STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2nd Session of the 54th Legislature (2014)

HOUSE BILL 3470 By: Nelson

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to children; creating the Foster Children Education Enhancement Task Force; providing termination date; stating purpose of the Task Force; providing for membership; establishing appointment deadline; directing how vacancies should be filled; requiring organizational meeting; providing for selection of officers; specifying meeting frequency; stating duties; requiring compliance with certain acts; prohibiting travel reimbursement; providing staff assistance; permitting use of public and private resources; requiring submission of Task Force report by a certain date; providing for noncodification; and providing an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law not to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes reads as follows:

A. There is hereby created until December 31, 2015, the "Foster Children Education Enhancement Task Force". The purpose of the Task Force shall be to study the educational challenges facing children in the custody and care of the Department of Human Services.

B. The Task Force shall consist of eleven (11) members as follows:

1. The Director of the Department of Human Services, or designee;

2. The Superintendent of Public Instruction, or designee;

3. The Director of the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education, or designee;

4. The Chancellor of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, or designee;

5. Two members of the House Human Services Committee or House Appropriations Subcommittee on Human Services, appointed by the Speaker of the Oklahoma House of Representatives;

6. Two members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee or Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services, appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Oklahoma State Senate;

7. One member who is a current foster parent of school-age children, appointed by the Speaker of the Oklahoma House of Representatives;

8. One member who works for the Department of Human Services as a child welfare specialist or supervisor, appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Oklahoma State Senate; and

9. One member who is a former foster child who is currently enrolled in or a recent graduate of a post-high school education program, appointed by the Governor.

C. Appointments to the Task Force shall be made by November 1, 2014. Members of the Task Force shall serve at the pleasure of the appointing authority. Vacancies in a position shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

D. The Task Force shall conduct an organizational meeting not later than November 31, 2014. The Task Force shall elect a chair and cochair at the organizational meeting. The Task Force shall meet at least once monthly.

E. The Task Force shall investigate and make recommendations regarding:

1. How to ensure children in the custody of the Department of Human Services are receiving the necessary educational services in preparation for active citizenship and postsecondary education or entry into the workforce;

2. Solutions to avoid loss of educational credits due to changes in placement;

3. How to develop alternative education plans for children in the custody of the Department, including, but not limited to, online programs, the General Educational Development (GED) credential, career and technology education training, higher education and other education programs; and

4. Any other educational issues or challenges associated with children in the custody of the Department.

F. The Task Force shall be subject to the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act or the Oklahoma Open Records Act.

G. Members of the Task Force shall serve without compensation, and shall not be reimbursed for necessary travel expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

H. Staff assistance for the Task Force shall be provided by the Department of Human Services.

I. The Task Force may make use of any resources, both public and private, that will provide information and analysis that assists in executing its statutory mission.

J. The Task Force shall submit to the Governor, the President Pro Tempore of the Oklahoma State Senate, and the Speaker of the Oklahoma House of Representatives a report no later than December 31, 2015, that identifies the educational challenges facing children in the custody of the Department of Human Services and recommends how children in the custody of the Department throughout the state can be better served to ensure they have the educational tools necessary for adulthood.

SECTION 2. This act shall become effective November 1, 2014.

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