EDUCATION PROGRAM. (a) Requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to develop an agriculture education program for elementary school students to encourage appreciation and improve students' understanding of agriculture. Requires TEA, in developing the program, to coordinate with the Texas Department of Agriculture and nonprofit organizations with expertise in agriculture education, as identified by TEA.

(b) Requires TEA to develop a list of agriculture education programs approved by TEA and the State Board of Education that may be used as part of the curriculum for elementary school students. Requires that a program included on the list be available to an elementary school at no cost to the school district or open-enrollment charter school.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2021.