

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA
ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH LEGISLATURE
SECOND SESSION

LEGISLATIVE BILL 1055

Introduced by Walz, 15.

Read first time January 08, 2024

Committee:

1 A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to education; to amend section 79-2607,
2 Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2022; to change provisions
3 relating to the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act; to provide powers
4 and duties to the State Department of Education related to the
5 creation and support of a professional learning system and
6 programming for adult education and literacy as prescribed; to
7 require teachers who teach students in grades kindergarten through
8 fifth grade at an approved and accredited school receive certain
9 training related to instruction in reading; to create a Literacy
10 Steering Committee; to state intent regarding appropriations; and to
11 repeal the original section.
12 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1 Section 1. Section 79-2607, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement,
2 2022, is amended to read:

3 79-2607 (1)(a) The State Department of Education, shall, in
4 consultation with statewide family engagement centers, develop a
5 professional learning system to help provide sustained professional
6 learning and training in high-quality instruction in reading for teachers
7 and early childhood educators who teach students from birth through fifth
8 grade. The professional learning system shall include information and
9 tips for teachers and early childhood educators related to helping
10 children and families work with statewide family engagement centers to
11 strengthen home and family literacy programs and better instruct students
12 in reading.

13 (b) Approved or accredited elementary schools shall ensure that
14 teachers who teach students in kindergarten through fifth grade are aware
15 of the professional learning system and are adequately trained to
16 effectively instruct students in reading.

17 (2) The State Department of Education shall work with educational
18 service units to provide regional coaches to approved or accredited
19 elementary schools to provide assistance and job-embedded training
20 relating to instruction in reading to teachers who teach students in
21 kindergarten through fifth grade.

22 (3) It is the intent of the Legislature to appropriate ten million
23 dollars from the General Fund for FY2024-25 to the State Department of
24 Education to provide regional coaches to assist with training relating to
25 instruction in reading pursuant to subsection (1) or (2) of this section
26 for teachers and early childhood educators, high-quality instructional
27 reading materials to support families, and any other activities approved
28 by the State Board of Education for the purpose of improving early
29 literacy.

30 (4) ~~(1)~~ The State Department of Education may provide technical
31 assistance as needed to assist school boards in carrying out the Nebraska

1 Reading Improvement Act.

2 (5) (2) The department may adopt and promulgate rules and
3 regulations to carry out the act.

4 Sec. 2. (1) The State Department of Education shall work with adult
5 education providers to develop, administer, and support voluntary adult
6 education and literacy programming that meets the requirements of Title
7 II of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Such
8 programming includes programs which focus on:

9 (a) Assisting adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and
10 skills necessary for employment and economic self-sufficiency;

11 (b) Assisting adults who are parents to obtain education and skills
12 that are necessary to become full partners in the educational development
13 of their children;

14 (c) Assisting adults in attaining a high school diploma or its
15 recognized equivalent and in aiding the transition to postsecondary
16 education through career pathways; or

17 (d) Assisting immigrants and other adults who are English language
18 learners in improving such individual's reading, writing, speaking, and
19 comprehending of the English language and in understanding the United
20 States system of government, including the responsibilities of
21 citizenship.

22 (2) It is the intent of the Legislature to appropriate two million
23 dollars from the General Fund to the State Department of Education for
24 FY2024-25 to carry out this section.

25 Sec. 3. (1) The Literacy Steering Committee is created. The
26 committee shall consist of the following members appointed by the
27 Governor:

28 (a) A representative from the State Department of Education;

29 (b) A representative from the Department of Health and Human
30 Services;

31 (c) A representative from an educational service unit;

- 1 (d) A representative from a rural school;
- 2 (e) A representative from an urban school;
- 3 (f) A representative from a community college;
- 4 (g) A representative from a statewide family engagement center; and
- 5 (h) A representative from an educator preparation program.

6 (2) The committee shall elect a chairperson from among the members
7 and shall meet as necessary.

8 (3) The committee shall (a) contract with a third party to conduct a
9 comprehensive literacy-needs assessment in Nebraska and (b) develop a
10 strategic action plan and coherent vision for improving literacy in
11 Nebraska.

12 (4) The committee shall deliver a report containing the strategic
13 action plan electronically to the Clerk of the Legislature on or before
14 December 1, 2024. On or before December 1, 2025, and on or before each
15 December 1 thereafter, the committee shall provide a report
16 electronically to the Clerk of the Legislature relating to the
17 implementation of the strategic action plan and any necessary updates or
18 changes.

19 Sec. 4. The State Department of Education shall employ a literacy
20 coordinator. The duties of such coordinator shall include, but need not
21 be limited to:

22 (1) Overseeing the professional learning system developed pursuant
23 to section 79-2607;

24 (2) Advising and consulting with early childhood educators and
25 elementary school teachers and administrators relating to early literacy
26 matters and the implementation of the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act;
27 and

28 (3) Monitoring and assist with the implementation of the Nebraska
29 Reading Improvement Act, the adult education and literacy programming
30 developed pursuant to section 2 of this act, and the strategic action
31 plan developed pursuant to section 3 of this act.

1 Sec. 5. Original section 79-2607, Revised Statutes Cumulative
2 Supplement, 2022, is repealed.