

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA
ONE HUNDRED FOURTH LEGISLATURE
FIRST SESSION

LEGISLATIVE BILL 435

Introduced by Cook, 13.

Read first time January 20, 2015

Committee: Education

- 1 A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to education; to adopt the Time to Teach and
- 2 Time to Learn Act; and to provide operative dates.
- 3 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1 Section 1. Sections 1 to 7 of this act shall be known and may be
2 cited as the Time to Teach and Time to Learn Act.

3 Sec. 2. The Legislature finds that the typical school day and
4 school calendar has been burdened with too many programs unrelated to the
5 primary function of schools which is teaching and learning the curriculum
6 established by the school board of a school district. The Legislature
7 also finds that adequate time to teach is a crucial factor in student
8 success. It is the intent of the Legislature to provide incentives to
9 school districts that prioritize time to teach and time to learn the
10 school curriculum through the Time to Teach and Time to Learn Act.

11 Sec. 3. (1)(a) The Class Size and Instructional Time Task force is
12 created. The task force shall be composed of (i) three members of the
13 Education Committee of the Legislature appointed by the chairperson of
14 the committee, (ii) two classroom teachers, two principals, two
15 superintendents, two school board members, and two representatives of
16 teacher training institutions, appointed by [XX], and (iii) the
17 Commissioner of Education and one staff member of the State Department of
18 Education having responsibility for educational research and data
19 collection, appointed by the commissioner.

20 (b) The task force shall direct a research project to assess class
21 sizes and instructional time at school districts across the state. On or
22 before December 1, 2015, the task force shall report electronically to
23 the Legislature its findings and recommendations for creating incentives
24 for school districts to reduce class sizes and increase instructional
25 time, including improved utilization of the poverty allowance funding
26 provided pursuant to the Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support
27 Act.

28 (2) The State Department of Education shall analyze class size and
29 instructional time data on behalf of the task force. The analysis shall
30 include, but not be limited to, the following data elements:

31 (a) The number of students in prekindergarten through grade twelve

1 assigned to specific teachers, using student, teacher, course, and
2 section codes data from the Nebraska Staff and Student Reporting System;

3 (b) The number of students in poverty assigned to each specific
4 teacher, as disaggregated from data described in subdivision (a) of this
5 subsection, using the percentages of poverty per school building
6 identified in section 79-1007.06 and other definitions of poverty
7 utilized by the State Department of Education; and

8 (c) The amount of instructional time, measured in days and hours
9 provided by each school district.

10 Sec. 4. Beginning with school fiscal year 2016-17, the Time to
11 Teach and Time to Learn Grant Program is established in the State
12 Department of Education to encourage school districts to increase time
13 for teachers to teach and time for students to learn. A school district
14 may apply for a grant pursuant to the grant program of up to one hundred
15 dollars per impacted student and up to five hundred dollars per impacted
16 teacher or principal for increasing time available for teaching and
17 learning by measures which may include, but are not limited to, the
18 following:

19 (1) Increasing the number of instructional days;

20 (2) Creating blocks of uninterrupted instructional time within the
21 school day;

22 (3) Reducing class sizes for at-risk learners to optimum levels
23 established in rules and regulations adopted and promulgated by the State
24 Board of Education, having due regard for special learning challenges of
25 students in poverty;

26 (4) Developing a classroom shortage facilities plan to address
27 facilities space issues related to class size reduction;

28 (5) Providing collaboration time among teachers and administrators
29 to set group and individual student learning goals, establish strategies
30 to address learning issues, and use diagnostic assessment data and other
31 data relevant to student learning; and

1 (6) Providing time for teacher collaboration to improve student
2 outcomes, including team teaching, professional rounds, and peer
3 assistance and mentoring.

4 Sec. 5. A school district may apply to the State Department of
5 Education for a grant pursuant to the Time to Teach and Time to Learn
6 Grant Program. Applicants are eligible to receive a grant up to the
7 amount requested in the grant application. If funds appropriated by the
8 Legislature are not adequate to fully fund all grant applications, the
9 State Board of Education shall select grant applications based on the
10 following criteria:

11 (1) Consistency with rules, regulations, and guidelines adopted and
12 promulgated by the state board;

13 (2) Broad distribution relative to school size;

14 (3) Student poverty in the district submitting the application;

15 (4) Geographic distribution; and

16 (5) Other factors established by the state board.

17 Sec. 6. Grant funds received by a school district or a local system
18 under the Time to Teach and Time to Learn Act are supplemental to any
19 funds received by a school district as a poverty allowance pursuant to
20 the Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act and shall not be
21 considered other actual receipts for purposes of section 79-1018.01.

22 Sec. 7. The State Board of Education shall adopt and promulgate
23 rules and regulations to carry out the Time to Teach and Time to Learn
24 Act.

25 Sec. 8. Sections 4, 5, 6, and 7 of this act become operative July
26 1, 2016. The other sections of this act become operative on their
27 effective date.