

ONE HUNDRED FOURTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION - 2015

COMMITTEE STATEMENT

LB49

Hearing Date: Tuesday January 27, 2015
Committee On: Education
Introducer: Scheer
One Liner: Provide for allied school systems

Roll Call Vote - Final Committee Action:
Indefinitely postponed

Vote Results:

Aye: 8 Senators Baker, Cook, Groene, Kolowski, Morfeld, Pansing Brooks, Schnoor, Sullivan

Nay:

Absent:

Present Not Voting:

Verbal Testimony:

Proponents:

Senator Jim Scheer

Representing:

Introducer

Opponents:

Robert Christensen
Jon Habben
John Bonaiuto
Matt Fisher

Representing:

Loup County Public School
Nebraska Rural Community Schools Association
Nebraska Association of School Boards
Grand Island Northwest Public Schools

Neutral:

Representing:

Summary of purpose and/or changes:

Legislative Bill 49 would require school districts to form or join an allied system on or before July 1, 2016, and each July 1 thereafter, if the district's average daily membership for grades K-12 is lower than 650 students for two years. Allied systems would generally be required to have at least 3 member school districts who would agree on a common schedule for the first 3 periods of the school day. Districts in allied systems would also be eligible for reimbursements for computer equipment and labor associated with distance education courses.

A district with less than 650 students would be required to join with at least 3 other districts to form an allied system, join an existing allied system, or join with at least one district with an average daily membership for grades K-12 of 650 or more students. For districts that fail to comply by the deadline, the Commissioner of Education would be required to form allied systems or direct the district to join an existing allied system specified by the Commissioner. The Commissioner would also be required to provide an opportunity to be heard for the district, member districts of the affected allied system, and any other interested party. Joining an allied system would be optional for districts with more than 650 students.

The agreement forming the allied system would be required to provide that:

1. Each superintendent is deemed to represent their district in the system;
 2. Each superintendent would be required to file notice of membership in the allied system and a list of the other members with the Department of Education on or before July 1 of each year beginning in 2016;
 3. Each district would be required to have the same schedule for the first 3 periods of the school day, except with regard
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to extracurricular activities;

4. Districts could cooperate beyond the uniform schedule by forming an interlocal agreement with every member of the interlocal agreement entitled to 1 vote on matters covered by the agreement;
5. Employees of each district would remain employees of the district with their contracts negotiated through the district;
6. School district would not be allowed to move to another allied system if the move would reduce the system to fewer than 3 member districts, unless the remaining districts agree to dissolve the system and join other allied systems;
7. If a member district merges with one or more other districts and the reorganized district joins the allied system, the original district would count as a separate member district only for the purpose of meeting the 3 district minimum; and
8. Districts would not be prevented from reorganizing with one or more other districts regardless of allied system membership, and if a reorganization causes the allied system to fall below the 3 district minimum, the allied system would be dissolved and the remaining member school district would be required to join other allied systems.

The representative superintendents would have one year to meet and create a common calendar and schedule.

Districts in allied systems would be eligible for reimbursements up to a maximum of \$25,000 per school year for computer hardware or software purchased to provide or maintain distance education courses and associated labor costs. Districts would apply for the reimbursements on a form provided by the Department of Education and would provide documentation of membership in an allied system and of the expense to be reimbursed.

Nothing in the act would require the member school district to consolidate or merge.

Kate Sullivan, Chairperson