

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA
ONE HUNDRED FIFTH LEGISLATURE
FIRST SESSION

LEGISLATIVE BILL 484

Introduced by Kolowski, 31.

Read first time January 17, 2017

Committee: Education

- 1 A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to schools; to create and provide duties for
- 2 the School Financing Review Commission; to state intent relating to
- 3 appropriations; and to declare an emergency.
- 4 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1 Section 1. (1) The School Financing Review Commission is created.
2 The commission shall consist of twenty members, including: (a) Three
3 members of the Legislature, including one member of the Revenue Committee
4 of the Legislature, one member of the Education Committee of the
5 Legislature, and one member of the Appropriations Committee of the
6 Legislature, appointed by the Executive Board of the Legislative Council;
7 (b) the Property Tax Administrator or his or her designee, who shall be a
8 nonvoting, ex officio member; (c) the council director of the Educational
9 Service Unit Coordinating Council; (d) the Commissioner of Education or
10 his or her designee; (e) a representative of the Governor selected by the
11 Governor; (f) two members representing postsecondary education with
12 expertise in the area of school finance; (g) two members who reside in a
13 Class II school district, one of whom shall be a school administrator and
14 one of whom shall be a school board member; (h) two members who reside in
15 a Class III school district, one of whom shall be a school administrator
16 and one of whom shall be a school board member; (i) two members who
17 reside in a Class IV school district, one of whom shall be a school
18 administrator and one of whom shall be a school board member; (j) two
19 members who reside in a Class V school district, one of whom shall be a
20 school administrator and one of whom shall be a school board member; and
21 (k) three members from the state at large, one from each congressional
22 district, who reside in school districts of varied sizes and with varying
23 percentages of limited English proficiency students and poverty students.
24 At least one of the members appointed pursuant to this subdivision shall
25 have experience in the teaching profession in public schools, at least
26 one shall have experience in business, and at least one shall have
27 experience in agriculture-related business.

28 (2) The members described in subdivisions (1)(f) through (k) of this
29 section shall be appointed by the Commissioner of Education to serve
30 through December 31, 2026. To the extent possible, the membership of the
31 commission shall be diverse in terms of race, gender, and other

1 demographic factors. Vacancies shall be filled by the Commissioner of
2 Education for the remainder of the term. The Commissioner of Education or
3 his or her designee shall be the chairperson of the commission, and the
4 commission shall elect a vice-chairperson from among its members. Members
5 of the commission shall not receive any compensation for their services
6 but shall be reimbursed for their actual and necessary expenses incurred
7 as members of the commission as provided in sections 81-1174 to 81-1177.

8 (3) The commission shall cease to exist on December 31, 2026, unless
9 extended by the Legislature.

10 (4) For administrative purposes, the commission shall be housed
11 within the State Department of Education.

12 Sec. 2. (1) The School Financing Review Commission shall conduct an
13 in-depth review of the financing of the public elementary and secondary
14 schools. The commission shall:

15 (a) Examine the option of using income as a component in the
16 financing of schools;

17 (b) Examine the option of using sales tax as a component in the
18 financing of schools, including, but not limited to, an examination of
19 the experience of any other states with such option;

20 (c) Examine financing methods used in other states which offer
21 alternatives to heavy reliance on property tax;

22 (d) Examine financing issues as they relate to the quality and
23 performance of the schools;

24 (e) Examine options for funding expanded prekindergarten services;

25 (f) Examine options for funding college-readiness and career-
26 readiness programs, including, but not limited to, programs of
27 excellence, dual-enrollment courses, and career academies;

28 (g) Examine the costs and resources necessary to educate poverty
29 students and limited English proficiency students;

30 (h) Examine methods used by other states to fund kindergarten
31 through twelfth grade infrastructure needs;

1 (i) Examine other issues related to public elementary and secondary
2 school finance as necessary and as determined by the chairperson;

3 (j) Prepare a report on the progress of the work of the commission
4 and submit it electronically to the Legislature on or before December 31,
5 2017; and

6 (k) Prepare a preliminary report and present it to the Legislative
7 Council in November 2018. A final report with recommendations on
8 maintaining adequate and equitable funding for public schools in light of
9 information gathered through the review shall be presented to the
10 Governor, the State Board of Education, and electronically to the
11 Legislature by December 1, 2018.

12 (2) On and after December 1, 2018, to assure that every Nebraskan is
13 educated for success, the commission shall:

14 (a) Review the mission of providing Nebraskans the opportunity to
15 acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to be productive individuals;

16 (b) Review, make recommendations on, and report on the progress of
17 the goals established by the Legislature and the State Department of
18 Education. The committee may solicit comments, concerns, and case studies
19 from all sizes of schools in Nebraska and develop best practices for
20 implementing and achieving such goals; and

21 (c) Review the implementation of the Tax Equity and Educational
22 Opportunities Support Act and the implementation of any recommendations
23 contained in reports issued under section 3 of this act.

24 Sec. 3. On or before July 1 of each even-numbered year beginning in
25 2020, the School Financing Review Commission shall report to the
26 Governor, to the State Board of Education, and electronically to the
27 Legislature on the adequacy of school funding sources. The State
28 Department of Education and the staff of the Revenue Committee, the
29 Education Committee, and the Appropriations Committee of the Legislature,
30 with the consent of the chairpersons of such committees, may assist as
31 needed and requested by the chairperson of the commission in accordance

1 with guidelines developed by the commission.

2 Sec. 4. The School Financing Review Commission may:

3 (1) Hire staff, including, but not limited to, consultants; and

4 (2) Obtain assistance from the State Department of Education and the

5 Department of Revenue in acquiring data needed to carry out its duties.

6 Sec. 5. It is the intent of the Legislature to appropriate at least

7 one hundred thousand dollars from the General Fund to the School

8 Financing Review Commission to carry out its duties.

9 Sec. 6. Since an emergency exists, this act takes effect when
10 passed and approved according to law.