

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA
ONE HUNDRED THIRD LEGISLATURE
SECOND SESSION

LEGISLATIVE BILL 1009

Introduced by Haar, 21.

Read first time January 21, 2014

Committee: Education

A BILL

- 1 FOR AN ACT relating to education; to state intent; to define a term;
- 2 to establish a pilot program relating to problem-based
- 3 learning as prescribed; and to provide a termination
- 4 date.
- 5 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1 Section 1. The Legislature finds that a pilot program to
2 establish problem-based learning as a strategy to strengthen the
3 success of rural schools in Nebraska should be implemented.

4 Sec. 2. For purposes to sections 1 to 4 of this act,
5 problem-based learning means an instructional practice in which
6 students and their teachers identify problems in their community that
7 they will work together to solve. In the course of the problem-
8 solving, students seek out new knowledge and practice a rich variety
9 of skills in reading, mathematics, science, writing, and diverse
10 other educational subject areas. Problem-based learning begins with
11 identification of a problem that the students and teacher believe is
12 relevant to their community and that the solution of which will make
13 an important contribution to the community. Students and teachers
14 generate questions that need to be answered and describe knowledge
15 that they need to acquire in order to solve the problem. Teachers
16 identify the educational standards that will be addressed as part of
17 the problem-related instruction. While working with their teachers to
18 solve problems, students engage in varied forms of communication and
19 investigate information from many different academic disciplines. The
20 knowledge that they gain during problem-based learning shall
21 strengthen their literacy and enhance their understanding of the
22 academic subjects.

23 Sec. 3. (1) The State Department of Education shall
24 establish a pilot program to provide teacher professional development
25 in problem-based learning. Participation in the program shall be

1 voluntary. The pilot program shall be limited to no more than four
2 school districts, each of which has a student population of fewer
3 than nine hundred students, selected by the department from
4 interested applicants. The department shall establish an application
5 process for selecting interested school districts to participate in
6 the pilot program.

7 (2) The department and teachers participating in the
8 pilot program shall work together to plan the precise learning
9 indicators that will be assessed. The department shall gather data
10 describing these indicators before the pilot program begins and twice
11 a year while the program is being implemented. A central evaluation
12 committee shall take responsibility for receiving data from each
13 participating school district and evaluating the degree to which
14 progress was being made on the indicators, and determining whether
15 such progress was substantial enough to be meaningful. The pilot
16 program shall include seminars and weekly coaching which may be
17 conducted remotely.

18 (3) The pilot program shall include:

19 (a) For all participating students, computers or tablets
20 with access to high-speed Internet to use for researching topics
21 necessary for problem-based learning;

22 (b) Text sets or books on particular topics that span
23 reading levels;

24 (c) Ongoing professional development on problem-based
25 learning for teachers; and

1 (d) Research equipment such as digital cameras, global
2 positioning systems, or other technical devices related to carrying
3 out successful problem-based learning.

4 Sec. 4. The pilot program established pursuant to section
5 3 of this act terminates five years after the effective date of this
6 act unless extended by the Legislature.