



Ninety-Ninth Legislature - First Session - 2005
Committee Statement
LB 689

Hearing Date: February 7, 2005
Committee On: Education

Introducer(s): (Stuhr, Raikes)

Title: Create and provide duties for the Distance Education Enhancement Task Force

Roll Call Vote – Final Committee Action:

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

Vote Results:

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

Proponents:

Senator Elaine Stuhr
Virgil Horne
Larry L. Dlugosh

Edward Rastovski
Terry Haack
Al Inzerello
Brian Hale
Dennis Baack
Dennis Linster
Jeffrey Wooters

Al Schneider

Shirley J. Schall

Charles A. Doyle

Brian Halstead
Duane Obermier

Representing:

Introducer
Lincoln Public Schools
University of Nebraska-Lincoln / Distance
Education Coordinating Commission
Nebraska Council of School Administrators
Nebraska Council of School Administrators
Westside Community Schools
Nebraska Association of School Boards
Nebraska Community College Association
Wayne State College
Educational Service Units Network Operations
Committee
Educational Service Unit Administrative
Association
Southeast Nebraska Distance Learning
Consortium
Southeast Nebraska Distance Learning
Consortium
Nebraska Department of Education
Nebraska State Education Association

Opponents:

Representing:

Neutral:

Representing:

Summary of purpose and/or changes:

Legislative Bill 689 would create the Distance Education Enhancement Task Force and state an intent to appropriate \$10 million per year for 2006-07, 2007-08, and 2008-09 to carry out recommendations of the task force.

Members would be appointed on or before June 15, 2005, and include:

1. The chairperson and one other member of the Education Committee of the Legislature;
2. The chairperson of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee of the Legislature;
3. The chairperson of the Appropriations Committee of the Legislature;
4. Two representatives of Educational Service Units (E.S.U.'s);
5. Two representatives of distance education consortia;
6. Two representatives of the State Department of Education, one of whom shall have expertise in technology infrastructure;
7. Two representatives of the Public Service Commission;
8. Two representatives of the Nebraska Information Technology Commission;
9. Two representatives of postsecondary education; and
10. One representative of the Governor.

Members would be appointed by the Executive Board of the Legislative Council, except that the Department of Education members, the Nebraska Information Technology Commission members, and the Governor's representative would be appointed by the Governor.

The chairperson of the Education Committee would serve as the chairperson of the task force. The Education Committee, Transportation and Telecommunications Committee, Legislative Fiscal Analyst, State Department of Education, and Nebraska Information Technology Commission would provide research and administrative support. The task force would be within the Legislative Council for budgetary purposes only.

The task force would develop an improvement plan to upgrade and coordinate distance education and make recommendations for policies and potential legislation to the Clerk of the Legislature, Education Committee, Transportation and Telecommunications Committee, and Appropriations Committee on or before November 1, 2005. The plan would include:

1. The development of a broadband, scalable telecommunications infrastructure for use in distance learning classrooms;
2. The development of an Internet protocol-based network to interconnect all existing and future distance education and videoconferencing facilities;
3. Upgrades of current telecommunications equipment;
4. The provision of training and support programs for educators in the development and use of distance learning;
5. The transfer distance education coordination responsibilities from distance education consortia to E.S.U.'s by July 1, 2007;

6. The provision of statewide coordination for distance education offerings;
7. Potential funding sources;
8. The establishment of an equitable and affordable financing system for both equipment and usage;
9. The provision of a system that allows school districts to purchase quality distance education offerings from other school districts; and
10. The statewide provision of other technology based services.

The task force would be authorized to hold one or more public hearings to obtain public input.

An intent would be stated to appropriate \$10 million to the Department of Education each year for 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09 to implement the task force recommendations.

The task force would terminate on December 31, 2005.

The measure contains an emergency clause.

Explanation of amendments, if any:

Committee Amendments would revise the membership of the Task Force such that the Task Force would be composed of:

1. The chairperson and 1 other member of the Education Committee of the Legislature;
2. The chairperson of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee of the Legislature;
3. The chairperson of the Appropriations Committee of the Legislature;
4. Two representatives of E.S.U.'s;
5. Two representatives of distance education consortia;
6. One school district superintendent or public school principal;
7. One representative of the State Department of Education who would have expertise in technology infrastructure;
8. One representative of the Public Service Commission;
9. One representative of the Nebraska Information Technology Commission;
10. One representative of the Governor;
11. One representative of the Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Commission who has expertise in technology infrastructure or distance education;
12. One representative of the University of Nebraska who has expertise in technology infrastructure or distance education;
13. One representative of the state colleges who has expertise in technology infrastructure or distance education;
14. One representative of community colleges who has expertise in technology infrastructure or distance education; and
15. One representative of the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary education who has expertise in dual enrollment courses.

The Governor would appoint his own representatives and the representatives of the Department of Education and the Nebraska Information Technology Commission. All other appointments would be made by the Executive Board of the Legislative Council.

The Committee Amendments would also extend the deadline for making recommendations from November 1, 2005 to December 31, 2005 and replace the term “broadband” with “high capacity” to describe the telecommunications infrastructure to be developed.

Senator Ron Raikes, Chairperson