

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION - 2021
COMMITTEE STATEMENT
LB538

Hearing Date: Tuesday February 16, 2021
Committee On: Education
Introducer: Walz
One Liner: Adopt the Community Schools Act and change the distribution of income from solar and wind agreements on school lands

Roll Call Vote - Final Committee Action:

Indefinitely postponed

Vote Results:

Aye:	6	Senators Day, Linehan, McKinney, Murman, Sanders, Walz
Nay:	1	Senator Pansing Brooks
Absent:		
Present Not Voting:	1	Senator Morfeld

Oral Testimony:

Proponents:

Matthew L. Blomstedt
Ann Hunter-Pirtle

Representing:

NE Dept. of Education
Stand For Schools

Opponents:

Representing:

Neutral:

Representing:

Submitted Written Testimony:

Proponents:

Connie Knoche

Representing:

Open Sky Policy Institute

Opponents:

Representing:

Neutral:

Representing:

Summary of purpose and/or changes:

Legislative bill 538 creates a new pilot program and accompanying new sections of statute.

Section 1. Establishes the Community Schools Act.

Section 2. Defines the following terms for the purposes of the act:

- Board
 - Commissioner
 - Community organization
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- Community school
- Community school consortium
- Community school programming
- Department
- Eligible school
- High-quality child care or early childhood education programming
- Site coordinator

Section 3. LB538 places responsibilities for administration of the act with the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) and requires it to hire two persons to oversee, monitor, and assist in operations under the act. The Commissioner shall establish a competitive application process and timeline for pilot funding and, beginning with school year 2022-23, recommend to the State Board of Education (Board) two applicants from each congressional district for the award of pilot program funding.

An eligible school may receive up to \$150,000 in pilot project funding for each of five consecutive school fiscal years. Each community school receiving pilot project funding shall hire or contract with a partner agency to hire a site coordinator, who shall be a member of the community school leadership team, to coordinate community school programming at such school.

In awarding funding, the commissioner shall prioritize, in addition to the community school plan and other requirements of this act, applicants with:

- Equity among urban, suburban, and rural schools,
- Eligible schools with significant populations of students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunches, and
- Eligible schools with a significant proportion of homeless students, highly mobile students, or students with disabilities.

Section 4. Each community school shall establish a leadership team of 12-15 members, in collaboration with the site coordinator, responsible for:

- Developing school-specific programming goals
- Assessing program needs, and
- Overseeing the process of implementing community school programming

The leadership team membership shall consist of:

- At least 30% of parents or guardians of students at the community school
- 30% of Teachers at the community school
- School principal, and
- Representatives from community organizations in the community school consortium

Responsibilities of the leadership team:

- Overseeing the baseline analysis under section 6 of this act
- Monitoring the development and implementation of community school programming at the community school
- Issuing recommendations to the community school on a regular basis, and
- Summarizing such recommendations in an annual report, which shall also be made available to the public at the community school, on the community school website, and the school district website.

Section 5. Each leadership team shall develop a community school plan detailing the steps the team will take, including seven specific components specified in the bill (page 4).

Section 6. Each community school, led by the leadership team, shall complete a baseline analysis prior to the beginning of community school programming. The baseline analysis shall include nine elements outlined in the bill (pages 5-6).

Section 7. Each community school receiving funding under the act shall establish at least two of twenty-one types of

programming outlined in the bill (pages 6-7).

Section 8. On or before July 1 following completion of the pilot project, each community school shall submit a report to the Board and electronically to the Education Committee of the Legislature, as well as make it available at the community school and on the community school and school districts websites. The report shall describe efforts to integrate community school programming and the effect of the transition to a community school on participating children and adults. It shall include, but not be limited to, 15 specific items outlined in the bill (pages 8-9). The reports submitted shall be evaluated by the Board with respect to 9 criteria outlined in the bill (page 9).

Section 9. The Board may adopt and promulgate rules and regulations to carry out the act.

Section 10. LB538 modifies Neb. Rev. Stat. 79-1035 to allow the income from solar and wind agreements on school lands to fund the pilot program from this act.

Section 11. Repeals original sections of statute modified by the bill.

Lynne Walz, Chairperson