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implement in statute the all-day kindergarten portion of the Essential Education plan approved by the State Board of Education last December. The Essential Education plan is meant to ensure that all Nebraska students get the same educational opportunities. LB 228, as amended, would require all Nebraska school districts to offer all-day kindergarten to every student by 2009-2010 school year. Senator Raikes and I will be offering an amendment to the committee amendment that will require all-day kindergarten in any public school district or accredited private, denominational, or parochial school. The trend over the past 20 years has seen kindergarten districts already moving toward all-day kindergarten. This bill will simply put an orderly schedule to the process. I introduce this bill because I believe every child in Nebraska should have the opportunity to attend all-day kindergarten, regardless of where they live. Currently, some students do not have this opportunity. There will continue to be a growing need for all-day kindergarten as the result of social factors, including the growing number of single- and dual-income families in the work force. The practice of half-day kindergarten was actually more a result of economics than developmentally appropriate practice. In many cases, it was less expensive to schedule two groups of children with one teacher, rather than having two groups with two teachers all day. All-day kindergarten also provides proven educational and social benefits to children. We are in the process of handing out to you a brief summary of the research that has been done on this issue. Children that attend all-day kindergarten score higher on standardized tests, and they have fewer grade retention in the primary grades. All-day kindergarten students also have fewer Chapter I reading placements. Educational policy has been moving in recent years toward more accountability of school districts, schools, students, and teachers based on various measurements like standardized tests. If we are going to continue to use these measures, we need to give every child in every school the best opportunity to succeed. All-day kindergarten allows more time to be spent on reading, science, social studies, and math. Research has also shown that economically disadvantaged students receive greater benefits from all-day kindergarten than they do from half-day kindergarten. First grade teachers report significantly greater progress in literacy, math--we used to