

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA
ONE HUNDRED FOURTH LEGISLATURE
FIRST SESSION

LEGISLATIVE BILL 343

Introduced by Kolowski, 31.

Read first time January 15, 2015

Committee: Education

- 1 A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to education; to state intent; to define
- 2 terms; to provide for funding for schools implementing and offering
- 3 courses and programs as prescribed; to create a fund; and to declare
- 4 an emergency.
- 5 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1 Section 1. The Legislature finds that:

2 (1) In order for Nebraska's students to adequately prepare for
3 postsecondary education and careers, public schools in conjunction with
4 educational service units in Nebraska should offer courses of increased
5 educational rigor and relevancy, including, but not limited to, programs
6 of excellence, dual-enrollment courses, and career academies;

7 (2) The startup costs of implementing and the ongoing costs of
8 offering such programs, courses, and academies, including, but not
9 limited to, curricula, textbooks, testing fees, postsecondary tuition,
10 technology, equipment, staffing, staff training, and other related
11 expenses, can often exceed the resources available to a school district
12 or an educational service unit; and

13 (3) It is in the best interests of the state to provide a dedicated
14 source of funding to public schools in Nebraska through educational
15 service units for such programs, courses, and academies.

16 Sec. 2. For purposes of sections 1 to 5 of this act:

17 (1) Career academy means a career academy established pursuant to
18 section 79-777;

19 (2) Dual-enrollment course means a course taught to students for
20 credit at both a high school and a postsecondary educational institution
21 accredited by an accrediting organization recognized by the United States
22 Department of Education; and

23 (3) Program of excellence means a nationally recognized program,
24 offered in the high school grades that includes a curriculum and
25 pedagogy, professional development for teachers, and a rigorous
26 assessment external to the school system.

27 Sec. 3. (1) The State Board of Education may adopt and promulgate
28 rules and regulations to determine the mechanisms for successful student
29 completion of a program of excellence, a dual-enrollment course, or a
30 career academy. For each student who completes a program of excellence, a
31 dual-enrollment course, or a career academy, the department shall approve

1 and reimburse the school district through its educational service unit XX
2 dollars if the school district through its educational service unit has
3 applied pursuant to section 4 of this act.

4 (2) For purposes of the general fund budget of expenditures as
5 defined in section 79-1003, funds received pursuant to this section shall
6 be considered special grant funds.

7 Sec. 4. (1) An educational service unit on behalf of a school
8 district may apply to the State Department of Education for reimbursement
9 under section 3 of this act. The school district through its educational
10 service unit shall provide documentation of the number of students in
11 each program, course, or academy for which reimbursement is requested and
12 the number of students successfully completing each program, course, or
13 academy pursuant to the rules and regulations adopted and promulgated by
14 the State Board of Education pursuant to section 3 of this act.

15 (2) Reimbursement under this section shall apply to a program of
16 excellence, a dual-enrollment course, or a career academy taken on or
17 after July 1 of every year beginning in 2016. Applications shall be
18 submitted not later than August 1 of every year beginning in 2017. The
19 department shall award the grants provided for in this section and
20 distribute such grants after September 1 and no later than October 1 of
21 every year beginning in 2017.

22 Sec. 5. (1) A school implementing a program of excellence, a dual-
23 enrollment course, or a career academy may apply through its educational
24 service unit to the State Department of Education for a grant of funds to
25 offset the initial costs of such implementation. The school district may
26 not receive more than forty-nine percent of the total cost of such
27 program, course, or academy pursuant to a grant under this section. Such
28 program, course, or academy shall be implemented within two years after
29 the date on which the grant application is approved. If such program,
30 course, or academy is not implemented within such two-year time period,
31 the school district through its educational service unit shall return one

1 hundred percent of the amount of the grant to the department. Grants
2 shall be distributed by the department not later than December 1 of every
3 year beginning in 2016.

4 (2) Application for a grant under this section shall be submitted no
5 later than August 1 of every year beginning in 2016, and shall be on
6 forms provided by the department and shall include, but not be limited
7 to, the program, course, or academy to be implemented, the number of
8 students projected to enroll in such program, course, or academy, an
9 itemized listing of the projected expenses of implementing such program,
10 course, or academy, including, but not limited to, textbooks, curricula,
11 program fees, postsecondary tuition, technology, equipment, staffing,
12 staff training, and other expenses specifically related to implementing
13 such program, course, or academy, and other information deemed necessary
14 by the department.

15 (3) The College and Career Readiness Fund is created. Money in the
16 fund available for investment shall be invested by the state investment
17 officer pursuant to the Nebraska Capital Expansion Act and the Nebraska
18 State Funds Investment Act.

19 (4) The fund shall be used to provide grants to school districts as
20 provided in this section.

21 (5) For purposes of the general fund budget of expenditures as
22 defined in section 79-1003, funds received pursuant to this section shall
23 be considered special grant funds.

24 Sec. 6. (1) It is the intent of the Legislature to appropriate
25 seven million dollars from the General Fund for fiscal year 2016-17 to
26 carry out the purposes of section 3 of this act.

27 (2) It is the intent of the Legislature to appropriate three million
28 dollars from the Education Innovation Fund for fiscal year 2015-16 to
29 carry out the purposes of section 5 of this act. For fiscal year 2016-17
30 and each fiscal year thereafter, grants under section 5 of this act shall
31 be funded as the Legislature determines.

1 Sec. 7. Since an emergency exists, this act takes effect when
2 passed and approved according to law.