



Ninety-Ninth Legislature - First Session - 2005
Committee Statement
LB 347

Hearing Date: February 1, 2005
Committee On: Education

Introducer(s): (Bourne, Howard, Thompson)
Title: Provide for socioeconomic integration plans relating to the enrollment option program

Roll Call Vote – Final Committee Action:

- Advanced to General File
 - Advanced to General File with Amendments
 - X Indefinitely Postponed
-

Vote Results:

6	Yes	Senators Howard, Kopplin, McDonald, Raikes, Schrock, and Stuhr
0	No	
1	Present, not voting	Senator Bourne
1	Absent	Senator Byars

Proponents:
 Senator Patrick Bourne
 John Mackiel
 Richard D. Eisenhauer
 Kerri Nazarenius
 Herb Schimek

Representing:
 Introducer
 Omaha Public Schools
 Lexington Public Schools
 Grand Island Public Schools
 Nebraska State Education Association

Opponents:
 Al Inzerello
 Douglas Lewis

Representing:
 Westside Community Schools
 Ralston Public Schools

Neutral:

Representing:

Summary of purpose and/or changes:

Legislative Bill 347 would allow school districts with socioeconomic integration plans to have earlier deadlines and different acceptance standards for option enrollment applications.

Section 79-232 currently provides findings and declaration language that recognizes parents and legal guardians as having primary responsibility for ensuring that their children receive the best education possible. An intent is stated to recognize that responsibility through public school options. However, an exception is found in language recognizing desegregation and racial

integration as of such critical importance that district with desegregation plans are authorized to deny educational options for parents. This proposal would amend the exception by also declaring socioeconomic integration to be of critical importance and thus allowing districts with socioeconomic integration plans to also deny educational options for parents.

Section 79-237 would be amended by adding school districts socioeconomic integration plans adopted by the school board to the school districts with option enrollment application deadlines between September 1 and January 1, instead of March 15. February 1 is the deadline for such resident district to notify the option district and the parents if the application was accepted or rejected. The deadline for the option district remains April 1 for notifying the resident district, option district, and the Department of Education.

Section 79-238 would be amended by providing that a school district which has a socioeconomic integration plan may adopt standards for acceptance and rejection of option enrollment applications which are designed to aid socioeconomic integration. The standards could apply to students who seek to transfer into or out of the district. It would be declared that socioeconomic integration is aided by standards which, considering all requests for transfer into or out of the school district, prohibit transfers which would not meet requirements for aiding socioeconomic integration. Socioeconomic integration would be considered aided if a student transfers into a district in which students of his or her status as either a low-income child or a free lunch and free milk student or as a non-low-income child or a non-free lunch and free milk student comprise a smaller percentage of the enrollment of the option district than of the resident district.

Option school districts would be required to give first priority to option students who would aid the socioeconomic integration of the option school district and the resident school district and to siblings of option students. New provisions reiterate that option school districts are not required to accept the sibling of an option student if the district is at capacity.

Explanation of amendments, if any:

Senator Ron Raikes, Chairperson