

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION - 2021
COMMITTEE STATEMENT
LB87

Hearing Date: Tuesday March 02, 2021
Committee On: Education
Introducer: Morfeld
One Liner: Provide for mental health first aid training for school districts and change provisions relating to the use of lottery funds

Roll Call Vote - Final Committee Action:
Indefinitely postponed

Vote Results:

Aye:	6	Senators Day, Linehan, McKinney, Murman, Sanders, Walz
Nay:	1	Senator Pansing Brooks
Absent:		
Present Not Voting:	1	Senator Morfeld

Oral Testimony:

Proponents: Capt. Steve Cerveny	Representing: Omaha Police Dept.
Opponents:	Representing:
Neutral:	Representing:

Submitted Written Testimony:

Proponents: Cora Schrader Jason Hayes	Representing: Children's Hospital & Medical Center NSEA
Opponents:	Representing:
Neutral:	Representing:

Summary of purpose and/or changes:

Section 1. The State Department of Education must establish a training program in mental health first aid for teachers and other employees of a school district or educational service unit participating in the mental health first aid grant described in section 3.

The training must be given by trainers who have been properly certified by a national organization for behavioral health to provide training meeting the requirements of this section.

The training must also provide an opportunity for teachers and other designated employees to become trainers in mental health first aid.

The mental health first aid training must include training on:

- a) The skills, resources, and knowledge necessary to assist students in crisis to connect with appropriate local mental health care services;
- b) Mental health resources, including the location of local community mental health centers; and
- c) Action plans and protocols for referral to such resources.

A person receiving training must also receive instruction preparing him or her to:

- a) Safely de-escalate crisis situation;
- b) Recognize the signs and symptoms of mental illness, including such psychiatric conditions as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major clinical depression, and anxiety disorders; and
- c) Timely refer a student to mental health services in the early stages of the development of a mental disorder to avoid subsequent behavioral health care and to enhance the effectiveness of mental health services.

Section 2. The Nebraska Education Improvement Fund receives a forty-four and one-half percent (44.5%) of the remaining lottery funds after prizes and operating expenses are paid and a specific transfer is made to the Compulsive Gamblers Assistance Fund. Of this transfer and any other transfer made to the fund, the amount necessary for administering and evaluating the fund may be retained. Additionally, ten percent of the revenue received in the prior fiscal year must be retained.

The remaining funds are then allocated through year 2020-21 to various funds, one of which is the Department of Education Innovative Grant Fund, which receives seventeen percent (17%) of the remaining allocated funds.

LB87 changes this so that the allocations no longer end after year 2020-21 and instead continue every fiscal year.

The bill also removes the requirement that the Education Committee of the Legislature submit recommendations to the Clerk of the Legislature regarding how the fund should be allocated to best advance the educational priorities of the state for the five year period beginning with fiscal year 2021-22.

Section 2 also eliminates obsolete references and all references to the now-obsolete Education Innovation Fund. The Education Innovation Fund terminated on June 30, 2016, and any money left in the fund on that date was transferred to the Nebraska Education Improvement Fund.

Section 3 requires the State Board of Education to establish innovation grant programs that include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a) Mental health first aid;
- b) Early literacy;
- c) Quality instructional materials;
- d) Personalized learning through digital education; or
- e) Other innovation areas identified by the board.

These are established with funding from the Nebraska Education Improvement Fund.

Currently and under LB87, school districts, educational service units, or combinations of entities that includes at least one school district or ESU can be a grantee.

Present law requires that the school district or the ESU be the fiscal agent to administer the fund if the grantee is a combination of a school districts or ESUs and other entities. LB87 removes this requirement so an entity, which is not an ESU or a school district, can be a fiscal agent and administer the fund.

LB87 also eliminates the requirement that the grants only be awarded to applications that are sufficiently innovative and to have a high chance of success.

Lynne Walz, Chairperson