

One Hundred Fourth Legislature - First Session - 2015

Introducer's Statement of Intent

LB 617

Chairperson: Senator Kate Sullivan

Committee: Education

Date of Hearing: February 24, 2015

The following constitutes the reasons for this bill and the purposes which are sought to be accomplished thereby:

LB 617, the Working to Improve Nebraska Schools (WINS) Act would institute 5 major changes to help further student achievement and school accountability. These would include:

1. Ending Social promotion after 3rd grade.

Should a student fail to be proficient in state and local reading assessments at grade 3, they will be held in grade 3 until proficiency is reached. Schools shall provide intensive summer programs and supplemental reading education opportunities to try and keep students on track in terms of “social promotion” by working to bring their reading skills to par with their peers, allowing them to advance in grade level.

2. School Grading.

The State Department of Education will set up programs and statistical models for grading the quality and progress of individual schools across the state. They will be ranked in an A-F fashion.

A — Making excellent progress;

B — Making above-average progress;

C — Making satisfactory progress;

D — Making less than satisfactory progress; and

F — Failing to make adequate progress.

Maintenance of an “A” grade, or improvement by a grade level will merit schools a monetary (budgetary) reward. A school's grade shall be based on a combination of: (a) Student achievement scores on the statewide assessment for all students enrolled in the school; (b) Student learning gains for all students enrolled in the school as measured by the statewide assessment; and (c) Student learning gains of the students enrolled in the school scoring in the lowest twenty-fifth percentile in reading and mathematics on the statewide assessment.

The Legislature can also use these grades, as well as cumulative grades for school districts, to decide on the amount of any appropriated performance based funding.

3. Create Alternative Teacher Certification.

The State Board of Education is empowered to issue teaching certificates to additional qualified candidates for teaching, which include: Those qualified by examination and college credits; those with a valid doctoral degree from a properly accredited institution; those with a valid teaching certificate from another state or from a national accreditation board.

4. Establish the School Recognition Program.

Working in conjunction with the School Grading Process, schools attaining an A rating will be allocated monies that can be used for non-recurring bonuses for faculty and staff or for special equipment geared toward increasing student performance.

5. Require Principal Approval for Teacher Transfer.

All teacher transfers within a district are to be approved by the "receiving" principal of the school the teacher is wishing to transfer to.

Principal Introducer: _____

Senator Tyson Larson