



Hundredth Legislature - First Session - 2007
Committee Statement
LB 520

Hearing Date: March 6, 2007
Committee On: Education

Introducer(s): (Howard)
Title: Create the Early Childhood Education Legislative Study Group

Roll Call Vote – Final Committee Action:

Advanced to General File
Advanced to General File with Amendments
X Indefinitely Postponed

Vote Results:

7	Yes	Senators Adams, Avery, Burling, Howard, Johnson, Kopplin, and Raikes
	No	
	Present, not voting	
1	Absent	Senator Ashford

Proponents:

Senator Gwen Howard
Marcia Corr

Jay Sears
Mark Whitehead

Representing:

Introducer
Nebraska Department of Education / State Board of Education
Nebraska State Education Association
Girl Scouts of Nebraska

Opponents:

Representing:

Neutral:

Representing:

Summary of purpose and/or changes:

Legislative Bill 520 would create the Early Childhood Education Legislative Study Group. The commission would consist of 16 members:

1. Three members of the Legislature;
 2. The Commissioner of Education or a representative;
 3. A representative of the Governor;
 4. Two early childhood educators from non-school preschool programs;
 5. Two early childhood educators from school-based preschool programs;
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6. Two individuals from postsecondary education with expertise in early childhood education;
7. One representative from the Department of Health and Human Services with responsibilities related to early childhood health and development;
8. One representative from a nonprofit public interest organization with a primary focus on meeting the needs of children; and
9. Two representatives of the general public from the state at large.

Except for the senators and the Commissioner, the members would be appointed by the Governor with the approval of the Legislature. The senators would be appointed by the Executive Board. The appointments would be made by July 1, 2007, with members serving through June 30, 2009. Members would not be compensated, but would receive expenses.

An intent is stated to establish financing through the Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act and other coordinated funding programs to support universally available early childhood education programs through the public schools and to design a system of state accreditation. The accreditation system would assure adequate training and education of teachers, a developmentally sound curriculum and instructional materials, and the adoption on minimum health and safety standards for early childhood programs in public schools.

The Study Group would conduct a review of the currently available programs and the financing available to support such programs and would project the state investment require to finance universal availability. The Study Group would be required to:

1. Examine methods to phase in full funding for the 3-5 age group;
2. Examine financing used in other states and nations;
3. Examine methods to coordinate programs available through private nonprofit and for-profit organizations with public school programs, including school district contracts with entities meeting state program standards;
4. Examine the impact of current budget and tax limitations on the growth of early childhood education;
5. Examine standards that promote optimal learning and that are integrated with state curriculum content standards;
6. Examine minimum licensure and certification standards for teachers in early childhood education programs; and
7. Prepare a report with recommendations and an implementation plan, with a preliminary report due March 1, 2008 and a final report due January 1, 2009.

The provisions of the Act would terminate on June 30, 2009.

Explanation of amendments, if any:

Senator Ron Raikes, Chairperson