

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA  
ONE HUNDREDTH LEGISLATURE  
FIRST SESSION  
**LEGISLATIVE BILL 595**

Introduced by Kopplin, 3

Read first time January 17, 2007

Committee: Education

A BILL

1 FOR AN ACT relating to school finance; to amend section 79-1001,  
2 Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2006; to create  
3 the Task Force on School Funding for Economic Growth;  
4 to prescribe duties; to require reporting; to repeal the  
5 original sections; and to declare an emergency.  
6 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1           Section 1. Section 79-1001, Revised Statutes Cumulative  
2 Supplement, 2006, is amended to read:

3           79-1001 Sections 79-1001 to 79-1033 shall be known and  
4 may be cited as the Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities  
5 Support Act. The Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support  
6 Act terminates on June 30, 2009.

7           Sec. 2. (1) The Legislature hereby finds and declares  
8 that a high quality system of public education is essential to:

9           (a) Attract and retain a dynamic and educated workforce  
10 and a competitive economy;

11           (b) Maintain a high quality of life for all Nebraskans;  
12 and

13           (c) Broaden the economic base of Nebraska and reduce the  
14 tax burden on citizens.

15           (2) The Legislature further finds and declares that the  
16 ideal system for funding public schools:

17           (a) Is fair, understandable, predictable, and stable;

18           (b) Assures equity in educational opportunities across  
19 the state;

20           (c) Provides sufficient support and resources for all  
21 school districts to meet state accreditation standards; and

22           (d) Eliminates or limits property tax funding for the  
23 core educational services provided by public schools.

24           Sec. 3. (1) There is hereby established the Task Force on  
25 School Funding for Economic Growth. The responsibility of the task

1 force will be to develop and propose a system of funding public  
2 schools that will move Nebraska forward in its economic and social  
3 growth and accomplish the goals described in section 2 of this act.

4 (2) The task force shall include seventeen members,  
5 appointed as follows:

6 (a) The chairpersons of the Education, Revenue, and  
7 Appropriations Committees of the Legislature;

8 (b) The Governor or his or her representative;

9 (c) The Commissioner of Education or his or her  
10 representative;

11 (d) Three representatives of business, industry, and  
12 economic development organizations, appointed by the Governor;

13 (e) Five representatives of kindergarten through twelfth  
14 grade education, including school board members, teachers,  
15 administrators, parents, and students, appointed by the Governor;

16 (f) Two representatives of postsecondary education,  
17 appointed by the Governor; and

18 (g) Two representatives of community organizations,  
19 appointed by the Governor.

20 (3) The members of the task force shall be appointed  
21 within thirty days after the effective date of this act, and the  
22 task force shall hold its organizational meeting by July 1, 2007.

23 Members of the task force shall receive no compensation but shall  
24 be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses as provided in  
25 sections 81-1174 to 81-1177.

1           Sec. 4. The Task Force on School Funding for Economic  
2 Growth shall hold public meetings in each of the congressional  
3 districts and seek public input through all appropriate means.  
4 A preliminary report shall be made public and provided to the  
5 Legislature by February 14, 2008, and a final report shall be made  
6 public and provided to the Legislature by October 1, 2008. The  
7 report shall include a plan to accomplish the goals described in  
8 section 2 of this act with appropriate implementation strategies.  
9 The plan will address, but not be limited to, the following  
10 elements:

11           (1) Sufficient funding levels to meet state accreditation  
12 standards and fund essential educational opportunities in each  
13 school district in the state;

14           (2) Appropriate mechanisms to address special needs,  
15 sparsity, poverty, and the growing immigrant population;

16           (3) Incentives to reward districts that employ more  
17 highly qualified teaching and instructional support staff, as  
18 measured by level of certification, postsecondary education,  
19 experience, knowledge, and skill standards, and to fund a  
20 nationally competitive starting salary;

21           (4) Substantial reduction, if not elimination, of the  
22 property tax as the primary support for essential education; and

23           (5) Incentives for an efficient organization and  
24 administration of the public schools.

25           Sec. 5. It is the intent of the Legislature to

1 appropriate one hundred twenty-five thousand dollars for fiscal  
2 year 2007-08 and one hundred twenty-five thousand dollars for  
3 fiscal year 2008-09 for support of the task force created by this  
4 act. Expenditures may be made for employment of school finance  
5 consultants, data analysis, public meetings, and communications.  
6 Staff, logistical and technical support for the task force will be  
7 provided by the Legislature and the State Department of Education.

8           Sec. 6. Sections 2 to 6 of this act terminate on October  
9 15, 2008.

10           Sec. 7. Original section 79-1001, Revised Statutes  
11 Cumulative Supplement, 2006, is repealed.

12           Sec. 8. Since an emergency exists, this act takes effect  
13 when passed and approved according to law.