STATE OF NEW YORK

7637

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

April 24, 2025

Introduced by Sen. HINCHEY -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Education

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to establishing the commission for agricultural education excellence

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. The education law is amended by adding a new section 141 to read as follows:

§ 141. Commission for agricultural education excellence. 1. There is hereby established within the department the commission for agricultural education excellence to assist in developing a statewide plan for increasing agricultural literacy and supporting agricultural education. The commissioner shall implement the requirements of the commission within funds available to the department and in conjunction with the department of agriculture and markets, and the department of labor as provided for under this section.

2. (a) The commission shall consist of nineteen members to be appointed as follows:

(i) the commissioner, or their designee;

(ii) the commissioner of agriculture and markets, or their designee;

(iii) the commissioner of labor, or their designee;

(iv) the dean of the college of agriculture and life sciences of Cornell university, or their designee;

(v) the executive director of agriculture education and outreach at Cornell university;

(vi) a member of the New York agriculture in the classroom advisory committee appointed by the chair;

(vii) the president of New York FFA;

(viii) the director of the Cornell cooperative extension, or their designee;

(ix) the president of New York State 4-H;

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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(x) ten members who shall be jointly appointed by the commissioner, the commissioner of agriculture and markets, and the commissioner of labor from lists submitted by the temporary president of the senate and the speaker of the assembly, in consultation with the minority leader of the senate and the majority leader and the minority leader of the assembly as follows:

(1) two farmers;

(2) a representative of the agricultural processing and marketing industries;

(3) two secondary teachers of agriculture, one from a board of cooperative educational services career and technical center and one from a school district appointed by the president of the New York Association of Agricultural Educators;

(4) a representative of the state university of New York agricultural and technical colleges that offer agriculture majors, who has a background in or knowledge of agricultural education;

(5) a secondary school administrator from a school that conducts an agricultural education program;

(6) one member from any college or university that offers state-approved agricultural science teacher preparation programs or a public community college in this state that provides an articulated agricultural science teacher education course of study; and

(7) two members of the business community with knowledge of agricultural education.

(b) Each member of the commission shall serve for a term of three years, except that of the initial members so appointed: seven members shall serve for a term of three years, six members shall serve for a term of two years, and six members shall serve a term of one year. Such initial terms shall be randomly determined among the members. Any vacancy in the commission shall be filled for the unexpired term in the same manner as the original appointment.

(c) The chair of the commission shall rotate on an annual basis between the commissioner, the commissioner of agriculture and markets, and the commissioner of labor, with the commissioner of agriculture and markets chairing the first annual rotation.

(d) A majority of the members of the commission then in office shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of any business or the exercise of any power or function of the commission.

(e) Members of the commission shall not receive compensation for their services as members, but shall be allowed their actual and necessary expenses reasonably incurred in the performance of their duties. No member shall be disqualified from holding any other public office or employment by reason of such person's appointment or service as a member notwithstanding the provisions of any other law to the contrary.

(f) The department, in conjunction with the department of agriculture and markets and the department of labor, shall provide the commission with such staff, equipment, facilities and such other resources as the commission may need to carry out its powers and duties.

(g) The commission shall keep a record of all of its proceedings and actions.

3. The commission shall:

(a) make recommendations on policy, programs, and initiatives aimed at:

(i) deepening the public understanding of the agriculture, food, and natural resources industry and the importance of locally sourced food supplies;

(ii) educating the public on the ability of the agricultural industry to assist the state in achieving the goals set by the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act;

(iii) increasing the effectiveness and accountability of agricultural education programs;

(iv) addressing industry workforce needs, including attracting and preparing young people for agricultural careers;

(v) providing in-service training for agricultural workers in the agricultural industry; and

(vi) promoting technology focused jobs and careers in the agricultural industry;

(b) consult with secondary schools and boards of cooperative educational services to facilitate articulation agreements with postsecondary institutions of higher education;

(c) provide support and technical assistance to supervised agricultural experience, also known as work-based learning programs, based on student and industry needs;

(d) provide support and technical assistance for K-12 programs using food and agriculture as context for learning;

(e) offer support and coordination for statewide and local activities related to FFA programs;

(f) offer support and coordination for statewide and local activities related to 4-H programs;

(g) investigate, review, and issue an annual report on the status of agricultural literacy and education in the state required pursuant to subdivision four of this section that includes the location of all resources provided by the commission;

(h) serve as a link between the agribusiness sector and the agricultural literacy and education system to communicate mutual concerns, needs, and projections;

(i) establish and maintain a system of increased awareness of agricultural literacy education and its continued need to all residents of New York; and

(j) study and make recommendations on model curriculum or instruction on agricultural literacy and education in an appropriate place in the curriculum of elementary, middle and high school students.

4. By May first, two thousand twenty-six, and by May first of each year thereafter, the commission shall submit a report to the governor and the legislature on the status of agricultural education in the state of New York. The report shall:

(a) outline agricultural literacy and education programs and achievements;

(b) assess the trends and needs in secondary and both formal and informal postsecondary agricultural education and training;

(c) investigate and assess workforce trends of the agriculture, food, and natural resources industry;

(d) assess and make programming recommendations for meeting the training needs for individuals not pursuing formal postsecondary education;

(e) identify critical needs, challenges and opportunities in the agriculture, food, and natural resources industry in the state, its workforce, and agricultural communities, and identify how to best strengthen the industry for growth and profitability;

(f) consider the manner in which funds are acquired and used to support agricultural education activities;

(g) highlight new initiatives and recommend future program needs;

(h) make recommendations on model curriculum or instruction on agricultural literacy and education in an appropriate place in the curriculum of elementary, middle and high schools;

(i) make recommendations to the governor and the legislature regarding legislative and regulatory changes to improve agricultural literacy and education; and

(j) be shared annually to the legislative committees with jurisdiction over agricultural, education and labor policy.

5. The implementation of this section shall be subject to funds appropriated to the department, the department of agriculture and markets, and the department of labor for such purposes. The department may accept grants and donations from public and private sources, including the federal government, to pay for costs incurred for the implementation and continuance of the provisions of this section.

§ 2. This act shall take effect immediately.