



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

FISCAL NOTE

HOUSE BILL NO. 944

PRINTERS NO. 1967

PRIME SPONSOR: M.K. Keller

COST / (SAVINGS)

FUND	FY 2016/17	FY 2017/18
General Fund	\$0	See Fiscal Impact

SUMMARY: House Bill 944, Printer's Number 1967, amends the Public School Code to create the Commission of Agricultural Education Excellence to assist in development and implementation of agricultural education programming.

ANALYSIS: This bill amends the Public School Code (Act 14 of 1949), specifically Section 1549 that addresses agricultural education which requires the Department of Education (PDE) and the Department of Agriculture (PDA) to provide educational resources and programming to kindergarten through secondary schools. An annual report on the status of agricultural education is also required currently. The report is to include stakeholder input from both the agriculture and education communities.

The legislation adds a new Section 1549.1 to create a Commission for Agricultural Education Excellence that will serve as a departmental administrative commission under the concurrent authority of the PDA and PDE. The commission shall assist in developing a Statewide plan for agricultural education and coordinate the implementation of related agricultural education programming with the departments.

The commission shall be administratively housed within the Department of Agriculture and supported by both the PDA and PDE, as provided under this section. An agreement shall be executed between both departments and the commission to define and delineate roles and responsibilities related to the use of staff, land, buildings, quarters, facilities and equipment.

The commission will consist of the Secretary of Education and Secretary of Agriculture or their designees, and chairmanship shall rotate between the two on an annual basis, starting with the Secretary of Education. The following members will be jointly appointed by the Secretaries from lists submitted by the legislature: two farmers; a representative of the agricultural processing and agricultural marketing industries; two faculty members of agricultural sciences, not more than one of whom shall be a faculty member of the College of Agricultural Sciences of the Commonwealth's land grant university; a faculty member of the State System of Higher Education with a background in or knowledge of agricultural education; two teachers of vocational agriculture; a teacher involved in agricultural education other than vocational agriculture; an administrator of a school entity which conducts an agricultural education program; a member of a school district occupational advisory committee; and two members of the business community with knowledge of agricultural education. Members of the committee shall not receive compensation for services, but may be reimbursed for related travel expenses.

The commission shall keep a record of official actions and may promulgate policies, procedures and guidelines as necessary to perform the following duties, such as investigating, reviewing and issuing an

annual report by May 1 each year on the status of agricultural education in the Commonwealth with recommendations to improve agricultural education based on work force trends and program needs.

Both departments shall provide staff to assist the Commission with its duties who may be full-time or part-time and may be assigned to other duties within either agency. The bill outlines six specific staff positions for the commission including an executive director, curriculum specialist, program approval specialist, FFA program specialist, work force development specialist, and agricultural education support specialist.

The bill states that the costs of the commission shall be paid from general government operations funding for both PDA and PDE. The departments may also use funds appropriated by the General Assembly and accept donations from public and private sources, including the Federal Government, to pay for costs.

This legislation would take effect in 60 days upon enactment.

FISCAL IMPACT: While the legislation establishes the Commission for Agricultural Education Excellence in the Public School Code to assist with agricultural education as defined in Section 1549, much of these additional duties and costs are covered under existing operations. For example, the PDA and PDE currently have an Agriculture Education Advisory Committee comprised of stakeholders similar to those outlined in the bill to meet the objectives of Section 1549. This advisory committee provides consultation and recommendations for agricultural education as part of an annual report process, but the committee is not formally established in law.

Both departments shall provide staff to assist the commission with its duties who may be full-time or part-time and may be assigned to other duties within either agency. All staffing costs shall be paid through agency general government operations funding. However, it is possible there could be additional administrative and staffing costs if one or more of the outlined positions are not currently filled or additional support is necessary to meet the needs of the commission.

The bill also provides that the departments may use funds appropriated by the General Assembly to meet the requirements of Section 1549 and operate the commission. Lastly, the departments are permitted to accept donations from public and private sources, including the Federal Government, to provide an additional revenue source to pay for these costs. Whether donations come from educational organizations or agricultural industries, such augmenting revenue could be deposited into a restricted account or special fund for agricultural education.

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Estimates are calculated using the best information available. Actual costs and revenue impact incurred may vary from estimates.