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Education Committee
December 04, 2013

[LR208 LR211]

The Committee on Education met at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, December 4, 2013, in Room 1525 of the State Capitol, Lincoln, Nebraska, for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on LR211 and LR208. Senators present: Kate Sullivan, Chairperson; Jim Scheer, Vice Chairperson; Al Davis; Rick Kolowski; and Les Seiler. Senators absent: Bill Avery; Ken Haar; and Tanya Cook.

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you all for being here today. My name is Kate Sullivan. I represent District 41 in the Legislature, and I'm Chair of the Education Committee. We're not at full force today, but we are...those of us here are in full attention. To my right is the Vice Chair of the committee, Senator Jim Scheer of Norfolk. And to my left is Senator Les Seiler of Hastings. And of course one member of the committee is the introducer of the two resolutions today, Senator Rick Kolowski, who's sitting at the testifier's table, from Omaha. And who just joined us is LaMont Rainey, one of the legal counsels for the Education Committee. At my far right is Mandy Mizerski who is the committee clerk. A few housekeeping details before we get started, we do have two pages that are helping us today: Audie Aguilar from Grand Island who's a student at UNL and Stuart Sucha from Lincoln who's also a student at UNL. If you're planning to testify at either one of the resolutions, I'd like you to pick up a green sheet. They should be at either entrance. And even if you don't wish to testify but would like your name entered into the record as being present at the hearing, there's a form at either table to do that as well, for you to sign in. And all of that will be part of the official record of this hearing. When you fill out the green sheet, please print and complete it in its entirety so we do have that accurate record. And when you come up to testify, then give that green sheet to the committee clerk. And as I said, if you do not wish to testify but you have written comments and would like them read into the official record, please let us know that that is your intent. If you have handouts for your testimony, we'd like you to have 12 copies and hand those to the pages when you come up to testify. When you do sit down at the testifier's table, if you would please state your first and last name and spell both of

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those, again, so we have an adequate record. And please, please, if you have your cell phone on, please turn it off, any pagers or beeps or anything that's going to make sound other than your voice when you come up to testify. We're going to have Senator Kolowski make the introduction and then that will be followed by whoever would like to testify. Now, I am not choosing to use the light system. I would like to know, though, just out of curiosity, for the first resolution, how many are planning to testify? And what about for the second one? Well, I think that's manageable today, but I will tell you, too, that between Mandy and I, we're going to keep track of the time and I would really like you if possible to keep your comments to no longer than five minutes. And of course, we as senators, may have some questions to ask of you as well. So I think...oh, and Senator Davis, excuse me. Didn't even see you come in. (Laugh) Senator Al Davis, a member of the committee from Hyannis. So without further ado, I think we will get started. The first study resolution: an interim study to examine and define the need for increased access to, and the costs of, quality expanded learning opportunities for K-12 children, focusing on at-risk children. It's been introduced by Senator Rick Kolowski, and we'll hear from you, Senator. [LR211]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Good afternoon, Chairwoman Sullivan and members of the Education Committee. My name is Senator Rick Kolowski, R-i-c-k K-o-l-o-w-s-k-i, and I represent District 31. Looking around the room, I am encouraged that everyone here took the time to engage in the discussion about expanded learning opportunities because it is crucial that we make this one of our priorities. We are now faced with the challenge of preparing our children to compete for jobs not only with their neighbor down the street but with their peer from another country. And that competition is a challenge. Expanded learning opportunities are proven to engage students and give them that competitive edge to compete in a global society. So what are expanded learning opportunities? This summer, the Nebraska Board of Education defined them in a policy statement. I have included that in your binder and would like to read through it with you. The Nebraska State Board of Education believes that in order to help prepare future generations of Nebraska youth for success in life, the Nebraska schools, families,

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and communities must work together to provide multiple opportunities for healthy growth, development, and academic success. The Nebraska State Board of Education recognizes that the traditional school calendar does not fit all students' needs. The typical school day may not provide adequate time for students needing additional educational and enrichment opportunities in order to experience academic success, particularly students who are limited English proficient, live in poverty, or those who may start the school year learning below their grade level. Quality expanded learning opportunities--ELO programs--build on, support, and enhance learning during times when students are not in school: before and after school, weekends, and summer. Therefore, they are critical components of Nebraska's educational landscape and one that should be intentionally supported and developed in communities across our state. Quality expanded learning principles include but are not limited to the following: school-community partnerships and resource sharing; engaged learning; family engagement; intentional programming aligned with the school day program; diverse prepared staff including certified educators; participation and access; safety, health, and wellness; ongoing assessment and improvement. I can tell you firsthand the importance of expanded learning opportunities for preparing our students for their professional life, personal stories I have from my own experiences as principal of Millard West High School. We took great pride in the sense that we developed an activities program. And the first hire I made back in 1993-94 was the activities director. And Mr. Steve Joekel put together an activities program with clubs, organizations, sports, and volunteerism opportunities that was one of the top programs in the state, and we had some of the highest participation rates of high school students of any high school in the state. The dividends with that were many as students find a certain niche or a group they can identify with in school beyond their academics and, therefore, connect and engage in that school in a different way, and a higher degree of success as time goes on. It works. I have seen it work, and it makes a world of difference for those students when they can do that. I can also tell you the importance of helping our working parents with their professional lives. Here is a staggering statistic about working families in Nebraska. During my first week as a legislator, I attended a Legislative Planning Commission

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where I learned that Nebraska has the highest population in the country of dual-working parents at 75 percent, 75 percent. That means 75 percent of households in this state every parent works a full-time job. So where are the kids from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m.? Are they safe and supervised, making healthy decisions, enriching their learning educationally and socially and emotionally? And are they preparing to show up the next day to school ready to learn? You can imagine working parents share the same concerns, and this can hurt their productivity. Engaging our kids beyond the school bell with quality expanded learning opportunity answers questions that are in the mind of many working parents. When we talk about ELOs, we are not just talking about education. We are also talking public safety, public health, and work force development. This is why I introduced LR211, to study and define the need for increased access to quality expanded learning opportunities for K-12 students in Nebraska. We have an incredible lineup of testifiers today who are experts in expanded learning opportunities. They will paint a vivid picture of what is currently happening in Nebraska and what we can improve. I would like to move right into their testimony and ask you to hold questions for me until my conclusion, if you would. Thank you very much. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Senator. Appreciate that. [LR211]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you, ma'am. May I sit over here in this comfortable chair? [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Please. Please do. (Laughter) [LR211]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you. And the first testifier. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Welcome. [LR211]

KATHAREN HEDGES: Hi. Good afternoon, Senator Sullivan, members of the Education Committee. I'm Katharen Hedges. [LR211]

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SENATOR SULLIVAN: Could you move that down just a little bit so that...yeah. There you go. [LR211]

KATHAREN HEDGES: Yeah, okay. I'm Katharen Hedges. I'm from Lincoln North Star High School. I will be presenting a poem today. It's called Emily (phonetic). [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Could you spell your name? [LR211]

KATHAREN HEDGES: Yeah, sorry. K-a-t-h-a-r-e-n H-e-d-g-e-s. Hi. I nearly mistook her for myself. With her cheeks pulled tight and a gap-toothed smile, it was clear to see that bloodlines can't be broken, even if the strands are made from fuzzy phone calls and old photographs or maybe the lack of. I used to wonder how my father could abandon his own daughter, but that was before I could use myself as an example, before I realized my feet could never run fast enough to reach his bumper before he drove 3,369.6 miles into the distance, before he was 2 days and 13 hours, 3,660 minutes, 219,600 seconds away, before he told my mother he never loved her and we all heard him, before I realized it's not okay to leave your daughter for months at a time. It's not okay to never call. It's not okay to hand her cigarettes and tell her to inhale. It's not okay. But most of all, it's not okay that you left my mother with four kids, that you abandoned her just like her father did, that you abandoned her like you abandon everybody. I am here because of Emily. I am here because I have a sister somewhere that I've never known. I'm here because of all the families that you left behind. I am here. But you can't hear me, so what is the point of this speaking? Well, it's not about you anymore. It's about me. It's about the void you left where my father was supposed to be, see. If I could tell my 12-year-old myself anything, I would tell her to stop searching for her father in the faces of strangers, for comfort in bad behavior, for anyone but God to be her savior, see. I used to think that God was complicated. Like if I prayed hard enough, I might be worthy of loving. But before that I just assumed that he didn't care, that my father in heaven cared just as much about my bleeding hands as the one on earth. So I taught myself the

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art of numbness, worthlessness, and destruction. I hone them like a sharp tool to do myself in. If I could tell my 12-year-old self anything, I would tell her to put down the cigarettes and the facade, they won't make her feel any better, that she would look a lot sharper when not wearing black, that the cuts on her hands are going to be one of her biggest regrets, that she would get her heart broken again. But that she would have a strength that she didn't even know was there. That her voice would echo with ambition and her heart would pulse with a purpose. That she would no longer have to worry about being perfect and fail repeatedly because perfection is the digression of the ordinary. So it's okay to hit an earthquake because our crumbling is humbling. So when her heart shakes and it shudders and it struggles to utter the actions necessary to accomplish anything, she would remember with a little faith, you can write your own destiny. All you need to do is turn the page. Thank you. [LR211]

MOLLY O'HOLLERAN: Good afternoon. I'm Molly O'Holleran, M-o-l-l-y O-'-H-o-l-l-e-r-a-n. And this is a wonderful time for me to be here in front of the Education Committee. I know how much hard work you do to make expanded learning possible, and I'm thankful for the moment to be able to make my testimony. The Nebraska State Board of Education focuses on improving student learning, directly increasing student achievement, closing achievement gaps, and preparing every student for success in college and careers. This intention flows from preschool through grade 12. We support wraparound systems for vulnerable youth. Student success is at the center of expanded learning opportunities. We have many single-parent families and families where both parents work, so ELOs have taken place before or after school, weekends, and during the summer. Often, opportunities for expanded learning have worked to remediate as well as retain at-risk youth in our schools including those qualifying for ELL, special education, and free and reduced meals. We have noted that time spent in the ELO can help transition students to the challenges and opportunities of a global community where character, intention, work ethic, and relationships count. Expanded learning can create a balance between organized activities and guided independence. Existing programs have been variable. Some expanded learning

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opportunities are merely creating safe locations. However, successful school districts use expanded learning based on high expectations that incorporate flexibility in response to their accountability results. The 21st Century grants for supplemental education have produced programs promoting best practices. We encourage all students to explore their variable talents and seek new opportunities to achieve. In middle school and high school, students can be encouraged to participate in relevant work force career-technical education as part of their expanded learning. Nurturing community partnerships can enhance these results. September 6, 2013, the Nebraska State Board of Education created a policy for expanded learning opportunities that establishes a road map for all 249 school districts in Nebraska. ELO principles are promoted. HHS Title XX money, 21st Century grants, and IDEA funds can leverage school-community partnerships and resource sharing. We want to build this infrastructure wisely and take advantage of existing partnerships in our communities. Students can be engaged in relevant and fun use of technology where appropriate. Extended families are involved in school activities when possible. And it is important for district management to respect and guide the ELO staff. Probably one of the most important components is the intentional programming aligned with school-day curriculum. And also, a diverse, prepared staff including certified educators help make alignment with curriculum possible. In special school systems, the paraeducators participating in ELO can be incentivized to make the transition to teacher certification. Although time can be an issue with participation and access, safety, health, and wellness should be the standard in all ELOs. What is the hope for the future of ELO in Nebraska's 249 school districts? Due to Nebraska's changing demographics, ELOs need to address the needs and dreams of this diverse population. And that goes from urban to rural. Quality ELO can align with a public school curriculum to span the range from a remediation to enrichment. This is more than ever...more than content comprehension. ELOs can delve into critical-thinking skills and innovation. The State Board of Education realizes that the Nebraska Unicameral's role is to encourage quality education and to use our scarce state dollars to support educational programs that have the highest potential return on investment. We would appreciate the Legislature's help in

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developing a state-level policy framework that incentivize locally governed school-community partnerships that provide high-quality ELO, especially to high-poverty youth that suffer the most from this opportunity gap. Now more than ever, it's important that we sustain the supports we're providing high-poverty youth in the early years with sustainable, effective ELO programs as our students move through their public education. Our future work force depends on the graduates who are ready for college and careers, and sustainable ELO programs can help. The ELO of Nebraska now and the ELO of Nebraska future can really be enhanced by your leadership and guidance on the Education Committee and the Legislature. Thank you for this opportunity to speak with you this afternoon. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Molly. Just a minute, we may have some questions for you. (Laugh) [LR211]

MOLLY O'HOLLERAN: Oh, okay. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any questions for...yes, Senator Scheer. [LR211]

SENATOR SCHEER: Molly, how do you or the board view that the Legislature could incentivize these programs? [LR211]

MOLLY O'HOLLERAN: Probably what I would recommend is a task force that would look at what is working and best practice for our expanded learning opportunity programs that exist already. I know the 21st Century grants that have been provided by the federal government have set up some successful models. And if in fact we do have a task force, I would hope that the task force would look into several dimensions. Number one, keep student achievement in mind and as they do that recognize that the gap still exists, as you know, Senator Scheer, in our NeSA results. And I think expanded learning can really be used to narrow that gap and provide opportunities on site, especially if we do have certificated teachers and paras that are in alignment with what

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the goals of the district are. I would say as a Legislature, this task force probably should also look at not only best practices but building community partnerships. I think the best investment of your money, of the state dollars will be if we can recognize communities that are working together in partnership and not just for entertainment. Like I'm in North Platte and we have Kids Klub and we do a lot of stuff with NEBRASKAland Days and there's exposure to the museum and traveling that some children otherwise might not do. But I really see the future of ELO and the task force is possibly to investigate career tech links also. And we might get more expanded learning opportunities working in our high school where kids after school...that middle and high school can actually delve into real careers and expanded learning opportunities that might segue into relationships and those kids might even come back to those areas later on to work. [LR211]

SENATOR SCHEER: Are you...more specifically, are you or are the board looking at a series of grant fundings to produce the incentives? Are you looking at new additional dollars from the Legislature? Are you looking at implementing this as part of the state aid formula? How were you looking at trying to utilize...where were those funds coming from? [LR211]

MOLLY O'HOLLERAN: Senator Scheer, I don't think it's my place speak for the board in response to that question. But just speaking as Molly, I would say if we are going to do this well, I think there would probably incorporate a fiscal note for seed money for the ELO program that the task force envisions. And at this time, I would not speculate how that would be funded, whether it be grant or part of the formula or part of a specific line item on your budget. [LR211]

SENATOR SCHEER: Okay, so that wasn't part of it. You wanted...the board wants it incentivized, but you haven't had the discussion of what that might look like. [LR211]

MOLLY O'HOLLERAN: What we wanted to really encourage is a task force to be set up to investigate how best to leverage dollars to maximize what already exists in

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community partnerships, and in those partnerships primarily focus on the community partnering with the ELOs. And then if there is a need for some fiscal note from the Legislature, I think the task force might make that recommendation after they've done an analysis. [LR211]

SENATOR SCHEER: Okay. Thank you. [LR211]

MOLLY O'HOLLERAN: Okay. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Regarding the 21st Century Learning grants, how fully utilized are they? Where are they generally? Are they all across the state? And how stable is that funding source? [LR211]

MOLLY O'HOLLERAN: You know what, I'm really excited you asked that because a little bit later on I'm going to have a specialist on 21st Century Learning grants come and speak with you. But as you know, federal programs oftentimes have a short time period, and when they're done, then the community is expected to continue the sustainability. And I would just be speculating but I know in my own town of North Platte, after we received the 21st Century Learning grant our community recognized the value of expanded learning that was in alignment with our curriculum, and they chose as local school board to continue funding. And we have a lot of partnerships with different businesses that also see expanded learning opportunities for students that might come back and work for them. Some of our small rural areas even in expanded learning will really support those students as they go on into college and career. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. Thank you. Any other questions? Thank you. [LR211]

MOLLY O'HOLLERAN: Thank you so much. [LR211]

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SENATOR SULLIVAN: Welcome. [LR211]

LUISA PALOMO HARE: Thank you. My name is Luisa Palomo, L-u-i-s-a P-a-l-o-m-o, and I am a kindergarten teacher at Liberty Elementary in the Omaha Public Schools. I'm also the 2012 Nebraska Teacher of the Year. So I usually am with 5-year-olds and I talk really fast; so I made myself write down what I would say to go slowly and appropriately (laughter). I'm honored to have the opportunity to talk with you guys today about the importance of expanded learning opportunities that we can provide for Nebraska's children. I want to begin by letting you know that I've been teaching at my school, an urban school, for ten years, but that I grew up in western Nebraska, a small town, Gering. And so while I am speaking from my experience as a teacher, I do keep in contact with my family and educators in my hometown, and I know that the benefits for expanded learning opportunities are not limited to one group of people in our state. But because I have spent the last ten years working at Liberty, I want to talk about the expanded learning opportunity that we provide for our children through the Completely KIDS program. It was formerly Camp Fire USA. It's now Completely KIDS. And were a part of the 21st Century Learning grant monies years ago, and we've been able to sustain our ELO. Twelve years ago, the need arose for a new elementary school in downtown Omaha. With the neighborhood stability and safety precarious, many parents voiced their desire to bus their children to schools farther away. The principal and staff at Liberty pledged to parents that if given a chance our school would be the center of the community. Twelve years later, largely due to the support from our community partners, we have followed through on that promise. We consider ourselves a full-service community school model, a term coined by Joy Dryfoos describing schools dating back almost a hundred years. Basically, these schools offer wraparound services for their students and families not to enable their families, but to make sure that the children are getting what they need so that time at school can be on task. Our school is able to offer programming because of partnerships before school, during school, and after school with our Completely KIDS program. Our school is a public school. It's part of the Omaha Public Schools, and it has a poverty rate of about 95 percent. We have

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roughly 670 students starting as young as three years old in our Head Start program and going through the sixth grade. We receive the same funding that other Title I schools get. However, because of our close partnership with Completely KIDS, we are able to offer a variety of additional services to support our families. We have classes geared towards helping families with social, emotional, academic, and health-related topics. We have enrichment classes for students. About 250 of our students participate in our programming after our traditional school day is finished. The programming at our school is not meant to contain children. True, it's a very safe place for kids. And true, we have adults who can help with homework. But we wanted more. When I say "we" I don't just mean our Liberty staff. I mean our Completely KIDS staff. We're a very united team. We wanted to take advantage of the fact that we had 250 children with us every day essentially gaining a sixth day of learning when you imagine that children are with us for 2 hours a day, 5 days a week. So we know that for all kids, but especially children in poverty, dedicating additional time daily for learning would help close the achievement gap. We knew that we had the kids, and we knew that we had the time. We just needed the instruction. So recently, we were able to secure some grant money so that each grade level in our Completely KIDS program is working with a Liberty teacher at the same grade level, doing lesson planning, coaching, mentoring, and observing of each other so that any learning that is happening after the traditional school day has ended is absolutely in line with what the children are learning during the day. It's a fantastic partnership that we've just taken to the next level this year. Another project that we've worked on with Completely KIDS is a kindergarten readiness class. In fact, you might notice I'll be stepping out a little bit early today because I teach the readiness class every Wednesday after school, and today is our graduation for first semester. This readiness class is put together in partnership with Completely KIDS so that our 4-year-olds...knowing the importance of early childhood education, our 4-year-olds and their families come to my kindergarten classroom every Wednesday and we spend 45 minutes learning an academic concept, whether it's math or literacy based. But the key is that families are learning with their children. They're finding ways to extend the simple concepts that I'm teaching them in their homes. This is free of charge to our families,

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and we have a waiting list of families who want to do this. It's in our second year. Working with Completely KIDS, we aim to connect with both the Liberty staff as well as families. We never intended our school to be separate from our expanded learning opportunity, so we make sure that both staffs are working together. We have family nights once a month where sometimes we'll work with our community partners and host them at The Rose Theater or the Omaha Children's Museum. And sometimes we host them at our school so that families come in and they get to know the Liberty staff, the Completely KIDS staff. They build strong relationships, and they're learning academic content at the same time. We also do weekly reading nights where every Liberty teacher signs up to read their favorite children's book. They're reading a book and children are participating in a story time while parents are seeing a literacy skill modeled by the teacher, and children receive books to take home to add to their personal libraries. When I think about what our State Board of Education has released in terms of their expanded learning opportunities, sharing resources between the school and the ELO, engaged learning, family engagement, and programming that's aligned with the school day, I can absolutely confidently say that we have a model that works at our school. We're seeing fantastic growth in our kids. We know that it takes work and it takes a lot of time to get to this level of partnership. But when serving children is our job, it is worth the extra energy. I could go on and on about the importance of supporting strong partnerships for expanded learning opportunities. I could tell you about the many families that celebrate our school Completely KIDS partnership, or the many staff that rely on the extra time given to students at the end of each day. What I will do instead is end with two things: first, an invitation. I invite you all to please visit Liberty and our CK program; see the magic that happens as our children seamlessly transition from day school to our expanded learning opportunity; see the learning that is happening long after the school day ends; see what goes on with our partnership and share it with others who are working to close the achievement gap in our schools. Secondly, I would like to end with a quote. It is one that I reflect on as teacher often but I also feel it applicable to the many partners involved with expanded learning opportunities in our communities. Barbara Coloroso has said: If kids come to us from strong, healthy

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functioning families, it makes our job easier. If they do not come to us from strong, healthy, functioning families, it makes our job more important. I can't underscore enough the important role that expanded learning opportunities play in so many lives of Nebraska's children. Thank you. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you very much. Any questions? [LR211]

SENATOR DAVIS: I have one. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Yes, Senator Davis. [LR211]

SENATOR DAVIS: You say 250 of about 400 and how many students? [LR211]

LUISA PALOMO HARE: Of about 670 students. [LR211]

SENATOR DAVIS: Six hundred. So these 250, are they the same 250? [LR211]

LUISA PALOMO HARE: They are the same 250. [LR211]

SENATOR DAVIS: So are you seeing a gradual pulling away of those students from the others in terms of their abilities? [LR211]

LUISA PALOMO HARE: I would say in their confidence, absolutely. It's too early I think to really measure the data. We're able now to share data with our ELO, which has been extremely helpful. What we're noticing is that the kids who participate in our after school program have learned more of the social skills and the study skills of learning. So when our other children who maybe go straight home, sit in front of a TV, our Completely KIDS children know that the first thing you do is spend 20 minutes with a book. Regardless of if they have homework, they know the study skill habits that we've built into them. We'll just be finishing this year our first full year of lesson planning at each

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grade level; so we're measuring as we go to see where our kids are ending. [LR211]

SENATOR DAVIS: And so they're doing some of their homework there in that (inaudible). [LR211]

LUISA PALOMO HARE: Absolutely. So our fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-graders have a designated homework time before they do their enrichment activity. And they might...right now they're working with the Humane Society; so it's different service learning opportunities for our intermediate students. Our younger students are doing academic rotations for 45 minutes. And because they're little and they need to get their wiggles out, they're in the gym or they're dancing and singing and doing that. [LR211]

SENATOR DAVIS: And so then how does the compensation end of it work for the staff? [LR211]

LUISA PALOMO HARE: They are funded entirely through Completely KIDS, which is an organization. They're in, I want to say, in about seven OPS schools. We don't have to fund anything. We share our space. We let them use all of our classrooms. So in other ELOs, all the children might be contained to a gymnasium or a cafeteria. At Liberty, they're in the grade level appropriate classrooms. So kindergartners are using my kindergarten room after school for their learning. They're broken up by grade level. And then Liberty teachers, if they so choose, can be paid by Completely KIDS to work after school hours, also before school hours. Liberty teachers are being paid to do the lesson planning and the coaching and the mentoring of our after school staff. But we also highly recruit from our social work programs and our education programs. So a lot of the staff that we have after school, we very closely recruit so that we have the right people in the right spot. [LR211]

SENATOR DAVIS: So I guess my question then is, the compensation would be outside the negotiated agreement. [LR211]

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LUISA PALOMO HARE: Yes. Yes, outside of us. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Complete KIDS program... [LR211]

LUISA PALOMO HARE: Completely. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: ...was formerly a Camp Fire program... [LR211]

LUISA PALOMO HARE: Yes. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: ...or is that what Camp Fire is now? [LR211]

LUISA PALOMO HARE: That's what Camp Fire is now. Camp Fire of the Midlands is now Completely KIDS. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: And you said that that program is in seven different buildings in OPS. [LR211]

LUISA PALOMO HARE: Yeah. I'm trying to think of how many...I mostly work with the elementary, but I know that they're in middle schools and a high school as well, mostly in south Omaha. I know they're looking to expand. Penny Parker is the one in charge, and she's dynamite. But we actually started working with them 12 years ago. We were in a warehouse for two years as we built our school. So we've had a longstanding partnership with our specific ELO. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: And you indicated that you have a model that you believe works at Liberty. [LR211]

LUISA PALOMO HARE: Absolutely. [LR211]

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SENATOR SULLIVAN: Has that...have you...describe that model throughout the OPS system, I guess. What communications have you had? [LR211]

LUISA PALOMO HARE: It's very, very different throughout the OPS system. OPS has a lot of different ELOs that push into the schools. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. [LR211]

LUISA PALOMO HARE: Kids Club is one of them where parents pay for their children to stay late. Ours is predominately in south Omaha, predominately in high-poverty schools. My school I think is the farthest north, and we're right in the middle of downtown Omaha. I would say the model that happens at Liberty is a model for other schools. We have other schools probably on a monthly basis coming to observe what we do and to talk to our school staff and our extended learning...or, I'm sorry, expanded learning opportunities staff. We also have a lot of shadowing. So I might have a director from another elementary school for their program come and observe us and how we work with our director after school. So there's a lot of sharing of our model. I think that it needs teachers to buy into it and schools to understand that it really is a benefit to us. And I think that for the expanded learning opportunity programs, they need to just have that confidence to say, this is what's best for kids. It's not your school, Luisa Palomo; it's the kids at Liberty's school and we need to do what's best for them. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. Thank you. Any other questions? Yes, Senator Kolowski. [LR211]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you. Luisa, great to see you again. [LR211]

LUISA PALOMO HARE: Yeah. [LR211]

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SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you. I have been in your classroom. [LR211]

LUISA PALOMO HARE: You have been (laugh). [LR211]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: You are truly a phenomenal teacher, and it's great to have you here today. Thank you for your testimony. [LR211]

LUISA PALOMO HARE: Thank you. [LR211]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Your school is extremely unique. You have another resource right across the street with the Omaha Children's Museum. Would you tell us how that is used within the realm of all these opportunities? [LR211]

LUISA PALOMO HARE: Absolutely, absolutely. If you are familiar with Omaha, we are literally across the street from the Omaha Children's Museum. And so we have had a longstanding partnership with them, for 12 years now, where we send all of our students on a very regular basis to the museum. We scaffold, depending on their age. So our little ones, our 3- and 4-year-olds, are going twice a month to the museum. From kindergarten through third, we go once a month. And then we decrease it according to age level. But the museum has worked with us so that our kids are able to experience learning through play, to get that higher level of creativity thought processes going on. But at the same time the museum relies on us. When they're trying new exhibits, they'll come to our school and they'll test them on our students. They'll push into our school and work together to find out what's best for the Omaha community. They also have--and it's not just limited to Liberty--but they have a welcome fund where any family in poverty can qualify for a \$5 membership. You know, so we advocate that with our families, so our families are in the museum. And it is a unique school, but I would venture to say that what makes Liberty unique should not be limited to Liberty. The fact that we have teachers who care and who work with community partners and we take advantage of every opportunity that we can. So we work with the museum and we work

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with The Rose, but we also find out what they can do for our kids in return. [LR211]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you so much for what you do. [LR211]

LUISA PALOMO HARE: Thank you. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you very much. Welcome. [LR211]

LISA KASLON: Good afternoon. Members of the Education Committee, my name is Lisa Kaslon, L-i-s-a K-a-s-l-o-n, and I work for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension Program. For the past 16 years, I have been located in a county office working directly as a provider of expanded learning opportunities through the 4-H program. More recently, I now serve as the district coordinator overseeing and helping 28 counties to develop more opportunities through the 4-H program for their youth. Let me first say that 4-H and UNL is committed to the idea and vision for expanded learning opportunities. It is what we have been doing through our work for over 100 years in Nebraska. As many of you know, 4-H is a community of young people ages 5 to 18 across America and Nebraska who are learning leadership, citizenship, and life skills. 4-H empowers youth to reach their full potential, working and learning in partnership with caring adults, and by using a learn-by-doing approach and through several different delivery methods. In Nebraska, 4-H is present in all 93 counties of your state. So why am I here then if this is the work we already do? Because we are not only believers in expanded learning opportunities but are completely committed to the idea that Nebraska's schools, communities, and families must all work together to provide these multiple opportunities for healthy growth, development, and academic success for our kids, we in 4-H are pushing ourselves to do more to serve audiences we haven't served in the past, to adapt our programs to meet today's needs, and to work more closely with all partners that are committed to helping our youth in our communities. We support the increased awareness of expanded learning opportunities, the development of new opportunities, and the vision for our state in which we all work together for the

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betterment of kids regardless of the time of year or the time of day. In addition, I am here to represent existing investment and commitment of all the other community partners that have already been doing this work in the past but who know that we can't do it all alone. It is important that these groups, those such as Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, YMCAs, 4-H, Camp Fire and all the others that have been mentioned are drawn more into this conversation to bring their knowledge and work into the fold. What they have done in their expanded learning programs has provided a wonderful foundation for us to move forward from, and they should be acknowledged for that work. Our world, our families, and our kids, everything has changed. And working together to make sure all kids have expanded learning opportunities has become crucial to our state and nation's success in the future. For example, our commitment to this has been evident in the Platte County 4-H program where I led a group of community partners including the school to receive a 21st Century grant to expand opportunities for youth in the hours right after school; to provide them a place that is safe, motivating, encouraging, and teaches them things they didn't know before; to help them be more academically successful; to find ways to engage their family; and to unwind in a place where they are cared for and secure. And Platte County Extension and 4-H lead this effort, and we want to be that partner that helps lead those efforts because we want all kids, no matter who they are, to have opportunity. But grant funds eventually run out and families who can't afford these services soon leave, and sustaining programs for everyone is difficult and becomes the priority that we must talk about. My challenge to everyone is, how do we continue to support all Nebraska kids and their need for expanded learning opportunities? How do we give everyone the same opportunities for success? And these are all questions that all programs and all entities are wrestling with as we want what's best for our state's youth. I think that by coming together as partners committed to this vision we are taking the first steps in finding these answers and making the commitment to saying our kids are important. Thank you. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Lisa. Questions? You indicated that 4-H is in all 93 counties in Nebraska, but can you tell us a little bit more about the model or models that

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4-H uses in terms of interacting with the school for expanded learning opportunities?
[LR211]

LISA KASLON: Absolutely. There are a variety of things because you may or may not know that 4-H has several different delivery methods. Many people are familiar with the traditional club program which has typically always been in those out-of-school hours: evenings, weekends, summers--right--and bringing kids together around projects, and with that celebration typically at the county fair. The other delivery methods that 4-H on the federal level as well as the state level engages with, one of those specific delivery methods is after school. And so several of our 4-H programs are trying to find ways and are finding ways to engage in those after school hours. And that becomes, definitely in most cases, a true partnership of us working with current programs, helping to lead or develop those programs. In what was our case, we took the initiative to say, we need to be doing something after school. Let us lead that community partnership and get that grant here in Columbus. But most of those programs are partnering in some way. A lot of 21st Century sites will talk about 4-H as a partner and coming in and providing programming and projects and hands-on work. We do work during the school day as a part of 4-H as well, taking enriching activities into the classroom such as embryology in which we hatch chicks in the classroom and do that a lot here in the Lincoln schools. And so there are several delivery methods that we work from. And depending on the county, depending on the staffing, depending on the dollars that are there to fund those programs, each county does a variety of things. But we have been recently pushing the initiative to do more after school work and the partnership during that time in which I think we're talking a lot about today. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: And in those after school relationships then with the school, as far the staff from the Extension side, is that a volunteer or is that an Extension educator that does the work? [LR211]

LISA KASLON: It can be both. We do have some volunteers that partner depending on

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their specialty. Let's say we have somebody that knows a lot about woodworking and a leader that's volunteering for the 4-H program. And we take them to that audience because any kid we work with we call 4-H. And so we are a true partner in saying if you have kids, we want to be there. And when staff come in, that is 4-H staff providing that service. And so we're providing that maybe in-kind to whatever that program is even though, you know, somebody is paying that. But we do that as a partnership in helping to reach kids. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. Very good. Any other...Senator Kolowski. [LR211]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you, ma'am. Lisa, thank you for your testimony and for your work. There's a lot of discussion and action in some places across the country on urban 4-H. Would you address that as a movement and what interest lies there? [LR211]

LISA KASLON: Absolutely. And I'm not as...I have not worked in the Lincoln or Omaha metro areas. I've been stationed in Columbus my entire career in Extension. And you know, compared to some of Nebraska, we might call that urban. And so we do know that we are trying to make our program accessible to all kids in all places. And 4-H is not just rural anymore. Fifty percent of our 4-H population is in the urban cities and environments because of the variety of projects and opportunities that we offer. We have initiatives around science. We have initiatives around career development. We're trying to do work that engages all students regardless of where they live and regardless of their background, and have recently started talking much more about, how do we reach that underserved audience? How do we make sure that 4-H is available to everyone? And what does...and that looks different. It's not...you almost have to take what you've thought of 4-H and let it go because it can't be the same as it's been. We know that, and we're really working to find ways. And we believe being a partner in this network and being a partner in this work gives us an avenue to bring the material, the curriculum, the opportunities we have through that federal program and state program

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to partner with these great people that are working to bring that into those after school hours. [LR211]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you. [LR211]

LISA KASLON: You're welcome. [LR211]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: I hope we can help you make that happen. [LR211]

LISA KASLON: Thanks. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you very much. [LR211]

LISA KASLON: Thank you. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Welcome. [LR211]

KAREN STEVENS: (Exhibit 1) Thank you. I'm Karen Stevens, K-a-r-e-n S-t-e-v-e-n-s. I work for the Nebraska Department of Education, and I administer the 21st Century Community Learning Center program. So it really is a pleasure to have somebody who would like to listen to us talk about something we care a lot about. My job today is to share with you just a little bit of the overview of the 21st Century Community Learning program. It's a federally funded out of Title IV, No Child Left Behind program that was given to state departments of education in 2001 to administer. And the rationale for moving from the federal government to the state government is interesting but probably not for you today. In 2001, when Nebraska took over the administration of the program, we were given some rather specific guidelines on what that program should be. And I think that's what's important for me to share with you today because that model does have a framework that I'd like to share with you. But it also allows for a lot of flexibility. And you've already heard that from the three presenters before coming from Lincoln,

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from Liberty which is still being funded by 21st Century, and from Lisa with the Columbus programs. So I'm going to try and get with the broad foundational pieces of that model, but letting you know and you already probably have seen that the programs really are quite different community to community. The grant program is for youth who are not in school. It's after school, before school, summer, days when school is not in session. It is an expanded learning opportunity, out of school time. There are a number of students who need the program, but based on the federal guidelines we can only operate in a school that has at least a 40 percent free and reduced lunch count population. So the competition for our grants must come from a school district that has that count. So automatically there are school districts that might like to participate who could not because of that activity. There are three underlying principles that compete for the grant, the entity must agree to support. The first one is that they want to improve student learning, student performance in one or more of the core academic areas. The second one is that they want to improve student skills, behavioral skills, social behavior. And the third one is to increase family and community involvement in the child's education. So those pieces are basic and fundamental to anyone who competes for a grant. They all must address that when they compete for that grant and commit to evaluating progress on our evaluation method toward those pieces. A number of programs have other objectives and other goals that they add on, but they all have those three. Our focus is on school, community, and family partnerships. And I think it's...that's probably one of the most exciting and important things that I see happening over the 12 years that I've been administering the program are the dynamics of some of these unusual partnerships that have been formed and strengthened and what that has done with our children's success staying in school and academic success. The youth that are in our program currently this last year, 72 percent of them were eligible for free and reduced lunch that participated regularly in our program; 16 percent were English language learners; 57 percent were from an ethnic minority; and 18 percent had a designation of special education. The remainder of the students were students from that area that was...the aggregate area that was being served that wanted to participate for a variety of reasons either through family referrals, teacher referrals, or student choice.

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We currently work with an annual distribution budget of \$5,384,000 and some odd cents. And with that money we're supporting over 100 sites in the state of Nebraska. My staff tell me that I run a Volkswagen program, and they're probably right. And that's just a personal desire...that I hate to get a program started on a lot of money, that it's hard to sustain. I also know how important this program is and I'd like to have it in as many places as possible. So if you look at the back of my handout that I just brought, you can see the places where we have sites currently being funded. Now, all of those sites are not fully funded. I want to digress maybe for just a minute to explain that. If you compete for a grant, you get a five-year grant. It's fully funded for the first two years, and then it cuts back to 80 percent, and then it cuts back to 60 percent. At the end of five years, if you are successfully doing the activities and your evaluation results are showing that you're moving along in a direction that shows commitment to this program, you can compete for another five years. Nebraska is fairly unique in that vein. A number of states don't do that. We have found that it's nigh on to impossible for a program to sustain itself at the end of five years even when they have good community partnerships. So we've been trying to do a 50 percent funding of those programs and hope that they can leverage other funds, other services, other in-kind to let them go on. And several of the ones that you're hearing today are going into their 11th and 12th years who are able to get along. And I would say they're probably operating more on a bicycle level than even a Volkswagen level in terms of our funding to them. But they're doing very good programs because they've been able to work with their community and work out some really unusual partnerships that are...probably the thing keep me going is when I get out and I have a chance to visit some of the programs and see what they've been able to do with the energy and the commitment that they have at their site. Last year we had 16,000 school-age youth that participated in our programs. We put a big emphasis on experiential, hands-on learning. You'll hear and you have heard already that it's different from site to site. But there's definitely an emphasis on not repeating something that could be occurring during the school day but that we would complement that. [LR211]

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SENATOR SULLIVAN: I'll have to say that...can you wrap up fairly soon? [LR211]

KAREN STEVENS: Oh, sure, sure. That went very, very quickly. Okay. They can do a variety of activities such as remedial education, tutoring, hands on. Let me give you just one example then, and you can delve out from the example. Last year we did some training on cosmic connections with some money that the state had from NASA. And we trained a number of people around the state to look at the night sky and the day sky. And Michael Sibbersen from the Air and Space Museum did some training. Kearney took that training, and with their local astronomy club parlayed that into a series of other events. The students stayed interested in it. And they studied the light pollution in Kearney. And then they went to their service learning people and decided that they were going to actually talk about the pollution of the sky, learning leadership skills, public relations skills. And our service learning grant bought some telescopes that will stay in the Kearney area now forever so that they can have access to those materials. But that's an example of the kind of things that Kearney did that others didn't. But that was something that they picked up and had a great deal of interest in. So we're excited to talk to you today about 21st Century, and we'd be happy to work with you in whatever way. Should you have a task force or a committee, the Department of Education stands ready to work with you in any way that you'd like to have us work. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Karen. Questions? Yes, Senator Scheer. [LR211]

SENATOR SCHEER: Just one real quick. You had mentioned the threshold was the 40 percent. Was it free or free and reduced? [LR211]

KAREN STEVENS: Free and reduced, either/or. [LR211]

SENATOR SCHEER: Okay. And of the 249 districts, how many of those would fall within the ability to get a grant from the...? [LR211]

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KAREN STEVENS: That's a good question. We have not saturated the district. There's still a number of the hundred sites...of the sites that we (inaudible) by site. Of the hundred sites, we still have a number who are eligible who have not competed for a grant yet. I really...but I can't tell you how many there are. [LR211]

SENATOR SCHEER: Okay. Thank you. [LR211]

KAREN STEVENS: Sorry. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: What sort of data are you collecting that might show the success of your programming? [LR211]

KAREN STEVENS: Well, fortunately for me, I only had five minutes. And so our statewide evaluator who evaluates our system is coming up. And she's got some data to share with you. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. Thank you. Any other questions? Thank you, Karen. [LR211]

KAREN STEVENS: Sure. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Welcome. [LR211]

KEN SCHROEDER: (Exhibit 2) Hello. My name is Ken, K-e-n, Schroeder, S-c-h-r-o-e-d-e-r. I'm currently the interim director at the Strategic Air and Space Museum in Ashland, and I'm here today to speak about the power of informal education. Most of my remarks will be around the ELO time that allows informal educators to impact with science and STEM-related subject matter, because over the last seven years I've had the privilege of presenting programming in over 83 counties in the state of Nebraska. So out of 93, I think I'm pretty well traveled for Nebraska geography. And

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you'll notice the Cool Science 2 Go program brochure I gave you. The whole privilege that I have is to go into an environment. And most of these schools and people I've worked with, I've had the joy of doing science programming at the Children's Museum in Omaha and working with those precious students from Liberty and seeing the impact. And I will tell you, unsolicited by them, it is a model program not only for our city in Omaha but for the state. It's doing some amazing things. Let me say that my work as a science museum director at Edgerton Center in Aurora, now at the Strategic Air and Space Museum where we're transitioning to become a world-class interactive science museum. When I talk about our scope of what we do, it's not relegated to a location. I believe that the reality is in our state, as a rural state, that geography is a component of underserved audiences. And I've gone from one end of the state to the other and seen amazing things that happened. I go into an atmosphere...maybe we go in. I say I blow in, blow up, and blow out. And we can do some demonstrations that excite people, but the exciting thing is when you're in a lab and there's maybe a third and fourth grade class on the floor and you've given them a challenge and this kid says, I can't do it; bald guy, I can't do it. And I said, yes, you can. Bald guy, I can't do it. You hear it over and over. And then all of sudden from that corner of the room you hear that same voice said, I did it; I can do anything. And then on the inside, I know I've done my job because my job is to make sure that the kids of Nebraska know the power of education and the power of STEM opens up a world of creativity. And they can do anything. Let me make a few quick remarks about the power of STEM. STEM creates a better quality of life. It serves our youth and our future, and it inspires imagination and success. Two out of one--that's a ratio right now--of STEM-future jobs are growing right now at a rate of 2:1. And by 2018, that's going to be a staggering number for our state and every other state in the United States to look at, STEM-related fields. Three out of one would be the STEM degrees that are out...in the rest of the world, they're giving degrees in STEM-related fields at a ratio of 3:1. The United States, we're giving one degree in a STEM-related field compared to the rest of world. We're being outpaced. It's kind of scary. We're sixth out of 40 in innovation and competitiveness as a nation. Fifty percent of the U.S. patents that were awarded 2009 were awarded to non-U.S. citizens. That

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scares me. Eleven percent decline in the world's share of published research papers right now because we're only producing 11 percent of research in the area of STEM. I believe in what we do because what we do creates inspiration. And there's a cycle, and it's this: Confidence produces success, and success produces confidence. And it's an ongoing cycle. The power of ELO and the power of informal science education is that we can create an atmosphere that breeds confidence. And we have to do it. These partners that you're hearing from, the power of those windows, the stack of data that shows us that informal education and in this ELO window, this out-of-school time is critical for not only our youth, our work force, and our future. It's powerful. And I have the great, great privilege of being able to be a part of that. I had 65,000 kids in front of me last year. And I think the joy is when they convert from saying, I can't do it, to I can. I'll end with a quote that comes from a great teacher, a great educator in 1928, Henrietta Mears. And she said, a teacher hasn't taught until a learner has learned. The reality is that as teachers and educators, we don't teach lessons. We teach students. We mold lives. We change the future. And our state deserves a commitment to every single one of them from Omaha to Chadron. From McCook to Valentine, our kids deserve our work and the deserve our support. Thank you very much for letting me be here today.

[LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you for your comments. Any questions? If what you say is we're lacking in the potential work force in this field... [LR211]

KEN SCHROEDER: Um-hum. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: ...and there is opportunity in expanded learning opportunities to help fill that void, should we prioritize what kinds of programming we do with expanded learning opportunities? [LR211]

KEN SCHROEDER: I'm going to allow the people who are leading the programs that we partner with all over the state to address maybe the specifics of what

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percentage they think deserves their time with STEM subject matter. But I can tell you that the informal learning window or the ELO window is one of the most powerful arenas for kids to gain confidence in STEM-related subject matter because we've taken off the pressure of testing. It's an atmosphere where it's trying, discovering, creating. And rather than putting a concept on the board--let's say the engineering method; come up with an idea, design, build it, test it, refine it, improve it; and then go through this process again--you let them do the experience. You let them go through that process and there's no pressure. And you let them know this is the great way we learn. We learn by trying new things. Try a new idea. And then they'll say, well, what's the right way? There is no right way. Try it. Let's discover a right way for you. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: So not everybody has a Strategic Air and Space Museum or an Edgerton Center. So... [LR211]

KEN SCHROEDER: Exactly. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: ...when you say you've been in 83 of the counties, I assume you have a curriculum or... [LR211]

KEN SCHROEDER: Yes, ma'am. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: ...a process that transcends that space. [LR211]

KEN SCHROEDER: Yeah. The programming that we provide...and I don't mean to brag but I'll tell you, we've been recognized nationally by the Association of Science-Technology Centers which is the association of science museums. And our model is now being replicated around the nation because our commitment is not to bring people to a building for a science experience. Our commitment is to take our experience to where people are and then let it be enhanced or augmented. Come to us, we want to be a great place. But I think really the power isn't about our place. The

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power is about our purpose. And we won't make change and we won't make impact anywhere in the world with professionals or with politicians or with money. We make change with passion. And when we can then fund people of passion who can network together, great things can happen. But we have to make a very calculated and very intentional commitment that says we're not going to play catch-up with the rest of the nation. We want to lead. And the only way we're going to lead is if we come away from using innovation and keywords that are kind of buzzwords right now, but we become passionate about it and say, let's do whatever it takes. I'm in a situation. I have to raise every penny. I have no public funding. I'm used to that. I believe in that because I think something amazing happens when we own our vision and when we own our mission and we say, no matter what we're going to make it happen. And that's the kind of people I get to partner with every day. And it's a great, great privilege. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you. [LR211]

KEN SCHROEDER: Thank you. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Oh, Senator Kolowski. [LR211]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Ken, thank you very much for your testimony and for your work. You hit on one issue when you talked about the engineering model... [LR211]

KEN SCHROEDER: Yeah. [LR211]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: ...which I think it's really worth stating again. And earlier speakers have talked about college and career readiness. And I think that's only halfway there. I think we also need to think of two more Cs. And one is citizenship. [LR211]

KEN SCHROEDER: Yes, sir. [LR211]

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SENATOR KOLOWSKI: And the other is critical thinking which you directly address, and I thank you for that. So I think of four Cs rather than just two Cs. When we think about college, career, it's also citizenship and critical thinking. Thank you. [LR211]

KEN SCHROEDER: It is, you know, in the children's museums, we learn by play. In science museums, we learn by doing. History museums, we learn to be great citizens by remembering. [LR211]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you so much. [LR211]

KEN SCHROEDER: You're welcome. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Welcome. [LR211]

GWYN WILLIAMS: (Exhibit 3) Thank you. My name is Gwynette Williams; it's G-w-y-n-e-t-t-e, Williams, W-i-l-l-i-a-m-s. I am the appointed after school ambassador for our state. Even though I may live in Omaha, I have found that the importance of expanded learning opportunities resonate with communities statewide. As ELO providers, we all share the same successes and frustrations that coincide with resources, development, advocacy, and the desire to shrink the achievement gap between school-age youth. Collective for Youth is the organization that I work with, but its goal is my passion. The goal is to build a sustainable system of quality expanded learning opportunity programs in the metro area. These high-quality programs are directly tied to school day curriculum and focus on recreation, nutrition, cultural activities, and academic enrichment with a large STEM component, which is science, technology, engineering, and math. A strong communitywide expanded learning opportunity system has six essential components: committed leadership, private coordinating entity, multiyear planning strategies, reliable information through data collection, expanded participation, and commitment to quality. The Collective for Youth

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community partners include the Sherwood Foundation, Creighton University, 21st Century, Completely KIDS, University of Nebraska at Omaha, University of Nebraska at Lincoln, the public library system, Raptor Recovery of Nebraska, Nebraska Parks and Rec, Henry Doorly Zoo, the Air and Space Museum, Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, and Girls Inc., just to name a few. These organizations provide high-quality programming and activities to create highly successful students. I love working with my colleagues, with my executive director Megan Addison who is sitting in the room with the rest of our team. I love making connections between community partners and Nebraska school-age youth. The work I do is important to me as well as other ELO providers across our state. The work is too important and too vast to be contained within the school day. The youth we serve are future Nebraska leaders, scientists, engineers, farmers, technology specialists, carpenters, political leaders, electricians, and voters that deserve our support. At one time, middle-class families across the state only needed one income to live a moderate, comfortable lifestyle. The television stations concluded at midnight with a waving flag and the national anthem. Today's world includes technology that allows Nebraska to be on a 24-hour loop. Most companies, businesses, factories, and mills within our state run outside traditional work hours to remain competitive in today's market. The modern middle-class family has two working parents that may or may not have traditional working hours. Who helps those families? My son has participated in an ELO program since he was in fifth grade where he has worked with college students, college instructors, and many other community partners. My son found his love of science and math in the ELO program. He's now a high school junior taking calculus, trigonometry, and physics. Now both my husband and I went to college. My degree is in psychology and I can tell you anything you want to know about Socrates, Plato, Erik Erikson, Freud, or human behavior. But I can't help my son with his homework. So it was, back to ELO you go, was my answer. Actually, my first response was, get that book away from me because I don't even know what it's talking about. (Laughter) I also have friends that are farmers with similar issues. The farm life is so busy and stressful that listening to them talk about their day makes me tired before they even get to their lunch hour. Who helps these families keep their youth engaged and

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excited about learning? ELOs. If college-educated, middle-class families need the help of ELO, what is the impact of ELOs on the families suffering from poverty? Nebraska has small communities where a steel mill is the main employer. Some of these families have parents with little or no education past high school. However, every family wants his or her child to be successful in school and have opportunities that will give them a competitive edge. No matter what door a child walks into for an ELO program, it should be a high-quality experience. It is our vision that all youth have expanded learning opportunities that ignite the imagination, grow the mind, and provide a foundation for success in school and life. In conclusion, there is a strong need for your support as we move forward. Thank you. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Ms. Williams. Any questions? [LR211]

GWYN WILLIAMS: Nope. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you very much. Welcome. [LR211]

TOM CASADY: (Exhibits 4 and 5) Good afternoon, Senators. My name is Tom Casady, C-a-s-a-d-y. I'm the onion in this petunia patch. (Laughter) I'm not an educator. I'm the public safety director here in Lincoln, and I'm actually a career police officer. This is about the middle of my 40th year as a police officer and sheriff and police chief, now public safety director. You may think it's a little bit unusual for someone with my professional background to be here to speak to you a little bit about expanded learning opportunities. I want to explain why I feel so strongly about this and why I'm not alone. And I've passed around two handouts. The first one is a bar graph that shows you the time that crimes have occurred in Lincoln over the past decade that were committed by juveniles. It's over 20,000 crimes sorted by hour of day of occurrence. And the biggest peak is the hour of 15:00. That's 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. for those of you who don't do military time. And it's obviously the after school hour. I refer to this phenomenon as school bell to dinner bell. It's the time by far that young people are most likely to be either victims of

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crime or perpetrators of crime. Every police chief I know understands this phenomena and understands how important it is and how valuable it is in a community to have quality extended learning opportunities for kids. It's important because it's an issue of public safety. When you can provide good quality learning environments for kids, activities for kids at times outside the normal school hours, you really are having an impact on public safety. There's just no question about that. The second handout I sent around is just a four-page white paper from an organization called Fight Crime: Invest in Kids. I've been a member of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids for several years. I'm not alone. There are 75 other police chiefs, sheriffs, county attorneys here in Nebraska that are members of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids. Those chiefs and sheriffs that aren't members probably don't know about it yet because there are over 5,000 chief prosecutors, police chiefs, and sheriffs in the United States who are members of this organization. It's a nonprofit private 501(c)(3) that exists to lend the support of public safety professionals and law enforcement professionals to expanded learning opportunities. And that paper is basically four pages that explains why we think this is such a valuable thing to do in our communities. We're committed to it. You know, police officers understand intuitively that when kids have adult mentors, when kids have good learning opportunities, when kids have positive, fulfilling activities that are fun and rewarding and where a lot of learning takes places by osmosis that that helps in our fundamental mission of providing services that promote a safe and secure community. This is so strongly felt by my colleagues that you'll find police departments in this country that for over a hundred years have been providing those kinds of services themselves to the best of their ability either through volunteer activities of individuals or, in many cases, departments that sponsor things like explorer posts and police athletic leagues. Here in Lincoln during my career I've served as a camp counselor at the police summer camp. We've operated Midget Football teams for kids in Lincoln's most economically challenged neighborhoods. We've done an explorer post. We've sponsored and participated in things like the TeamMates mentoring program, Big Brothers Big Sisters. That's how strongly the men and women I work with feel about this. And I just want you to know that as you consider what we can do to improve or continue expanded learning

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opportunities here in Nebraska, I hope you'll remember the perspective of someone who's been dealing with the ugly side of life way too much during the past 40 years, that these programs really do make a difference in the safety in our community. My colleagues that are members of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids believe in primary prevention, and that's basically what that white paper is about. It really explains how we understand and are committed to the importance of early childhood education, good after school activities and summer activities for kids, mentoring, and even before that to the importance of providing good support to new and would-be parents. So that's what I want you to think about. I want you to think about this issue in terms of public safety. And I'd happy to address any questions that you have. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Casady. Any questions for Tom? Senator. [LR211]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Tom, thank you so much for your testimony, and you have confirmed the old adage that some people have lived by, that nothing good happens after midnight. You have proven what I felt as a high school principal. Nothing happens that's very good after 3:00 in the afternoon. And I thank you for that. [LR211]

TOM CASADY: Senator, I originally created that graph for the Governor's Summit on Expanded Learning Opportunities which was held here in the Capitol in the Senate Chamber in 2008. And then earlier this year, our superintendent of schools here in Lincoln, Dr. Steve Joel, asked me if I could update it with more current data. And I really do think it speaks for itself. [LR211]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: It does. Thank you. [LR211]

TOM CASADY: Thank you. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you very much. Welcome. [LR211]

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LISA ST. CLAIR: (Exhibit 6) Thank you. I'm Lisa St. Clair, L-i-s-a S-t. C-l-a-i-r. I'm from the University of Nebraska Medical Center, the Interdisciplinary Center for Program Evaluation. So I'm here to talk to you about evaluation and research. So far, I think I evaluate every program that has testified. I evaluate the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program, and through that that includes Collective for Youth, Completely KIDS, Liberty, Columbus, North Platte, I think everyone you've heard from so far. I also evaluate the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties, and that includes 11 districts in the Omaha metro area. And a number of them have expanded learning opportunities, school year and summer. One of the questions you have to be wondering by now is you've heard a lot good things about the program, very meaningful things about the program. But you have to be wondering, are there many academic benefits? Are students improving in reading or writing or math? So one of the things I thought I'd share with you is a three-year longitudinal study. We looked at students who participated in the program at least 30 days IN 2009-10, 2010-11, and 2011-12. So these were the regular attenders of the 21st Century Program. How did they do on NeSA reading? We know that the programs at that time were focusing on reading. We wanted to know how they did. So we looked at the students who had a NeSA score back in 2009-10 and looked at it again two years later. These were the high-participating students, 30 days or more. Seventy-one percent were eligible for free or reduced lunch. So that's a highly at-risk group. They went from a NeSA reading score of 92 which was not bad. We were pretty pleased with that. But they went up to almost 100. That's pretty good. The question I was asked was, who benefited the most from participation in the program? And actually it was the students eligible for free lunch. The students who were not eligible for a free or reduced lunch certainly benefited from the program. They had more social-behavioral benefits. In terms of reading, their reading stayed about the same. Students eligible for reduced price lunch improved, some significantly. But the effect size was low. Effect size is the magnitude of the difference; so significant difference is good, but what was the size of the of the change? That's effect size. The students who benefited the most were the students I was personally

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interested in learning the most about, the free lunch kids. And their NeSA scores, interestingly, gained almost 10 points. They went from 82.36, which is below proficient, to 92.23. That's pretty awesome. The sample size there was 620 students of our 1,064 sample. Then we dug in a little bit deeper and we really wanted to know...I was concerned about knowing the ethnic subgroups, the racial and ethnic subgroups because Phi Delta Kappan magazine which we've looked at for a number of years has shown that certain groups of students--let's say African American males eligible for free lunch--are not making gains in reading scores. They're showing a flat line or a decline. These students improved. So African American males eligible for free lunch went from 71 to almost 82 on their NeSA reading score. Their effect size was almost .4 which is huge. They benefited significantly from participation in the program. African American females, Hispanic males, Hispanic females, Native American females benefited the most. Their gain on the NeSA reading test was 18 points. This was not solely through participation in the expanded learning opportunity. It was everything these students were experiencing in school, at home, in the expanded learning program. But we're not seeing these kinds of gains in school alone. This is unique. So I guess I wanted to just share with you the collective impact of expanded learning with those school-community partnerships they're talking about. And this is something phenomenal. You don't see these kinds of outcomes. You don't see it coming out of our data here in Nebraska. So something phenomenal is happening that I can brag to you about. Now there's one subgroup that's not benefiting as much from the program, so it's something to pay attention to. Native American males did not show the same improvement. So that's something to pay attention to. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Lisa. Any questions? Is that a one-time follow up or do you track these students for longer period of time? [LR211]

LISA ST. CLAIR: We'll be tracking it every three years. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Every three years, okay. All right. Very good. Thank you for your

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testimony. [LR211]

LISA ST. CLAIR: Thank you. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Hello, John. [LR211]

JOHN SPATZ: I'll try to be brief. Senator Sullivan, members of the committee, my name is John Spatz; that's J-o-h-n S-p-a-t-z, and I'm the executive director of the Nebraska Association of School Boards. And I appreciate, Senator Kolowski, your invitation for being here today. I think you and Anna have put together really a great group to talk about expanded learning opportunities. And I think historically NASB may not have been here at a discussion like this, to be honest with you. And I'm pointing the thumb at our organization. And I think this is something that we should be participating in. In January of 2012, the NASB board of directors had a strategic planning process and we discussed what is the role of an organization like this in student achievement. And when I say student achievement, I think it's more defined by maybe the four Cs than perhaps our NeSA scores, something broader than simply test scores. But what is the role of a statewide organization, particularly in working with at-risk students and poverty? So my board of directors had said, we're going to try to do more of a community engagement initiative to address issues of poverty and at-risk students. So that's what we've been doing for the last couple of years is trying to reach out and collaborate with groups. And I've described some of the challenges that we have in terms of a puzzle. While the school day, the 8:00 to 3:00, or 9:00 to 3:00 school day is a very large piece of that puzzle and I would never want to suggest that schools are trying to move their accountability or change the accountability, but there are other pieces of that puzzle. And expanded learning opportunities we think are a very important piece of that puzzle when we're dealing with particularly poverty students. So the role of a statewide organization like this, collaborating with organizations like this and with this committee and the Legislature I think is important in providing more tools for communities to address student achievement, again, more as defined by what the community would

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say, not necessarily simply the NeSA test scores. And actually tonight, weather permitting, we have staff going to Sutton, Nebraska, to work with their school board on a local community engagement initiative. And I think expanded learning opportunities as a tool that a community and a school district can use to help poverty students and really all students I think is very important. So the work of this committee, the work of this Legislature, the work of the people in this room collaborating together to provide more opportunities for expanded learning opportunities I think is very important. And speaking on behalf of a statewide organization representing school boards, we do think this is a critical piece of that puzzle when we talk about solutions for true student success and student achievement for our at-risk populations. And I certainly again, don't want to suggest that schools...that accountability is a bugaboo of schools by any stretch of the imagination. But we do believe we need to do a better job collaborating with groups that are in this room today and others in providing more opportunities like expanded learning opportunities. So I thank Senator Kolowski and Senator Sullivan and your work in bringing groups like this together to have this conversation. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, John. Has your association talked in terms of who leads the charge, so to speak? Do you prefer that it be spearheaded at the local level or there be some direction from the state accompanied by funding or what...? [LR211]

JOHN SPATZ: Great question, and that's really the \$6 million question I think. Typically, we are very supportive of local control. But we are trying to experiment and say, what is our responsibility as a statewide organization in helping the local school districts do things like engage their community to establish ELO programs. So typically, we do support the local control concept. However, in a situation like this where there are examples, where there are best practices, where we do see things that are successful, we need to find better ways of sharing those opportunities. If there's funding available that some school districts aren't aware of, we need to create opportunities for all school districts across Nebraska because poverty is everywhere in our state. But that's a discussion that we're going to have on every issue I think. That's a great question,

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Senator Sullivan. And that's something that I think together we will need to continue talking about because people have strong opinions about that. That's a great question. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Yeah, definitely. Okay. Any other questions? Senator. [LR211]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you. John, thanks for being here. I appreciate your testimony. And I think one of the...a lot of things are being amended today, and I think one of the comments you made is one of them: local control with accountability. I think that has to go hand in hand anymore because of the funding, because of the challenges, because of accountability across the country that we're having at the current time. And I hope we can change our language a little bit about that so it's a comfortable feeling... [LR211]

JOHN SPATZ: Yeah. Right, agreed. [LR211]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: ...and not a threatening feeling. It should be there for all of us to improve student performance. [LR211]

JOHN SPATZ: Yes. No question about that. [LR211]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you. [LR211]

JOHN SPATZ: And I may want to add a fifth C: character. You may be able to fit that into the citizenship one, but I think that's also an important part of that discussion. (Laugh). [LR211]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you for your testimony. [LR211]

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JOHN SPATZ: Thank you very much. I appreciate it. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Welcome. [LR211]

LEA ANN JOHNSON: (Exhibit 7) Thank you. Good afternoon. My name is Lea Ann Johnson, L-e-a A-n-n J-o-h-n-s-o-n. Senator Sullivan and members of the Education Committee, on behalf of Lincoln CLC partners, many of who are in this room today, I want to thank you for your interest, time, and passion in the matter of expanded learning opportunities for all youth in our great state of Nebraska. In the packet that you've received, there is a letter from Dr. Joel, the superintendent of Lincoln Public Schools, in support of expanded learning opportunities and from Mayor Chris Beutler who is also a strong partner in support of the efforts in ELO activities. And I want to take just a minute and go away from my script and acknowledge Kat Hedges who spoke to you at the beginning. And she is a...she makes my heart just really go pitter-patter. You'd think I was her mom. I met Kat when I watched her and her North Star slam poetry team practice during the out-of-school hours at North Star, and I was moved. And every time I see them perform and every time I hear her just speak from her heart...kudos to you. And she spends a lot of time and a lot of energy in those out-of-school hours perfecting her craft. And I think there is a bright place for Kat Hedges at some point. The expanded learning opportunities provided by an array of partners are one key strategy for the continued educational success we experience here in the state of Nebraska and in our local communities. We know that children and youth do not just learn in the classroom. We know that their learning and their development continues well beyond the bell. That is why the development of high-quality ELO opportunities are essential to student success academically, socially, and emotionally. I speak to you today as the director of Lincoln's 25 community learning centers, all which provide expanded learning opportunities. It is because of partnerships with community-based organizations including our YMCA, Parks and Recreation, CEDARS Youth Services, Family Service, Northeast Family Center, Malone Center, NeighborWorks of Lincoln, Willard Community

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Center, Lincoln Housing Authority, and the Boys and Girls Club that expanded learning opportunities are provided in our highest-need schools, schools with poverty rates that have averaged 74 percent during the 2012-2013 school year. As a district, our student population in the free and reduced lunch program continues to grow. Currently, 44 percent of all LPS students participate in free and reduced lunch programs. This percentage is staggering, yet we see our graduation rate continue to rise. There is much intentionality that goes into increased graduation rates. LPS has recognized that schools cannot improve outcomes for children in isolation. It is truly a community effort. It is an effort that brings together community partners each with their own strengths, with their own unique set of strategies and skills that allows us to wrap around the variety of services to families that ultimately impacts student achievement and graduation. Partners from all sectors are essential to the success of expanded learning opportunities which are aligned and connected to the school day. It is our shared vision and our goal that all students will graduate from high school, college, career, and citizenship ready. This may seem very lofty, but collectively it is achievable. With ever-increasing expectations, it's not surprising that schools struggle to squeeze everything from academics to social and emotional skills into a six-hour day. Narrowing the achievement gap is challenging and important work. CLC partners, expanded learning partners believe narrowing the opportunity gap is just as important and just as challenging. Our community partners help with both. Partners bring enriching opportunities to students and families who may not be able to access, due to financial limitations, private art classes, select club athletic teams, STEM robotics competitions, dance and theater classes, computer coding clubs, homework time, and college campus visits. The variety of opportunities provided by our community partners goes on and on and on. And the beneficiaries are our students. Closing the expanded opportunity gap does not come without a cost. In a study completed by the Afterschool Alliance in 2010, it was estimated that affluent families spend close to \$8,900 per year, per child. In comparison, families in the lowest income bracket spend slightly less than \$1,300 per child, per year. Expanded learning opportunities for all requires the use of braided funding streams with all partners contributing and sharing resources. And that's

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something you've talked about a little bit here. And one thing we've found in Lincoln to be successful in building and sustaining partnerships is that every grant dollar that we have invested, our community partners have nearly doubled that. They have provided organizational support and programming support beyond the grant dollars that we receive through community funders, 21st Century grants, title funds, etcetera. In closing, we want to ensure that you as a committee, as you move forward that you continue to stay focused on healthy partnerships between school and community-based organizations. Together, they're going to be what makes a difference for positive outcomes for our students. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Lea Ann. Any questions for Ms. Johnson? Thank you for your testimony. [LR211]

KRISTIN WILLIAMS: Good afternoon. My name is Kristin Williams; it's K-r-i-s-t-i-n W-i-l-l-i-a-m-s, and I'm the director of community initiatives at the Sherwood Foundation which is led by Susie Buffett. The foundation focuses on issues related to low-income children and their families. Our giving reaches across the state of Nebraska with growing emphasis on both local and statewide initiatives in areas such as juvenile justice, foster youth in transition, and expanded learning opportunities. I'm here to tell you about our investments in ELOs, particularly for enrichment activities between the hours of 3 and 6 p.m., after school, when youth are most at risk for criminal activity, teen pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse, and other problems that will plague them for the rest of their lives. Since 2006, the Sherwood Foundation has invested a combined total of \$19.1 million in ELO outside of the school day activities. This includes everything from simply providing safe space for kids--which is not our preferred way to do business, but we do see value in that--to offering curriculum-informed activities and tutoring, to fun and educational field trips. In 2008, we started programming at six of the Omaha Public Middle Schools through an organization that's now become the Collective for Youth, which you heard from earlier. Today, several of the principals are crediting the curriculum-connected learning opportunities with improvements in their test scores,

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attendance, and behavior at their schools. Just this year, we've funded additional programming at 20 OPS elementary schools with high rates of poverty because of the success of the middle schools. To us, this far-reaching issue impacts work force development, safety, health, juvenile justice, and the general well-being of children and families. Our commitment to this issue is longstanding and we have several philanthropic partners who also invest in ELOs and are particularly interested when those funds can be leveraged. The middle and elementary school sites that I just referenced are supported by 21st Century CLC dollars. These funds, when blended with local dollars from philanthropy, can make a difference between a site that does merely offer a safe space and homework help to a robust site with school-connected supports and opportunities. We're so pleased that you guys are taking time to look at this bigger picture. And I want to offer our ongoing partnership in supporting the well-being of children and families through ELO. We're not going away as a foundation. Our work is expanding across the state. And this is really an easy place where you can confidently put resources, support families, and help children excel. I'm happy to take any questions. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you for your comments. Any questions? Obviously, you are very philanthropic in your efforts to fund some of these programs. But it sounds like it needs, as you indicated, to be a partnership. I guess I'm wondering if the foundation has any suggestions on what might be missing in some of these partnerships, how to leverage certain skills that we're not doing now, and then how to make them more sustainable over time. [LR211]

KRISTIN WILLIAMS: The leveraging partnerships, are you talking about bringing in the community partners? [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: That as well as other philanthropic organizations. [LR211]

KRISTIN WILLIAMS: Yeah, yeah. [LR211]

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SENATOR SULLIVAN: You can't do it all yourself... [LR211]

KRISTIN WILLIAMS: No. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: ...neither can the state, neither can a school district. [LR211]

KRISTIN WILLIAMS: I work really hard to reach out to the other foundations. In the Omaha area is where I'm most comfortable. I'm not as familiar with the rest of the state. I have a colleague who's working in that regard. So we take the programs that we think are successful to other funding partners and encourage them to support that work. I'll tell you, when I can say the Department of Education CLC funds are also a part of that puzzle, it's almost a no-brainer. So when state and local governments can come forward with resources, foundations are just more likely to partner. And to me that is the sustainability. I think we have to let go of this idea that DOE is going to do it for five years and then private foundations are going come in for five years. I mean, this is going to be a need that doesn't go away. And I think that that's okay because it's an investment in our children. And when we can look at it for the long haul, and I can tell you that the Sherwood Foundation is looking at it in that regard, and sort of accept this as a prevention activity, then I think we just feel better about that partnership over the long haul. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Do we need to look at ways that create a funding stream that brings private and public together that is more sustainable, like for example, an endowment that can be there and...? [LR211]

KRISTIN WILLIAMS: That's one way to do it. I think we've seen with the Sixpence fund, that's been highly successful. So if there would be a way to work the expanded learning opportunities into a similar model, I think that could be looked upon pretty favorably. [LR211]

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SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. Thank you. [LR211]

KRISTIN WILLIAMS: Yeah. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any other testifiers? Welcome. [LR211]

DEAN TICKLE: Thank you. My name is Dean Tickle, D-e-a-n T-i-c-k-l-e. I'm the superintendent at Elm Creek Public Schools. And previously...this is my second year in Elm Creek. I came to Elm Creek from Lexington, and I was there for 18 years in the middle school, principal for 12 years there, and was fortunate enough to have I think a robust extended learning opportunity, a 21st Century Learning grant. And when I went to the meeting, I have to confess I didn't know much about it. And I sat and I listened to the program requirements. And one of the things that struck me is this is going to be unbelievable for our school and our kids. And it was, and we really developed I think a great program with community partnerships and got people involved in our school. So when I came to Elm Creek which is a vastly different school district, one of the first things that I realized is, we're not that different. I still have kids that have needs in a small school. How I am different is my free and reduced poverty rate. We were a little over 40 percent in a district of 320, and that's K-12. And the first thing I wanted to do was see if I could get an extended learning opportunity, a 21st Century Community Learning Center grant, and was working on it. And then my local preschool closed down, and I shifted gears immediately to see if I could shore up that. I did not want my community to be without a preschool. And so we took care of that knowing that I'd come back this year and apply and try to get an extended learning opportunities, after school programs, anything I could do. Start a TeamMates program, that was one piece of it. And then I found out that my free and reduced rate had dropped to 38 percent. And in my school district, that means four kids or a family of four either moved, didn't fill out the application, whatever. I have a tough time sometimes getting people in a small community to fill out free and reduced application forms. You know, sometimes the

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mind-set is, if I can put a sandwich in the bag, I don't care; I'm not filling it out. And it does cost me at times. Four kids is all it took and I'm no longer eligible. And so now I'm scrambling. I recognize the benefit of that. I know that we have kids that need it. I know that I am obligated through my continuous improvement process with school and through Title I to provide extended learning opportunities. I know that it's a wonderful opportunity to involve community members, whether it's the old lady across the street retired teacher that wants to come in and knit or someone that wants to show my kids how to whittle or whatever. I love having those people in my school. And it makes it much more difficult if I don't have some way to generate funds to create those extended learning opportunities. The other thing I would say is it's an economic development issue for my community. Why would you move to Elm Creek? I don't have a YMCA. I don't have a Boys and Girls Club. I don't have Camp Fire. I don't have a city rec program. Those are things that extended learning opportunities do for small communities. They keep them vibrant. They make it possible for people that want their kids in a small-school environment to step into those things and keep our community economically viable. Thank you. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Tickle. So with the loss of that grant...I presume that you've lost that. [LR211]

DEAN TICKLE: Right. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: So have you had involvement from other entities in the community to help you continue that programming? [LR211]

DEAN TICKLE: The after school? [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Um-hum. [LR211]

DEAN TICKLE: Well, we hadn't started it yet. [LR211]

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SENATOR SULLIVAN: Oh, you hadn't. Okay, okay. [LR211]

DEAN TICKLE: So I am, as we speak, trying to come up with ways to... [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: To do it. Okay. [LR211]

DEAN TICKLE: Yeah, to do that. And I, you know, I've got a lot of things that I want to get done. But, I mean, I think that needs to be at the top of my list. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Sounds like you maybe should contact the 4-H program.
(Laughter) [LR211]

DEAN TICKLE: Yeah, love 4-H. You bet. And UNL Extension is wonderful. I mean, there are a lot of cool things, people that are willing to partner with us. But I need to organize that. I need to coordinate it. I need to... [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Sure, sure. Very good. Any other questions? [LR211]

SENATOR DAVIS: You had this program at Lexington, sir? [LR211]

DEAN TICKLE: Yes. [LR211]

SENATOR DAVIS: And what did...what was encompassed in the program there?
[LR211]

DEAN TICKLE: Well, we had a couple of really strands that we did. Number one, it was...we had academic centers. And what we found out is that we had a lot of kids with gaps and holes in their educational background. And so we really tried to change the focus from a homework assistance program to an academic recovery program where

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we could fill those gaps and holes. And then the other thing we did is...really the other half of it, a good balance is the just community partnership and the enrichment part of it. There were a lot of things that we couldn't do during the school day that we were able to do in after school and summer programs that really spark kids' passion, things they would never been exposed to, people they wouldn't have been exposed to. And so I think we really had a good balance in that program. [LR211]

SENATOR DAVIS: Thank you. [LR211]

DEAN TICKLE: You bet. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you for your testimony. [LR211]

DEAN TICKLE: Yeah. Thank you. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Welcome. [LR211]

JEFF COLE: (Exhibits 8 and 9) Good afternoon. My name is Jeff Cole, J-e-f-f C-o-l-e. And thank you, Senator Sullivan and members of the committee, for the opportunity to testify today on this important topic, ELOs. The network I lead, Beyond School Bells, is a public-private partnership at the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation that works with expanded learning advocates and practitioners from across the state and nation to build partnerships and support policies that lead to more high-quality sustainable ELOs for more Nebraska youth, especially youth from our state's highest-need communities. As you've heard in the array of testimony this afternoon--and I might add there's been a lot of passion; passion has been used a lot in the testimony today--ELOs are a research-based, reality-tested solution to many of the challenges we face in helping to prepare the next generation of Nebraskans for the multifaceted responsibilities of citizenship. Specifically, you've heard that ELOs support and enhance the learning and growth that takes places in our state's high-quality public schools; that

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ELOs help address the opportunity gap dividing high-poverty and high-income youth in both urban and rural settings; that ELOs take advantage of the best of Nebraska communities through a strong commitment to school-community partnerships; that ELOs help both parents and our law enforcement agencies by providing safe, enriching spaces for youth to go to when parents are at work; that ELOs create opportunities for youth to get the engaged, hands-on, STEM learning experiences that are so essential for their futures; and finally, that ELOs create opportunities for public and private sector partners to come together and braid resources and develop innovative approaches to help our state's youth reach their full potential. These examples of benefits to Nebraska mirrors what national research tells us happens when young people regularly participate in high-quality ELO programs. I passed out some material from some of our national partners. And they summarize some of these benefits with a specific focus on research that shows when young people from high-poverty backgrounds regularly participate in quality programs throughout their elementary years, the achievement gap in math scores disappears. More generally, the research in this handout shows that regular participation leads to improvement in the critical A, Bs, and Cs: A, attendance in school day programs improves; B, positive behaviors increase and negative behaviors decline; and C, the coursework improved and grades improved. Because of the local, state, and national research in best practices, we feel the case for ELO programs built on strong school-community partnerships is rock solid, right for the times, and ideally situated to build on Nebraska's strengths to better serve youth across our state. In mid-October, we received a grant from the National Conference of State Legislatures to convene a summit in partnership with UNL to look at ELOs and the role that state policy can play to help support these community-driven efforts. We used the State School Board's framework you have before you today as the starting point for our conversation at the summit. We also shared emerging research that has been collected in this compendium. And the handout that I distributed earlier is part of a series of research reports that our national partners are summarizing to help spread the word about the important impact of ELO programs. Many of you I believe have copies of this compendium. We're excited to share this groundbreaking collection of research studies

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with stakeholders here in Nebraska and have given Senator Kolowski's office copies of the compendium for those of you that are interested. Our summit resulted in a series of recommendations that I also distributed earlier. We hope that you will take these recommendations into account as you consider future action in this area. In closing, expanded learning opportunities powered by school-community partnerships are proven to be both cost-effective and a vital support to youth and communities across our state. Expanded learning opportunities build on Nebraska's system of local control and the need for ELO programs to be rooted in the communities they serve. And expanded learning opportunities are based on assets that exist in almost all Nebraska communities: strong public schools and strong and diverse organizations and volunteers that want to support the youth in their communities. As you consider policy options to support these important programs, we hope that you develop an approach that builds on these Nebraska strengths. If we are successful in creating state and local policies that grow and sustain high-quality ELO programs, I am convinced, and I think the research we heard about and the practices we heard about today support that conviction, that Nebraska will emerge as a model for the rest of the nation of how, with thoughtful attention to time and the vital role of school-community partnerships, we can help bridge the opportunity gap and provide the lifetime array of supports both in school and out of school. We know that all children need to be productive citizens. Again, thank you for your time today. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Jeff. Now this summit that you talked about, NCSL sponsored? [LR211]

JEFF COLE: That's correct. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: That was here. [LR211]

JEFF COLE: That's correct. [LR211]

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SENATOR SULLIVAN: Were there senators, legislators from other states present?
[LR211]

JEFF COLE: No, it was focused on Nebraska policymakers. It was one of a series of events that the NCSL is sponsoring around the country... [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Oh, I see. [LR211]

JEFF COLE: ...focused on this topic. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. [LR211]

JEFF COLE: And so we had a staff member from the Congress that came and spoke and talked about some policies, activities that other states are doing. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay, all right. Very good. Any other questions for Jeff? All right. Thank you very much. [LR211]

JEFF COLE: Great. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any other testifiers? Senator Kolowski, would you like to conclude? [LR211]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Yes, ma'am. Hello, again. Chairman Sullivan and members of the Education Committee, my name is Senator Rick Kolowski, R-i-c-k K-o-l-o-w-s-k-i, and I represent District 31. My hope is that you leave today inspired by the testimony we have just witnessed and ready to help support and build an expanded learning opportunities network in Nebraska. One way that other states have continued to build support for ELOs is by developing a Blue Ribbon Task Force to undertake a yearlong process of information gathering activities and internal discussions about ways to

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increase support for expanded learning opportunities. Such a time-limited task force in Nebraska would help us to build a strategy for the following: first, meeting Nebraska's unique rural ELO needs while at the same time continuing to sustain our quality urban programs; secondly, exploring how ELOs fit into our plans to address poverty and support working families; third point, developing statewide quality standards for ELOs in a way that recognizes the local nature of ELO programs and incentivizes school-community partnerships; next point, reviewing our current funding sources and whether they are supporting quality programs or not; another point, determining ways to create sustainable funding sources with public-private partnerships; and lastly, finally, exploring opportunities for a statewide grant program to enhance and sustain existing high-quality, school-community ELO partnerships. I believe a task force is an appropriate first step to increase access to expanded learning opportunities for all of Nebraska's youth. I plan to introduce legislation in 2014 to establish a one-year Blue Ribbon Task Force and help us to take that next step. Thank you for your time today. And I will see you in a few minutes for our next hearing on school security. Any questions, please? [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: All right. Thank you, Senator. Any questions for the senator? Senator Seiler. [LR211]

SENATOR SEILER: Rick, does the...are all the programs in existence now tied to poverty? [LR211]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Do they serve only poverty or are they only tied to poverty? [LR211]

SENATOR SEILER: Yeah, the funding, is it all tied to...? [LR211]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Most of the...Jeff...I'd have to turn to some of our audience, people that know that better than I do but... [LR211]

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SENATOR SEILER: It sounded like it has to (inaudible) [LR211]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Usually they are, but also nonpoverty kids are also involved in some of those programs. As Lisa St. Clair was talking about, different categories of students taking place, whether they are free and reduced lunch... [LR211]

SENATOR SEILER: Right. [LR211]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: ...or not on those programs. [LR211]

SENATOR SEILER: Well, it sounds like it's a great program and would benefit all kids. [LR211]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Correct. Among the many different programs, keeping kids active and busy and learning and reinforced never goes wrong. Correct. [LR211]

SENATOR SEILER: Thank you. [LR211]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you. [LR211]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: (See also Exhibit 10) Any other questions? Thank you, Senator. That concludes the hearing for LR211. We're going to take a five-minute break, and we will resume shortly. Thank you. [LR211]

EASE

SENATOR SULLIVAN: (Recorder malfunction)...public hearing. And I'd like to open the hearing on LR208 which has been introduced by Senator Kolowski. It's an interim study to examine security in our public schools. Senator Kolowski, for your introduction.

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[LR208]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: (Exhibit 1) Thank you, Madam Chairman. Good afternoon, Chairwoman Sullivan and members of the Education Committee. My name is Senator Rick Kolowski, R-i-c-k K-o-l-o-w-s-k-i, and I represent District 31. Last session, I introduced legislation, LB346, to allow school boards with a two-thirds supermajority vote to raise their maximum levy 1 cent to use for school security improvements. This legislation is at the moment stalled in the Revenue Committee with four yeases, three nos, and one undecided. This summer I've been working on an interim study, LR208, to further explore the need for funding school security improvements and see if there is a way to do so through the Education Committee. As an educator for over 40 years and the founding principal of Millard West High School, I know what kind of security it takes to run a school of over 2,100 students. We are talking the population of many towns in the state of Nebraska--the size of any one of the high schools, for example, in Millard or Omaha or in Lincoln. At one time, one of my staff members, of course he was a science teacher, had to quantify something. And he checked the state of Nebraska booklet, and our schools were larger than 85 percent of the towns in Nebraska, a single school, a single high school. This year alone, in Millard, you're going to hear from one of our testifiers of the amount of money and improvements they put into their bond issue and the needs they will have on a continuous basis, year after year, as they move forward with 23,000 students in that district. From my own experience, the items that you would look at--staff ID cards, security cameras, school resource officers, hall monitors, number of doors to cover, and the list goes on and on in the size of the building that would house over 2,000 students--the needs are great and sometimes the money is short. These expenses and experiences are not unique just to my Millard experience. Please turn your attention to the handout I have provided you. With the help of the Nebraska Council of School Administrators, we reached out to superintendents across the state to learn about school security in their school districts. As you can see, regardless of geography or size, superintendents are facing the same dilemma of making the security changes necessary to keep children, educators, and parents safe without taking money

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away from the instruction of students and the maintenance of their buildings. You will hear similar testimony today from the Nebraska State Education Association, the Nebraska School Boards Association, the Nebraska Council of School Administrators, the Rural Community Schools Association, superintendents, students, teachers, and other concerned parties. Senator Hadley, who has been an outspoken advocate of school security, said the following and it has lingered with me and my staff. He said, and I'm paraphrasing, that we as legislators are in the position to help Nebraska's students by making sure our schools are as safe as possible. If we don't do anything, and God forbid we have any kind of school incident, then all eyes will be on us for not having taken bigger steps to protect Nebraska's youth. So what are the steps that we can take in the Education Committee? I believe one immediate option would be to create a state grant program to which schools could apply and receive funding for school security improvements. Long term, we may want to consider a school security adjustment through the TEEOSA formula. I would also propose that we have the department conduct a statewide assessment of school security needs as well as costs. This could be used to create a state standard of school security that could then be used as a target for state support of school districts' efforts to improve school security. As you can see, there are many routes we can take and I would encourage us to explore all of them and more, but to do so with haste. School security is an immediate issue. I look forward to working with you this session to help give schools the financial ability to keep our kids safe. Thank you for coming from across the state to be part of this hearing today, to all members who will testify, and to our committee. I would ask you hold your questions for my conclusion. Thank you very much. [LR208]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Senator. We'll start with the first testifier. Welcome. [LR208]

ANGELO PASSARELLI: (Exhibit 2) Thank you, Senator Sullivan. Members of the Education Committee, my name is Angelo Passarelli; that's A-n-g-e-l-o P-a-s-s-a-r-e-l-l-i, and I'm an administrator with the Millard Public Schools. And I'm

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happy to be here today. Thank you for inviting me, Senator Kolowski. The tragic events of January 5, 2011, that left an assistant principal of ours dead, our principal seriously wounded, and a young man dead have altered the way we look at things in the Millard Public Schools. They have changed the way we view security. They have intensified our efforts to look at our schools and programs and make them as safe as they can be. We've implemented a number of security measures that increase our confidence that we're doing everything we can to protect our students and our staff from these kinds of dangers. I want to refer to the handout. On page 2, if you would look at the colored sheet on page 2 it describes some of the things that we've had in place for many, many years: ID badges that most schools routinely have for staff...we don't have them for students but we have them for staff; video surveillance both inside and outside of our facility; and alarm systems. Those are things that we had before this event and things that we have today. We've added the last one, the door buzzer systems that lock our facilities during school hours. So those are things that are new. We have added those things to increase the security that we have in our school systems for our staff and our students. We recently passed a bond issue, and about \$5 million in that bond issue of \$80 million are intended for upgrades to our security systems including the last item on that sheet, the door buzzer systems; and on the items on page 3 which our consultant calls a unified security environment which kind of makes all of those components talk to each other and work in one, in concert, so that we can monitor all the doors in our schools. A typical high school in our school system has 40 or 50 doors to monitor that get to the outside. It also includes things like cameras that would be programmed so that when a door opens, they swing over to view that door; those kinds of things. The door buzzer system is locked during the day that would...so you'd have to be allowed in by the secretary or somebody staffing the front office. And then expanded card access so that our staff can move around the building and into the building and also maybe cards for students at some point that would allow them to move around the building. But all of these have come in light of the events that we've gone through since 2011. All of these systems will help us; probably not totally make us impenetrable. It won't stop events like that happened in 2011, but it certainly will add to the layers of security that

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we have in our school system. Our schools were built like most schools, in a time when security was not an issue. We wanted them to be open, friendly, and welcoming environments for our parents. So now we're modifying entrances, allowing for vestibules so visitors have to come in through a vestibule. We're taking our open concept buildings and adding doors with locks that lock from the inside. Again, those things are meant to slow down intruders. It certainly wouldn't stop. I remember the discussion recently on one of those open-to-close concept buildings. And we were trying to decide what it should look like. Should there be glass on either side of the door? Well, the glass made it more vulnerable. But we decided that we can't protect against every conceivable event. So we have to do, in our best judgment, make our buildings work for the educational program and process that we have in place, and then we have to allow for the safest measure we can. So we add security wherever we can to slow them down basically is what we're after. So in addition to the facility changes we have, we have security resource officers in our high schools, in all four of our high schools. We have off-duty or retired police officers in our middle schools. And all of those are continuing expenses, large expenses that we have that eat into our budget. I will remind you Millard is a low spender. We are in fact number 244 out of 247. I have to get that one in. Sorry. So those expenses come at the cost of something else in our budget. And they do come in the form of other staff that we would use for our educational program. So we do have audits. I know one of the things I was going to talk to you about today is the audit that we've done for our system, in an ongoing process, just to make sure that those are as safe as they can be. We appreciate your attention to this. I don't think I have any solutions. I hope...the 1 cent levy would certainly help us in that. And we would we could find some way of modifying our state aid formula to help us as well. [LR208]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Angelo. Questions? Yes. [LR208]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: If I may, ma'am. Angelo, just on...one penny for the Millard district, for example, would raise what on a year's basis? [LR208]

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ANGELO PASSARELLI: About \$900,000, 1 penny. So it would cover a large portion of our ongoing staff costs in security resource officers. [LR208]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you. [LR208]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: And to date, you've accomplished what you have now in place for security through just your cost of doing business on an annual basis plus a bond issue that has helped achieve that. [LR208]

ANGELO PASSARELLI: Correct, and the bond issue is the biggest chunk right now. We originally had \$10 million in there for security. And because our bond issue wasn't successful the first time around, we had to modify our plan so that we could fit it within the budget. And so there's about \$5 million in there now. [LR208]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: As you indicated, probably nothing is fail-safe proof, possibly "unimpenetrable." But if the state is going to have more involvement in this...and also I remember a comment that an administrator made to me a while back that if we were building new schools today, they wouldn't look anything like what they do now. So at the very least, should the state have some suggestions or a prototype of what should a facility look like to be totally secure? [LR208]

ANGELO PASSARELLI: Yes, but I think technology has really helped with that. Technology has allowed us to modify our facilities to work in a way that is safe. Again, nothing is going to make them totally safe, and that won't change. So I think the bond issue route is a great way to go. But our continuing costs are just pretty staggering when you think about it. [LR208]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. Thank you. Any other questions? Thank you. [LR208]

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ANGELO PASSARELLI: Thank you. [LR208]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: I failed to mention as we started this hearing that we are not using the light system. But when I hold up my hand it means that the five minutes have gone. (Laughter) And also just...if you are testifying and if someone has already made a point that is very similar to what you're trying to get across, there's no harm in saying, I agree with what's been said. So just want you to be cognizant of the time element involved so everybody gets a chance to testify. Thank you. [LR208]

JON HABBEN: (Exhibit 3) Hello, Senator Sullivan and members of the committee. Appreciate your time and effort on this kind of an issue. I think for us to try and say how important it is, we would all say the same thing. To begin, my name is Jon Habben, J-o-n H-a-b-b-e-n, executive director of Nebraska Rural Community Schools Association. Other than having fewer students, fewer buildings, fewer doors, and so on, the horrible possibility that an intruder could come onto rural community school campuses, even into a buildings, and harm students and adults echoes the same with no less expectations than a large district. There is no question that all districts have been working to take incremental steps toward providing a safe and secure environment as better practices emerge. Even though we don't want to have to admit, such practices have become reality. We do try to find ways to secure buildings, grounds, and transportation to protect students and adults. Equipment, facilities modifications, and additional due diligence can end up in competition with the rest of the school program when not enough funds are available and/or there is not enough growth room within the budget limitations. So the aggressiveness with which a district attempts to pursue a safer, more secure environment has to be tempered with existing school finance realities. The immediate concern becomes a multiyear plan. And you hope it can be met. There's no guarantee. And all is made a lot more expensive due to the aging facilities that exist in communities all across the state. In each of the rural community districts that I superintended, and the one that I was principal at, this was certainly a reality. They weren't the same in any of the four. There were differences in age. There

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were differences in construct. There were differences in organization. There were differences in communities. Somehow in each of those places, folks got together and tried to figure it out. In the last place that I superintended, annual meetings before every school year beginning with, what's our safety-security plan? We bring in law enforcement. We bring in fire department. We bring in other agencies. We bring in people on the staff. We bring in our teachers and our principals, and we try to figure out what's the best way to do whatever it is we can do. The dilemma is, whatever we want to do does have limits. Whether we want to admit it or not, we can't do it all when we want to do it all. The best you can do is forced to become less than what should be done. We all know it. In every school district, everybody knows it. And you try to cover your weaknesses. You try to figure out a way to deal with the priorities and cover your weaknesses. Now, hopefully, with this effort through Senator Kolowski we get an opportunity to continue this discussion. There are pieces to this that are different between school districts. You do have school districts that have levy capacity, and you have school districts that don't. You have school districts that have some budget capacity. You have school districts that don't. And they cross all the way from one corner of the state to the other. So a modification of TEEOSA on at least the budget limitations if not the levy side have to be considered. These are unusual costs that have now become normal. And we can't just assume that the normal method of financing schools will cover them without creating that conflict between all we want to do and all we are expected to do as a school along with all we want to do and all we're expected to do to keep our students and our staff and anybody who walks on campus safe and secure. You might start with a categorical state grant, noncompetitive, as something that's completely outside of TEEOSA in order to begin this process. But in either case, I would encourage you to look at what you can consider and what will be brought to you I'm sure in a bill or maybe more than one bill in the session to look at on a statewide issue with every kid measuring the same, what is it that we can do to have this be a safe and secure statewide environment on every campus? Thank you. [LR208]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Jon. Questions? Senator Seiler. [LR208]

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SENATOR SEILER: Involving your association and other associations, is there any minimum standards that have been put together by your associations so that we would...you know, you say start with children in each school district. Well, we've got 249 school districts. If we don't have a minimum, how do we know what monies to appropriate and how much the costs are? [LR208]

JON HABBEN: Yes. The question is not answered at this point. There is no listing of what every school district has done in every building. There is no repository of information that you can go to. We have many consultant recommendations and excellent recommendations in somewhat unique fashion here, maybe slight differences here. But we don't have that uniform repository of information or standards. To take your question one step further, it does make sense to have some recommendations, maybe stronger than recommendations, about what a minimum security plan should be. We have a certain amount of that because we do have requirements in the building of our safety-security plans. But in terms of the actual physical construct within all of our buildings, we do not. [LR208]

SENATOR SEILER: Thank you. [LR208]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any other questions? Thank you. Oh, Senator Scheer. [LR208]

SENATOR SCHEER: You represent mostly smaller rural school districts. [LR208]

JON HABBEN: Yes. [LR208]

SENATOR SCHEER: And in looking at some of, and probably a great deal of your facilities, they are much older than probably the more populated urban areas, not all but a lot of them. And I guess what I'm getting at is the...that I'm familiar with, at least in my neck of the woods, you have 1940 to 1950-ish buildings that are anywhere from two to

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three stories and they have an ungodly number of windows, most of which don't function very well but they're still there. And you know, when we look at safety concerns, some of which is not somebody walking in, it's what can be done from the outside as well. And so as we look at the security issues, it's not necessarily someone necessarily penetrating the building. Someone from the outside certainly could do as much damage as well. And I think to revamp or rehab a lot of those buildings, and some of which may be in more metropolitan areas, is a really, really big ticket I would say. Your thoughts on that. [LR208]

JON HABBEN: It is. It is, and let me give you an example. In the last district I superintended, one of our biggest issues...well, we had two 1957 elementary buildings. And in each of those buildings we had doors that, at the time of construction, met all the requirements that needed to be met. Once you begin having a security consultant look at those door, then you begin to see that your locking mechanisms and a variety of other things are not satisfactory. So now you have two buildings, each of them with 30 doors that you have to deal with and still meet, because you would be changing them, the newest Fire Marshal specifications. The cost is...just knocks you off your seat. You can't believe that in this effort to do the right thing, this has happened to you simply because you've got 1957 elementary buildings. And that didn't include all of the glass on the outside of the classrooms even though you didn't have glass on the inside hallways. You're right on track, Senator. This can be wildly expensive if you try to do everything to the maximum. That's why, as I said, you end up choosing your priorities and trying to figure out your weaknesses and deal with them. You could be forced into bond issues based up the ages of your buildings or the amount of work that needs to be done. You know, QCPUF does not allow this particular expenditure. So that's off the table. You're pretty much dealing with the voters unless you can fit it inside the levy cap and into your limitations. And voters...I think generally voters will certainly sympathize with the need to do these things. But one of the things that we find everywhere is they'd like you to do those things without spending so much money. And that universal consideration is what it is. So, you know, some places it passes. Some places it doesn't. But you're right,

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you're right on track. The costs can be prohibitive. In one of the school districts I was in, I think we would have been talking about building a new building. [LR208]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. Any other questions? Thank you for your testimony. [LR208]

JON HABBEN: You're welcome. Thank you. [LR208]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Welcome. [LR208]

JOHN BONAIUTO: Thank you. Senator Sullivan, members of the committee, John Bonaiuto, J-o-h-n B-o-n-a-i-u-t-o, registered lobbyist representing the Nebraska Council of School Administrators and the Nebraska Association of School Boards. And I'll start off with saying, I agree with everything that the previous testifiers had said. (Laugh) The two associations have given this a lot of thought. We've just had a state conference and talked to our members, the administrators and the school board members, and this is a critical issue. And Senator Kolowski did an important thing in bringing this to the forefront last year and introducing the bill that appeared in Revenue. And I think the Revenue Committee did a great job of not only having a thorough hearing, but discussing the issue and spent a lot of time on the issue. And I know that there was a split vote, but the reality was the discussion continued virtually until the end of session. And I know that I had conversations with every member of the Revenue Committee. And Senator Hadley and I talked about something that I really had not thought of initially when we supported the bill. Yes, it would have been a tax increase at probably not a very good time, obviously. But allowing boards, under whatever circumstances, to levy another penny, you create a new standard for districts. And as Senator Hadley and I discussed, no board in their right mind wouldn't levy and start working in this area because if you didn't and something happened, you would all of a sudden have a liability that you might not have had before because all of your neighboring districts were doing something, why weren't you, and the Legislature said you had a penny that

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you could levy to do something with. So that really forced us to start thinking about, how can the state be a partner working with the Legislature, working with the Department of Education and maybe doing something with grants, working with the formula to help equalized and nonequalized districts and still allowing for that local control. You know, the state did not wade into buildings. And we've talked about this issue for years. Should there be a factor in the formula, and what have you? Well, that train left the station a long time ago. But I think we're at a point now with this issue that it still makes sense for the state to be a partner in some way, shape, or form. And increasing the levy is not necessarily the only route. There should be other things that we can do and work together on. And so I think that in this coming session that we should explore...continue to explore options other than adding to the levy in looking at how this could be done. You know, possibly the up-front grants could be used by districts to do the assessments and just to see how much work they need, if they need a bond issue. Some districts are able to swing that; others it's pretty difficult. So I think the discussion should be ongoing, and we still have work to do. But this issue is not one that's going to away. With that, I'll conclude my testimony. [LR208]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, John. Your comment about the fact that the state hasn't played a part in facilities but now we're looking at security issues, so it does beg the question, what role does the state have in...because by and large, this really is a facility issue. [LR208]

JOHN BONAIUTO: It really... [LR208]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Even though it does extend... [LR208]

JOHN BONAIUTO: Yeah, up front. [LR208]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: ...I mean, to other areas. But primarily it is a facility issue. [LR208]

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JOHN BONAIUTO: Yeah. [LR208]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: And so if we're going to have that conversation, it's probably a path that we're going to have to at least look at, I would assume. [LR208]

JOHN BONAIUTO: Absolutely. I mean, that's the first thing. That's probably the easiest thing you deal with is the facilities. And Senator Scheer had alluded to the age of the buildings; and even nice buildings that have been remodeled, it's still the original design which isn't really conducive to being a secure facility. [LR208]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Scheer. [LR208]

SENATOR SCHEER: I'm just curious to the extent that we've talked about the concept of even adding one penny as far as a levy adjustment for security and that it may help or improve districts that have done something like Millard to help finish those type of projects. But in some smaller districts where you've done nothing and there's such a huge cost to try to indemnify the district from those type of calamities that might happen, I don't know that one cent even would come close to taking care of bond indebtedness. As Jon had said earlier, when you look at some of the rural schools, spend \$3 million or \$4 million trying to rehab a building or you can rebuild a building for \$2 million that takes its place, and putting the community in a situation, you know, neither one are very good choices for them, especially if they might be an area of declining enrollment as well. So I'm...you know, the penny works some places. I'm just not sure how to facilitate meaningful improvement in all districts across the state. And I don't know if that necessarily means state dollars involvement. I'm a little hesitant personally to do that. School districts and their buildings historically have been the domain of the local district and their responsibilities. I certainly want to give them the opportunity to have safe and sound buildings, but how to fund that I'm not sure is a state responsibility as more of a local responsibility and offering them the availability of those funds to do so.

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Unfortunately, if a district chooses not to, then, you know, that leaves them as an open liability as well. [LR208]

JOHN BONAIUTO: Senator, you bring forth a point that we've discussed when we talked about the state being part of facilities years back, that when you look at what a district can levy based on its valuation, a penny in one district will raise a considerable amount of money where in other districts it's not very much. And, you know, we talked about districts having bond issues, and in one community they can have a bond issue and fund it with a minimal tax increase and in another community to build a building it would be quite significant. You're not talking about pennies now. You're talking about a big increase in the taxes. So this goes along with that same discussion, is how does the state work as a partner? And I don't know if NDE could be a player here with someone that could help support safety and security in the field. And I know that they're strapped for dollars, and most of their staff is federal. (Laugh) [LR208]

SENATOR SCHEER: Well, most of it's federal plus the fact that, I believe it's been three, four, five years ago, they removed the safety person at the department. So I'm not even sure that we have a safety person on staff at the department as well. [LR208]

JOHN BONAIUTO: I don't think so. [LR208]

SENATOR SCHEER: So it just compounds. [LR208]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: What sense do you get from your membership? I mean, I'm just paging through some of the reactions from the survey. And to a certain extent, it's kind of all over the board. Some have handled it and feel comfortable with it. Some feel that they are still lacking. What do you hear from your membership? [LR208]

JOHN BONAIUTO: Senator, you really have summed it up, that we've got districts that have really moved forward in this area and are trying to really make progress and do

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what needs to be done. In other communities it's not as much a front-burner issue. And it's not that they're not thinking about it. They have just, as Jon Habben had said, they've got many other things that they're dealing with just to keep their doors open and provide a good instructional program, and they don't have the dollars to move forward in this area. And passing a bond issue is very difficult. So it's...I think that the associations will do everything that they can, the School Board Association, the school administrators, to support what districts need to do, with seminars, programs, what have you, but we can only go so far. [LR208]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you. Thank you for testimony. [LR208]

JOHN BONAIUTO: Thank you. [LR208]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Welcome. [LR208]

FAITH HUTCHERSON: Good afternoon, Senator Sullivan and other members of the committee. My name is Faith Hutcherson, F-a-i-t-h H-u-t-c-h-e-r-s-o-n, and I stand before you all today to give you my perspective as a freshman at Lincoln East High School on the issue of school security. There are many proposed solutions to this growing problem, and the following is mine. A 2012 Pearson Education database article stated that 47 school shootings have occurred in the United States between 2000 and 2012. It is startling statistics like this that cause us to question whether our schools are as safe and secure as they need be. As a responsible member of our community, I absolutely want to recognize this problem and work diligently to come up with a suitable solution. If we are able to find a solution now, we will not only be able to provide safer schools for students like me but safeguard the future generations. In addition to the proposed property tax increase of 1 percent, I believe we need to look deeper into the problem itself to find the true cause of the shootings. It is only then that we will be able to effectively solve the problem. School shootings are growing in occurrence and creating chaos in communities across the nation and take lives of many. They also

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terrorize the communities in which they occur. The two main causes that I believe are to blame for the school violence are bullying and harassment of students at school and the way we celebrate violence in our society. The U.S. Secret Service report in May of 2002 linked bullying as the cause of school shootings to 75 percent of the prior shootings. If we consider that that rate is still the same, we can conclude that 36 of those 47 shootings happened because students felt bullied and harassed at school. Those facts make it clear that the majority of the shootings were caused by bullying. They also shed light on how we can solve this problem. We must better monitor our own actions each and every day. This cannot be a new discipline plan or even a law passed by any legislative body but instead the conscious decision of our society as a whole to raise the standard of the way we treat one another. Although this solution may be more challenging and requires the participation of many committed individuals, it is the only way we will ever be able to conquer the issue itself. When we analyze our society and the social norms, the celebration of violence is quite evident. This can be seen by simply turning on the television. Even at a young age, we witnessed violence on the TV such as in harmless shows like Tom and Jerry. To prove the correlation between watching these violent scenes in a child's behavior, the American Academy of Pediatrics asserts that in over 1,000 studies they pointed overwhelmingly to a causal connection between media violence and aggressive behavior in children. That viewing entertainment violence can lead to increases in aggressive attitudes, values, and behaviors. Time Magazine then took a poll on March 20, 2005, and found that even kids think that the violence on TV is far above the amount there should be. Of the children surveyed, 68 percent believed that the entertainment industry had lost touch with viewers' moral standards. Even we as children are realizing that there's way too much violence going on in the entertainment industry. Sadly, it's not just the TV shows. It's also the video games that are widely loved. A study published in the journal Social Psychological and Personality Science suggested that teenagers that played violent video games were proven more likely to cheat, to experience increased aggression, and have reduced self-control. This combination of these two contributors has transformed our society into one of less moral behavior. The terrorizing effects of school shootings

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and their repercussions have caused us to question the security of our schools in both Nebraska and in our nation as a whole. It is our duty as citizens to be concerned about the safety of students and staff in Nebraska's schools. The reality is that the current school violence can only be solved when we as a society consciously choose to improve the way we treat one another. Thank you. [LR208]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you very much. You raise some excellent points. Any questions? Great testimony. Thank you very much. [LR208]

FAITH HUTCHERSON: Thank you. [LR208]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you. [LR208]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Welcome. [LR208]

SARAH FORREST: (Exhibit 4) Thank you. Good afternoon, Senator Sullivan, members of the Education Committee. My name is Sarah Forrest, S-a-r-a-h F-o-r-r-e-s-t, and I am the policy coordinator for child welfare and juvenile justice at Voices for Children in Nebraska. I'd first just like to thank Senator Kolowski for raising this important issue. And I want to say that I appreciate all the comments that have come before. I'm going to raise sort of a bit of a different issue. My main purpose in coming before you today is to talk about perhaps a little bit more of a comprehensive approach to school safety. We've talked about facilities and shootings. But when you think about safety for your average kid in school, it goes much further beyond that. It goes to bullying. It goes to discipline. It goes to many other factors that sort of contribute to how safe children feel at school and how safe teachers feel at school. Nationally, there's been a lot of movement in the past couple of years to sort of reevaluate how schools tackle safety and security and to start looking at more comprehensive approaches. Post-Columbine, a lot of schools adopted zero-tolerance policies, put in a lot of different infrastructure, and are reassessing at least the zero-tolerance policies because of some negative effects that have started

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showing up. What has been shown to be effective, however, are sort of comprehensive approaches that take kids' developmental needs into account and take into account their home environment and what they come to school having experienced. Resources that build trust and relationships between students, parents, and faculty are really important; access to mentors, counselors, therapists, behavioral health services; implementing new discipline approaches; providing comprehensive training for school resource officers; conflict resolution; all these amazing programs that I think at the end of the day require additional financial investment into schools. And so I think, you know, Nebraska really needs to think holistically about the safety and security issue. And I would really encourage the committee as you examine these issues to make sure that we're looking both at, you know, infrastructure and more traditional approaches, but also, what are the needs of our students and teachers and how can we really incorporate them and make those stand out? I would also say that I think a great place could be starting to look at some data on perhaps schools that are struggling more than others. Some indicators I would suggest would be looking at students who are absent frequently. We know that a lot of times kids stay away from school if they feel afraid or if they're experiencing bullying. Looking at suspension and expulsion rates, and also looking at arrests that happen in school. If we zero in on some schools that are maybe experiencing significant challenges, they could perhaps really benefit from some of these more comprehensive approaches. So I appreciate your time. I appreciate you bringing this resolution. And I would welcome any questions if you have them. [LR208]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you very much for your testimony. [LR208]

SARAH FORREST: Sure. [LR208]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any other questions? Thank you very much. [LR208]

SARAH FORREST: Thank you. [LR208]

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STEVE KING: Good afternoon. My name is Steve King, S-t-e-v-e K-i-n-g. I am the Lieutenant in charge of the Neighborhood Services Unit of the Omaha Police Department. In my job, I am in charge of all the school resource officers in the city of Omaha that cover four districts. Also, as a part of my unit, we conduct the safety audits, the safety assessments in schools in all four of those districts. So that adds up to well over 100 schools that we do safety assessments at. The Omaha Police Department also conducts lockdowns in all four districts as well as tabletop training exercises in several of the schools. I just wanted to give you a little overview of what we see. And I can tell you that when it comes to a safety assessment, you're not going to be able to get a one-size-fits-all solve for this. And that includes per district. What you're going to find is, especially some of these districts that have very old schools and very new schools, the needs are going to differ not only per district but per school. Something that may be needed in a high school in one side of the city may not be needed in a middle school or a grade school on the other side of the city. So the needs are going to be different. You're going to see needs, everything from simple locks that schools can't afford on the interior doors. Sometimes the needs and the cost of those needs goes up because of fire code. Unfortunately, we've experienced through this country a lot of deaths as a result of violence. We have experienced in the last 50 years no deaths in this country because of fire in school. Part of that reason is there are very stringent fire codes, and we see that. The problem with that is sometimes those fire codes seem to go the opposite of what we would like for security reasons. So we have to kind of figure that out, and sometimes those needs and the answers to those needs becomes extremely expensive. And locks is one of the reasons...or one of the examples of the that; some things as simple as shades on doors to very expensive systems like swipe card for students, cameras. But I also want to remind you that we talked about this being a facility issue. This is much more than a facility issue, although that might be the major cost. This is a training issue for staff, for students, for teachers, for school resource officers. It's a personnel issue, hiring the right personnel, the right number of personnel to respond to some of these things. We also need to be reminded that when we talk security, and it's been touched on by some other speakers, we're not talking just

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about intruders. We're talking about truancy issues. And we're talking about student issues, student actions that occur with students that are already in the building. So it's very comprehensive and you can't just look at one aspect of this and try to solve it. I promised I'd make it brief. Any questions? [LR208]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you for your testimony. You raise some issues that have kind of always been in the back of my mind in terms of dealing with what have been some of the current circumstances. And it seems like, are we treating the symptom and not going to the underlying problem? But it's...in doing that then it's kind of hard to identify the underlying problem too. [LR208]

STEVE KING: Completely agree. Some of the thoughts that were brought up about bullying and things like that may be the underlying problem. Unfortunately, as a police officer, I have to deal with the symptom. That's what I'm tasked to do. So we can give advice and we can...we have to deal with the symptom because as of right now we're going to continue to see this. [LR208]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any other questions? Thank you so much for your testimony. [LR208]

STEVE KING: Thank you. [LR208]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Welcome. [LR208]

JOSEPH WRIGHT: Thank you. Good afternoon. My name is Joseph Wright, J-o-s-e-p-h W-r-i-g-h-t. I'm the director of security for Lincoln Public Schools. I appreciate the opportunity to come before you today to speak in favor. Our schools are very safe. We've made sure to make them that way. Creating a safe environment is a purposeful endeavor. As we look to the most effective and responsible way to manage our future security needs, it becomes clear that the issues we face are nontraditional and will be

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difficult to impact with traditional funding sources. The change in the threat-scape every school district now has to consider is beyond anything any of us could have imagined and prepared for. My example would be replacing doors and steps, windows and offices that haven't worn out, to recreate more safe entryways, proper vestibules, things like that. But since you've heard so much about that today, I'll skip by that part of my testimony. Beyond that, the need to stay safe and connected through radio networks, meeting the public's expectation that we use camera systems in our buses and buildings are further examples of the evolution of the school security reality. The cost for the above improvements as well as added personnel who would staff threat management teams or be extra eyes and ears to athletic events is well outside standard school budgets. If you consider how many events, plays, practices, and other community functions are held in our schools outside of normal school hours, over 10,000 a year in Lincoln, you can imagine how security becomes a community issue, not just a school district issue. The good news is that most of the things we are talking about are designed with prevention in mind. We all know the benefits of preventative efforts are difficult to measure, but as with law enforcement and healthcare, prevention is the best way to avoid tragedy and is also the most cost-effective strategy for all concerned. The threat-scape, the range of security issues we need to be mindful of is not limited to certain parts of Nebraska. During my law enforcement career which I just ended, I had the privilege to teach in three of our state's law enforcement academies. I had the opportunity to train officers and deputies in O'Neill, Ainsworth, Valentine, Kearney, and other places. All communities in Nebraska have legitimate concerns about how to manage the safety and security vulnerabilities connected to their schools. The world has changed. I don't live in fear, but I know that my kids don't trick or treat the way I did when I was young. My children's educational reality is different from mine as well. Please do what you can to create a capacity for school districts to generate efficient, preventative safety and security programming which will benefit everyone who connects to our schools. Thank you. [LR208]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Wright. Any questions for him? Thank you.

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[LR208]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you. [LR208]

ANDREW RIKLI: Good afternoon, Senator Sullivan. [LR208]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Welcome. [LR208]

ANDREW RIKLI: (Exhibit 5) My name is Andrew Rikli. My last name is spelled R-i-k-l-i. I'm the superintendent of schools for the Papillion-La Vista School District in Sarpy County. You have a copy of my testimony in front of you. And many of the points that we articulated in our testimony have been covered already. The one point that I would bring up, we are the fourth largest school district in the state of Nebraska at approximately 11,000 students. We are an incredibly fast-growing district. This year we added almost 500 students alone. And we find ourselves in a very similar situation to the Millard Public Schools in that we recently passed a \$60 million bond issuance largely for facility renovations. But a large part of that facility renovation wish list has been security upgrades, things that you've already heard a great deal about, everything from buzzer systems, access control, things to really control the exterior of our building. Many Class A districts in the metro are up against \$1.05 and frankly have very little room to maneuver for additional resources that are needed. And as you've heard from previous testifiers, these improvements can be very costly. So we wanted to thank Senator Kolowski for bringing forward this bill. We would like to be part of the solution moving forward. And certainly if the committee has any questions, we would be happy to entertain those. [LR208]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Rikli. Questions? [LR208]

ANDREW RIKLI: Thank you. [LR208]

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SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you for your comments. Welcome. [LR208]

JASON HAYES: (Exhibit 6) Hi. Hi, Senator. Good afternoon, Senator Sullivan and members of the Education Committee. My name is Jason Hayes, J-a-s-o-n H-a-y-e-s. On behalf of the 28,000 members of the Nebraska State Education Association, we would like to lend our support for legislation that can assist school districts in dealing with security issues. NSEA supports Senator Kolowski in this effort because the safety and lives of students, teachers, administrators, school cooks, bus drivers, secretaries, paraeducators, as well as visiting members of the public are of paramount importance. In our opinion, there are three main financial obstacles that limit many school districts' abilities to deal with security issues. First, for districts that are up against the \$1.05 levy cap, as has been mentioned today, some relief is needed, possibly additional levy authority or some sort of regulated exception to that limitation. Next, districts that are heavily dependent on state aid, often those in the metro areas of the state, need some sort of state assistance so that in addition to the property taxes, they are able to raise the revenue for beefed-up security enhancements. And lastly, districts that are heavily property tax funded often are hemmed in by budget authority restrictions. Some regulated exceptions to the budget lid would also be helpful. NSEA supports the idea of conducting a thorough, building-by-building inventory of school security across the state based on widely accepted school security standards. It is crucial to know the scope of the security problems facing our schools today. This is a critical issue that needs to be addressed sooner rather than later. We ask the committee to craft and support legislation to address this vital issue. We are committed to supporting that effort. [LR208]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Jason. Questions? Senator Seiler. [LR208]

SENATOR SEILER: Jason, did I understand your testimony, that there are minimum standards for safety for schools? [LR208]

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JASON HAYES: That is my understanding. I can certainly...I don't have those with me right now but... [LR208]

SENATOR SEILER: Okay, because I asked other witnesses that question and they were not aware of any. [LR208]

JASON HAYES: Okay. [LR208]

SENATOR SEILER: And they had not...their organization had not put anything together either. [LR208]

JASON HAYES: Okay. I'd be happy to submit that to the... [LR208]

SENATOR SEILER: And so my thought has been running through is that we've got the horse behind the cart and he's backing up; that we don't know what standards we need, so how do we figure out a finance for it? [LR208]

JASON HAYES: Well, I think what you'll find in... [LR208]

SENATOR SEILER: One will want to build a Cadillac and the other will want to do the outhouse. [LR208]

JASON HAYES: Sure. I think what you'll find in those states where there have been major school shootings, they've gone through and implemented standards to address those issues. And although there have been school shootings in Nebraska, we are not as up to date in getting those standards together. [LR208]

SENATOR SEILER: Okay. That's fine. Thank you. [LR208]

JASON HAYES: To the extent of looking at other states, I think that would be helpful.

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[LR208]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Questions? Thank you, Jason. [LR208]

JASON HAYES: Thank you. [LR208]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Welcome. [LR208]

JAMES DALE: Good afternoon, Senator Sullivan, committee members. My name is James Dale, D-a-l-e, of Bellevue, Nebraska. I'm a security consultant. I spent 20 years in the military and 19 years in the private sector doing security consulting. I'm neutral on this matter. I just wanted to enter into...bring into the conversation...we talk a lot about...and I did some consulting for two different schools after the Newtown shooting. Some of the conversations naturally go towards physical security, and I think that's important and it's necessary. Senator, to your question about standards, my understanding is Nebraska nor Iowa or a lot of other states have school security standards. There are physical security standards that exist. ASIS International, which I'm sure some the other gentlemen are aware of, has physical security standards for facilities; so brick and mortar which can easily be adapted to schools. But I think one of the things that we may overlook sometimes is the whole issue of threat management. And I believe Sergeant (sic--Lieutenant) King from OPD discussed that briefly and the gentleman from Lincoln schools as well. And I think we're both a member of ATAP. The Association of Threat Assessment Professionals is a national organization. It has a very vibrant chapter here in the Lincoln and Omaha area. We can...if you look at a lot of the school shootings, the vast majority of those are generated from inside. So Newtown, and this is Jim Dale's perspective, but Newtown to me was an aberration. When you have a shooter that you did in that situation, it's extremely difficult to do much about that. To fortify our schools, to prevent that type of threat would be cost prohibitive and it would really be...it would be anti the culture of what we're seeking. But most of the shootings and the other threats that are generated come from inside. The young lady

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from Lincoln East who talked about bullying, absolutely she's spot on. So the dialogue, I think, needs to include...and this may not be relevant to the levy, but I think we should have it in the conversation. We need to talk about how we educate our staff and our teachers in the schools on how to identify and mitigate what the threat is. One of the school districts that I consulted with, I talked to them: Well, what does your threat assessment team look like? And they said, what do you mean? And I said, well, when you get a threat either from a student, student-on-student, teacher-on-teacher, whatever the case may be, how do you assess that? Well, we have the principal bring the student in, they talk, and then it's resolved one way or the other. And I said, well, I would bring in other players into that to make sure that you're looking at this holistically. The point being--I'm being somewhat verbose here--but the point being is we look at security holistically. So we look at it not just from a physical security perspective. We look at your policies and protocols which don't really cost money, and look at your threat management level of awareness which really doesn't cost money. And I think if you look at those things, it might mitigate some of your other costs. So thank you. [LR208]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you. Very good. Any other testifiers? All right. Senator Kolowski for closing. [LR208]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Senator Sullivan, members of the committee, thank you very much for the time today and for the elongated afternoon that we've had, two very important topics. The students that you saw in the back of the room earlier were all the ninth grade students from Lincoln East High School. And I had a chance to meet with them at 12:45 this afternoon and I had a chance to talk about my own background and why this was important to me and where we were coming from with this potential legislation. And then we took some questions and answers from the students. And one young lady...this is why I love all high school students but especially ninth-graders. They really come up with some good things sometimes. But she had great insight. She said, are we in a situation where we always have to have the thinking about spending for these things and people we have to hire to protect us in buildings, or can we also

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consider the possibility of counselors and mental health practitioners and all the rest that we need to balance that out or do something more on that side? And I said, you know, that's an excellent question and you're really right. And the answer to that is we need both. You've got to have minimal security issues as far as your building facility is concerned. And the culture, the climate of your building that's been established, the advisor-advisee programs that you might have in place, the wisdom of your staff to catch students that they see going through a change in a particular classroom and referring them to a counselor or a school psychologist becomes a crucial part of the total action that you have in preparation for potential changes in kids that you might see going on. And I said, you know, we can't get away from the responsibility we have as administrators or teachers, educators in those buildings. And that should be part of what we do in a culture and climate of caring, caring about everyone in the building and caring about all the people that walk through the door every day. The past weekend I had a chance to be with family members and especially our four grandkids, and I could not help but consider the one-year anniversary of Newtown, Connecticut, what took place there. It may be an aberration and maybe it's a situation that would never happen again, but I cannot believe...I can't even think of the horror of what took place in that classroom, because we have two kindergarten grandkids and two 2-year-olds; and so it is right in that age category of what could have happened to any school in the country if that would have taken place. So I hope those kind of situations and the history of just what's been brought up today by a number of people in our own testimonies will be remembered as we look ahead to our work in this committee for potential solutions to what we are facing as far as the security issues that are upon us in our schools. And every one of us wants our schools to be as safe as they can possibly be, and as vigilant with our members within those schools as possible, to ward off or think ahead of the negative things that could be happening and try to guard against those as well as be prepared to act when necessary. I know I did things as a high school principal with my staff in preparation for certain things that I don't know if they were done in other buildings but I...sometimes we were very well prepared for the inevitabilities that could happen, but thank God they never did. And I think the preparation and the training is

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always very, very helpful and makes you think about a bigger picture, more than your own classroom or even more than your own building as there's issues in our society. It all comes down to, again, a caring situation and trying to be as careful as we possibly can but also to have an environment that will be healthy for learning to take place. So I thank you very much for your time and your expertise today. And I thank everyone who's come in today for both issues and taking the time to travel and to be part of our presentations to the committee. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. [LR208]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Senator. Any questions or comments for the senator? [LR208]

SENATOR SEILER: I think it's really serious, Rick, when they start shooting lawyers. (Laughter) [LR208]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: I won't comment on that, Les. [LR208]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: It's not funny, not funny, not funny. Okay, well thank you. [LR208]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you. [LR208]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: (See also Exhibit 7) Thank you, Senator Kolowski, for sponsoring these resolutions. And that concludes these hearings, and I thank you all for your attendance and involvement. [LR208]