

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA
NINETY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE
FIRST SESSION

LEGISLATIVE BILL 740

Introduced by Landis, 46

Read first time January 17, 2001

Committee: Education

A BILL

- 1 FOR AN ACT relating to schools; to adopt the School Violence
- 2 Prevention Act.
- 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
2 and may be cited as the School Violence Prevention Act.

3 Sec. 2. (1) It is the intent of the Legislature to
4 establish a demonstration grant program to enhance the conflict
5 management and dispute resolution skills of Nebraska students and
6 teachers to help ensure that Nebraska schools are safe and orderly
7 places where teachers can teach and students can learn. Conflict,
8 in differing degrees, occurs daily in life. Conflict in and of
9 itself is not necessarily good or bad. It is the way that conflict
10 is handled that makes the outcome positive or negative. If handled
11 effectively, conflict can create a good learning experience. If
12 handled ineffectively, conflict can escalate into violence.

13 (2) Schools are microcosms of society. Students and
14 teachers bring the attitudes and behaviors of family members,
15 community leaders, and national figures into the school building.
16 Some of those attitudes and behaviors are inconsistent with
17 creating and maintaining a safe and disciplined learning
18 environment. Although conflict is a natural part of life, many
19 children and adults lack the skills necessary to resolve conflicts
20 peacefully and effectively. The acquisition of conflict management
21 and dispute resolution skills that empower students to take
22 responsibility for their own conflicts and for the resolution of
23 those conflicts is the focus of the School Violence Prevention
24 Program established in section 4 of this act.

25 (3) A well-designed, comprehensive, districtwide approach
26 to dispute resolution that is sustainable over time has many
27 benefits. Many schools and school districts lack a comprehensive
28 approach to teaching conflict management skills which is critical

1 to the maintenance of student discipline in schools. The expertise
2 exists within the State Department of Education, educational
3 service units, and mediation centers to assist school districts
4 with the assessment, evaluation, and training necessary to
5 establish and maintain comprehensive, districtwide conflict
6 management programs.

7 Sec. 3. For purposes of the School Violence Prevention
8 Act:

9 (1) Conflict management means any process that assists
10 persons with a dispute to resolve their differences without
11 litigation, prosecution, serious disruption of the school
12 environment, or violence;

13 (2) Department means the State Department of Education;

14 (3) Educational service unit means a provider of services
15 to schools established under the Educational Service Units Act; and

16 (4) Mediation center means an approved center as defined
17 in section 25-2903.

18 Sec. 4. (1) The department shall establish the School
19 Violence Prevention Program, a competitive, demonstration grant
20 program to assist school districts with the development, funding,
21 implementation, maintenance, and evaluation of comprehensive
22 conflict management programs. The department shall establish
23 criteria by which competitive grant applications are judged and
24 awards are given. It is the intent of the Legislature that grant
25 awards be geographically dispersed and that the department's
26 capacity to manage such program be appropriately supported.

27 (2) Educational service units may apply for grants under
28 the School Violence Prevention Program. Applications from an

1 educational service unit shall include documentation which
2 demonstrates (a) collaboration with a mediation center, (b)
3 participation by at least three school districts in the service
4 area of the educational service unit, and (c) reasons why such
5 school districts are in need of comprehensive conflict management
6 programs.

7 (3) School districts may apply for grants under the
8 School Violence Prevention Program. Applications from a school
9 district shall include documentation which demonstrates (a)
10 collaboration with the local educational service unit, (b)
11 collaboration with a mediation center, and (c) evidence of a
12 conflict management program plan.

13 (4) School districts receiving grants shall, on an annual
14 basis, (a) collect data detailing the incidence of conflict in the
15 district and the district's capacity to handle conflict, (b)
16 evaluate the district's capacity to handle conflict, and (c) revise
17 the district's conflict management program plan accordingly.

18 Sec. 5. (1) It is the intent of the Legislature that
19 \$250,000 be appropriated to the department each year for fiscal
20 years 2001-02 through 2005-06 to carry out the purposes of the
21 School Violence Prevention Act.

22 (2) Up to fifty percent of the money appropriated in any
23 fiscal year can be used by grantees for pre-implementation
24 activities. Such activities include, but are not limited to:

25 (a) Consulting with the school safety and security
26 committee;

27 (b) Developing assessment and evaluation instruments for
28 use by a school district;

1 (c) Providing inservice training for school teachers and
2 staff;

3 (d) Assisting in preparation and implementation of the
4 conflict management program plan;

5 (e) Developing and assess appropriate materials and
6 resources to support the school district's school safety and
7 security program and conflict management program;

8 (f) Providing parent education and training;

9 (g) Providing education sessions for school board
10 members, community organizations, or others who may be involved
11 with the conflict management program; or

12 (h) Performing any activity that builds the capacity of
13 an educational service unit or a school district to develop, fund,
14 implement, maintain, or evaluate a conflict management program or
15 plan.

16 (3) Educational service units or school districts may
17 contract with mediation centers or others to carry out the purposes
18 of the act.

19 Sec. 6. The department shall submit an annual report on
20 the activities of the School Violence Prevention Act to the
21 Governor and the Clerk of the Legislature on or before January 1
22 each year.

23 Sec. 7. The department may adopt and promulgate rules
24 and regulations to carry out the purposes of the School Violence
25 Prevention Act.