

ONE HUNDRED FIFTH LEGISLATURE

SECOND SESSION

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 428

Introduced by Pansing Brooks, 28.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this interim study is to examine the potential of micro-credentialing in Nebraska, including the potential impact on professional development, demonstrable student outcomes, and salary advancement. This study shall include, but not be limited to:

- (1) A review of what other states are doing to integrate micro-credentialing into professional development;
- (2) A review of the latest research on micro-credentialing and its potential impact on student outcomes;
- (3) An examination of how to ensure the development of rigorous, reputable micro-credentials;
- (4) A review of potential barriers to utilizing micro-credentials;
- (5) The potential for micro-credentials to impact salary advancement; and
- (6) A review of the role of the State Department of Education in the development and utilization of micro-credentialing and the potential application in recertification.

Research has shown that teaching quality and school leadership are the most important factors in raising student achievement. For teachers and school and district leaders to be as effective as possible, they need to continually expand their knowledge and skills. Effective professional learning is personalized, self-directed, competency-based, job-embedded, practical, and focused on the skills educators need to address students' major learning challenges. Annually, \$2.6 billion in federal funding is spent on professional development for educators. In addition, school districts spend up to \$18,000 per educator on professional development. Yet only twenty-nine percent of teachers feel that they have the professional development that they need to

support student achievement.

More than a decade ago, Linda Darling-Hammond and her colleagues revealed that most professional learning experiences in the United States are not adequately preparing teachers to make changes in their classrooms (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, and Orphanos, 2009). Still, the traditional method of professional development has remained largely unchanged and often relies on short, one-size-fits-all workshops without ongoing and job-embedded aspects that support the impact in the classroom. Micro-credentials provide an opportunity for educators to engage in rigorous, self-paced, job-embedded professional learning that is connected to the daily skills teachers need in their classrooms. This new wave in professional learning provides a way for teachers to earn recognition for the skills they acquire through formal and informal learning opportunities, to personalize their professional learning to meet their needs, and to take what they learn and apply it to their classrooms.

Micro-credentials focus on evidence of skills and abilities, not seat time. Teachers select which micro-credential to pursue and identify the specific activities that will support them in developing the competency. Micro-credentials, available on demand, are responsive to teachers' schedules and are sharable as portable currency for professional learning that educators can take with them no matter where they go. A micro-credential is a certification indicating demonstrated competency in a specific skill. Micro-credentials are a natural extension of an educator's professional learning journey. Educators engage in both formal and informal professional learning activities but are rarely recognized for their informal learning. Micro-credentials recognize that informal learning.

Micro-credentials are:

(1) Competency-based: Micro-credentials allow educators to focus on a discrete skill related to their practice, such as checking for student understanding, and collect the evidence, such as classroom videos or student work, to demonstrate ability in that specific skill;

(2) On demand: Through an agile online platform that clearly identifies

each micro-credential's competency and required evidence, educators can start and continue the process of earning micro-credentials on their own time;

(3) Personalized: Because educators are able to select the micro-credentials they wish to earn, they can create their own professional learning journey aligned to their specific student needs and school-wide instructional goals; and

(4) Shareable: Once educators earn micro-credentials, they can display the digital badges to signal their demonstrated competence wherever their professional journey might take them.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA, SECOND SESSION:

1. That the Education Committee of the Legislature shall be designated to conduct an interim study to carry out the purposes of this resolution.

2. That the committee shall upon the conclusion of its study make a report of its findings, together with its recommendations, to the Legislative Council or Legislature.