

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

**GROENE:** Serve as Chair of this committee. The committee will take up the bills in the posted agenda. Our hearing today is your public part of the legislative process. This is your opportunity to express your position on the proposed legislation before us today. Excuse me. To better facilitate today's proceedings, I ask that you abide by the following procedures: please turn off cell phones, and other electronic devices; move to the chairs at the front of the room when you are ready to testify. The order of testimony is introducer, proponents, opponents, neutral, and closing remarks by the introducer. If you will be testifying, please complete the green testifier sheet, then hand to the committee page when you come up to testify. If you have written material that you would like distributed to the committee, please hand them to the page to distribute. If you're not going to publicly testify or need to leave early, you may turn in written testimony with a completed green testifier sheet and then we'll put it in the record. We need twelve copies of all-- for all committee members and staff. If you need additional copies, please ask a page to make copies for you now. When you begin to testify, please state and spell out your name for the record. Please be concise. It is my request that tony-- testimony limited to five minutes. We'll be using the light system: green for four minutes, yellow for one minute, and then wrap up or, or be done by the time the red light comes on. And you may be asked questions afterwards. If you would like your support or opposition to be known, but do not wish to testify, please sign the white form at the back of the room and indicate if you're proponent or opponent. If you are not testifying in person on the bill and would like to submit a written position letter to be included in the official record, you must have it-- you must have had it in to us by 5:00 on the previous day. Additionally, the letter must include your name and address, state a position of for or against or neutral on the e-mail. Please include the subject line, letter of support, opposition to, to the bill. This will ensure your request is taken, taken in by the staff. The committee members with us today will introduce themselves beginning at my far right. Senator Murman.

**MURMAN:** Hello, I'm Senator Dave Murman, District 38, Clay, Webster, Nuckolls, Franklin, Kearney, Phelps, and southwest Buffalo County.

**LINEHAN:** Good afternoon, Lou Ann Linehan, from western Douglas County.

**WALZ:** Hi, Lynne Walz, District 15, Dodge County.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

**BREWER:** Tom Brewer, District 43, 13 counties of western Nebraska.

**GROENE:** Senators Morfeld, Pansing Brooks, Kolowski have left no indication they will not be here, they might be in another committee introducing legislation, and senators will coming-- come and go if they have to be present in another committee. To my immediate left is legal counsel, Amar-- Amara Block, she is handling the first bill and then you will notice that, Nicole Barrett, will take her place for the last three bills, because she is managing those three bills. To my right at the end of the table is committee clerk, Trevor Reilly. And the pages today, if they would stand up, that's who you would give your, your handouts to, Erika Llano, a sophomore at the University Nebraska-Lincoln studying political science and sociology; and, Maddy Brown, a junior at the University Nebraska-Lincoln studying political science. We would also like to remind our committee members to speak directly into the microphones because we're taking transcripts. Lastly, we are electronically eclipsed-- equipped, and you may see us sometimes texting our staff or on looking, Senator Morfeld brings his laptop, he researches while he's listening, so we're not playing games, we're actually making sure we ask pertinent and accurate questions to you when we do ask. Thank you. We will begin with LB120. Senator Crawford.

**CRAWFORD:** Good afternoon, Chairman Groene and members of the Education Committee. For the record, my name is Sue Crawford, S-u-e C-r-a-w-f-o-r-d, and I represent the 45th Legislative District of Bellevue-Offutt, and eastern Sarpy County, and I'm honored to be here today to introduce LB120 for your consideration. LB120 is the, is the culmination of numerous discussions with school administrators, school psychologists, teachers, and other education personnel, during which we arrived at LB120 as a tangible reasonable step to take toward improving school safety and student mental health without creating new mandates for teachers or school staff. The bill amends the existing requirement for a one-hour training on suicide prevention and simply expands the definitions of what can be covered in the training to include a wider array of behavioral and mental health topics relevant to the school staff as they inter-- interact with our students. Suicide prevention and awareness training will still be required, but this gives schools more latitude in terms of what they might cover for more comprehensive, behavioral mental health discussion, including topics such as early warning signs and symptoms, trauma informed care, and procedures for linking students, and parents to services and supports. The language in the bill has received approval from school

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

mental health personnel. Former, Senator McGill, who sponsored the bill to create the original requirement as well as the suicide prevention organizations that crafted the original bill are also in support of the change. We've been told by teachers and school personnel that the current requirement is somewhat restrictive and redundant and that staff are watching the same one hour video each year. The feedback has been that expanding the range of topics that can be covered could better equip teachers and other school personnel to recognize and address the behavioral health needs of their students. We are appreciative of the good work that various organizations have done and are continuing to do to provide suicide prevention training and education to our school personnel. In looking to preserve the original focus of the bill on suicide prevention, we worded this such that suicide prevention education is still required and the primary topic of the training, but it can also include other topics listed. The additional change in the bill is to specify that the training should occur during school contact hours due to feedback that some teachers have been completing the training uncompensated outside of work hours. We wanted to specify that staff should be able to complete the training and receive compensation during their regular contract hours. We are looking at this bill as just one small piece in the larger equation, one that will improve our current requirement for school staff. The goal of introducing the bill was not to present a comprehensive solution, but to look at, at one tangible step by expanding and improving upon a statutory requirement that already exists for school personnel. The amendment distributed to you as requested by the suicide prevention organizations who are currently providing the trainings, it reinstates the original suicide prevention language to ensure that the training includes both suicide prevention and other mental and behavioral health topics preserving the intent of the previous statute and honoring the good progress that's been made in suicide prevention education thanks to these organizations. We all know that meeting the mental health needs of our students is a critical topic. Here's one action we can take in Nebraska that doesn't place new mandate on the schools. We're simply improving upon a requirement that's already in place and allowing schools to use it to provide a more comprehensive education on behavioral health for staff. By allowing the training to cover a more holistic view of behavioral mental health, teachers and other school staff can be more prepared to respond to student needs that may have not yet escalated to the level of suicide. The proponents here today can speak more to how this update to the existing requirement will be beneficial to our teachers

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

and students. I encourage you to send LB120 to the floor for a vote.  
Thank you.

**GROENE:** Any questions from the committee? Thank you,--

**CRAWFORD:** OK.

**GROENE:** --Senator Crawford. Proponents.

**LOREN KNAUSS:** I don't always like to volunteer first, but--

**GROENE:** Any time, when that light turns green, your time is ticking.

**LOREN KNAUSS:** Perfect. Loren Knauss, I'm with the National Alliance on Mental Illness Nebraska, also NAMI Nebraska. First name's, L-o-r-e-n, last name is, K-n-a-u-s-s, Omaha, Nebraska. The senators and members of the-- Chairman and members of the Education Committee, my letter's being distributed right now. I'll just read from it. On behalf of the National Alliance on Mental Illness Nebraska, I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today and to add our support of LB120 as part of the public record. Teachers and school staff are often some of the first people to observe potential signs of mental health issues in students. Being able to identify potential signs of mental health issues in a student and knowing how to effectively discuss those concerns is an important part of helping students reach their full potential in school and in life. We use the word stigma to describe the fear and embarrassment that is often attached to this-- discussing mental health issues. We strongly support how LB120, excuse me, LB120 helps to fight the stigma by allowing school districts to train their staff on essential behavioral and mental health issues which will start an ongoing dialogue about mental health issues. Our hope is that this open dialogue about mental health issues will allow teachers, students, and parents to openly discuss any concerns they may have and to realize that seeking help for mental health issues can be as easy as going to your personal doctor and starting the discussion. We respectfully ask that your-- ask that you support LB120, and all legislation that helps to educate the public on behavior health and mental health issues. Thank you for everything you do for the state of Nebraska. And I wasn't expecting the, the chorus there. [LAUGHTER] That one caught me off guard, I apologize.

**GROENE:** Senator Brewer.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

**BREWER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. All right, real quick so we kind of understand what we're getting into here. How long is this training?

**LOREN KNAUSS:** The, the request in the bill--

**BREWER:** Right.

**LOREN KNAUSS:** --is for a minimum of one hour per year.

**BREWER:** OK, and then who does the, what we call in the military, the program of instruction, or the, the agenda of what's going to be in that?

**LOREN KNAUSS:** You know, I didn't help with the bill, but I'm gonna assume that they would contract or the schools would contract with different providers or help with it. I, I can use what NAMI Nebraska does. We offer a program that's a 50-minute class for students, a 60-minute for teachers, and a 60-minute for parents, and we pull everything together. So we have a very tight program that you will-- you-- instruction from top to bottom.

**BREWER:** Is that what's currently being used in schools then?

**LOREN KNAUSS:** Not in Nebraska. We have those programs throughout the, the nation, but nothing in Nebraska, yet.

**BREWER:** OK, I'll save questions for later, then. Thank you.

**LOREN KNAUSS:** That's probably-- I apologize. I wasn't involved in that discussion, I could only speak to what NAMI Nebraska does.

**GROENE:** Senator Linehan.

**LINEHAN:** Thank you, Chairman Groene. Do you provide these programs to other-- in other states free of charge or is there a minimal charge or what?

**LOREN KNAUSS:** In other states, NAMIs, the state organizations and affiliates, what we do is we work with the schools and what we do is we do fundraising. We go through grants and other organizations so the school can help compensate and offset, you know, offset the costs. We work with them on that. The NAMI program, and I can only speak on the NAMI program, is done by a volunteer-- two volunteers, so we don't have the cost of, of, you know, like a paid staff member per se, so we

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

would work with the schools and we would work on finding grants and others.

**LINEHAN:** But if you don't charge, why do you need to find grants?

**LOREN KNAUSS:** Actually, what it comes down to is the cost of the materials and other services. What we try to do is, we work with the schools so it doesn't come out of their budget.

**LINEHAN:** OK.

**LOREN KNAUSS:** So there's a lot of grants, organizations, and, and different organizations that want to help the schools with that.

**LINEHAN:** OK, thank you very much for being here.

**LOREN KNAUSS:** Absolutely, and sorry for the confusion on that [INAUDIBLE].

**LINEHAN:** No, no, that's fine, thank you, sir.

**GROENE:** Senator Walz.

**WALZ:** Can you just repeat what you, what you said about the time you, you teach to the kids, and then to the teachers, and also parents. How much time do you do?

**LOREN KNAUSS:** With, with this it's just about the, the students and the-- or, excuse me, the teachers, I apologize. What we do in, in multiple states, we find that some states will provide a required time for teachers to learn about this and what NAMI did nationwide, is we designed a kind of a multitier. Because teachers have a lot of stuff thrown in their lap, and what we find is the teachers are kind of expected to assess the students and stuff. So we designed a program so that teachers and the parents are on the same page and the students as well. So it's kind of a three-tiered approach--

**WALZ:** OK.

**LOREN KNAUSS:** --to, to addressing the issue.

**WALZ:** That's great. Thank you.

**LOREN KNAUSS:** And we, we actually seen some very good success with it. And we'll-- if, if the Legislature passes this, what we'll do is,

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

we'll send this information out to all the school districts and discuss if that's an option.

**WALZ:** That's awesome. Thank you.

**GROENE:** Any other questions? I'm assuming the MPA, Loren T. Knauss, means Master of Public Administration.

**LOREN KNAUSS:** Yes.

**GROENE:** So what do you know about mental health?

**LOREN KNAUSS:** Well, I'm actually a retired police officer. And in my time, I was a crisis negotiator also like a hostage negotiator. I also worked with the Red Cross. I was a volunteer as well as a paid staff member, and I respond to multiple disasters including September 11 at New York, Katrina and multiple other hurricanes, and I helped with working with a lot of the victims on mental health.

**GROENE:** What I have a concern is a-- so you have a bachelor's degree and you went to college and took up English or math or science, now you're a teacher. You might have went in and took finance and worked at the bank. Do you want some guy in the bank with a mast-- with a, a bachelor's degree taking a one-hour course and then telling people they might have a mental health problem?

**LOREN KNAUSS:** Oh, actually we never tell people that they have a mental health program-- problem. NAMI Nebraska, what we do in our organization-- what we do is we have programs that are very tightly regimented that are created by departments, excuse me, a medical director in our national office and it's designed to allow people like me who do not have a medical background per se to come in and educate individuals on mental health issues. So what we do is we go in there and we don't-- we never prescribe stuff, we never diagnose, what we do is we alert people to the signs of mental health issues based on what counselors, you know, educators, excuse me, and medical professionals have recommended. So we, we don't go in and assess, we never do that. What we do with NAMI Nebraska, is we, we truly refer people to go and seek the help with licensed counselors, their personal doctors and [INAUDIBLE].

**GROENE:** So what do you do with-- you've got a 10-year-old child-- who do you counsel. Who do you a-- there's no clear, clear evidence here that you go to the parent first?

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

**LOREN KNAUSS:** Well, and what this is right now what we're talking about when we do our programs we, we go into the schools and we, we also-- I'm just speaking on NAMI's point of view, what we would do is we'd talk to the teachers about the signs of mental health issues and everything else. And then the-- we always recommend that the schools have a protocol so a teacher would go to their, their school counselor and others, you know, and actually work with them to help address those issues. We never ask a teacher to [INAUDIBLE]--

**GROENE:** The counselor can't address the mental health issue either without parental or guardian, guardian consent.

**LOREN KNAUSS:** Correct. There's a procedure in every school and we would, we would highly-- we would never encourage, and NAMI, when you look at our program, we never come up and say, guess what, we feel that you have mental, you know, depression or anything like that. What we do is we say what the signs are and then we encourage them to go and seek the help they need. Their personal doctor, the school counselor, and then work with the parents also to get them involved.

**GROENE:** But, you put parents last. By statute and by ethical code of being a psychologist, you have to have approval by the guardian first.

**LOREN KNAUSS:** For?

**GROENE:** It's not mentioned here.

**LOREN KNAUSS:** For the?

**GROENE:** Before they talk to the child at all about it.

**LOREN KNAUSS:** Actually, in the bill it talks about the teachers actually receiving like a one-hour class and that's all it is. And if you look at our program-- what it is, is it shows the teachers what signs to look for. We also-- when our program, and I once again I'm just talking about NAMI, we talked to the parents also so that there is some connection so they can understand that if a teacher calls them and says, hey, we've seen these signs maybe you need to go to your personal doctor. We really push that angle. We, we really do because without the parent--

**GROENE:** But, legally you have to push that.

**LOREN KNAUSS:** Correct.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

**GROENE:** You don't go to the counselor, you don't go to psychologists, you go to the parent.

**LOREN KNAUSS:** You will never successfully address mental illness in a child unless you have the parent involved.

**GROENE:** You have to have by statute.

**LOREN KNAUSS:** Exactly. Exactly.

**GROENE:** All right.

**LOREN KNAUSS:** And when it comes to a lot of this what we, what we recommend for nationwide is when we talk to the teachers we stick to our program very clearly. So when the parents know that a program is gonna be offered, we send the material home and they see exactly what it is. We hold to our fidelity very tight. We are-- we're not counselors, we're not psychologists, so we do not alter from our fidelity. So when we come into the program, so if a teacher or a school district worked with NAMI to have us come into the school, we would be able to tell the superintendent very clearly, this is what we will say and, and that's it. I mean, it's not what we won't say, we will say this and that's it.

**GROENE:** OK, thank you.

**LOREN KNAUSS:** We never encouraged people to go outside of their parents.

**GROENE:** Thank you. Any other questions? Thank you.

**LOREN KNAUSS:** Thank you.

**GROENE:** Next proponent. And folks when you see that green light on start talking. I mean, you don't-- I know we're all polite around here, but you don't need my approval. Otherwise, we'd run late.

**DAVID MIERS:** David Miers, that's, M-i-e-r-s. I'm testifying on behalf of the Nebraska Association of Behavioral Health Organizations, and also the Nebraska State Suicide Prevention Coalition. NABHO and the Nebraska State Suicide Prevention Coalition are in support of LB120, introduced and amended by Senator Crawford. As the co-founder and current board member of the Nebraska State Suicide Prevention Coalition, I was very involved in the initial advocacy and implementation of LB923 with Senator McGill. And in the past five

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

years, since it has passed, NABHO and the Coalition have seen significant growth in the area of suicide prevention and awareness. We encourage you to continue this work by passing LB120 as amended. Suicide is the number one cause of death for youth ages 10 to 14, and the second leading cause of death for ages 15 to 24 for youth here in Nebraska. Not everyone who dies by suicide has a diagnosable mental illness. However, 90 percent do have a diagnosable mental illness or would have been diagnosed. Therefore, mandating training on suicide prevention and awareness as well as mental health and behavioral health to school personnel is vital and will be lifesaving for Nebraska's youth. Passage of LB120 as amended will ensure the education and acceptance of mental and behavioral health issues will continue to spread to every community across Nebraska and that mental wellness will remain a priority for all Nebraskans. NABHO and the Coalition have seen schools be proactive in setting up programs to identify and refer youth with mental health and behavioral issues to resources. You have the opportunity to make a significant impact on the lives of Nebraska's youth to ensure that every educator in Nebraska receives the training needed so they know what to look for in youth to, to connect them with the appropriate resources. The Coalition has been active in helping identify suicide prevention and awareness training that has been selected for school personnel since the passage of LB923, and welcomes the addition of mental and behavioral health to the array of information and made available to teachers for training. NABHO and the State Suicide Prevention Coalition are here to offer our help and support in the passing implementation of this bill, and look forward to working with Senator Crawford, your committee, and others to ensure that Nebraska schools have access to the resources that they need. Thank you.

**GROENE:** Any questions? Thank you, sir.

**DAVID MIERS:** All right, thanks.

**BRIAN HALSTEAD:** Good afternoon, Senator Groene and members of the Education Committee. For the record, my name is Brian Halstead, B-r-i-a-n H-a-l-s-t-e-a-d, here on behalf of the State Board of Education and the Nebraska Department of Education to show our support for LB120. And since you asked for concise, I'll stop right there and see if you have any questions.

**GROENE:** Senator Brewer.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

**BREWER:** Your opening was so short I had to do a [LAUGHTER]. All right, are you familiar with the bill?

**BRIAN HALSTEAD:** I have it in front of me, Senator, yes.

**BREWER:** All right, that's [INAUDIBLE]. Now you're in the gun sights. All right, page 2, line 28, I see that they crossed out suicide awareness and prevention and it's also on line 13, on page 3. Is there a reason why you lined through those?

**BRIAN HALSTEAD:** Well, it was my understanding the amendment puts back in the suicide awareness and prevention language. I haven't seen the actual amendment, but it talks about behavioral and mental health and suicide awareness and prevention training, I believe, is what the amendment--

**BREWER:** So it was-- Oh, OK. So--

**BRIAN HALSTEAD:** So both of those top areas--

**BREWER:** Let me, let me dig farther here.

**BRIAN HALSTEAD:** --still remain as we understand the, the amendment.

**BREWER:** I would just have been curious why they would have ever crossed it out in the first place. But, all right. When it talks about state school security director. That's a position right now here in Nebraska?

**BRIAN HALSTEAD:** There is a person the department has employed to do the work that you see under 79-2,144. All--

**BREWER:** All the list that goes down--

**BRIAN HALSTEAD:** I think it's ten things, yes.

**BREWER:** OK, and like this person resides where, if you wanted to talk to him or her?

**BRIAN HALSTEAD:** Her offices are in the State Office Building, she is out and about the state constantly. So I would tell you, you've given that individual a lot of things they're supposed to do as a single individual.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

**BREWER:** Well, that was my next question. Is, is did-- are we about to put more on her than she can realistically do?

**BRIAN HALSTEAD:** It's a possibility, but at the same time we also know that the needs of the children and families that our school people are interacting with daily may need some help. As we did the suicide awareness and prevention training, we brought together all of the named organizations so we try as best we can to tap all of the other resources as are available. I think if you look at the fiscal notes that were submitted you can see Jolene Palmer, who is that person, was saying, it might be helpful to have an additional half-staff person, but recognizing legislative fiscal things we can do it with the means we've got now. So that's always a struggle we have and we're not unaware of the fiscal restraints the state of Nebraska currently has.

**BREWER:** All right, thank you.

**BRIAN HALSTEAD:** Sure.

**GROENE:** Senator Linehan.

**LINEHAN:** Thank you, Chairman Groene. And this is not a reflection on how I feel about the bill at all, but I have this-- is this-- once we pass it, then is it called a mandate?

**BRIAN HALSTEAD:** It is a law that says there will be at least one hour of training. So I guess that probably depends on which side of the equation you are as to whether it's a mandate or it's just a necessary best practice to do.

**LINEHAN:** Thank you, that's very clever. Thank you.

**GROENE:** Any other questions? So a-- I have one. So who's doing the training? Is it a, is it a licensed psychologist or is it somebody who just--

**BRIAN HALSTEAD:** The training that would be done for the staff in schools?

**GROENE:** Um-hum.

**BRIAN HALSTEAD:** This doesn't necessarily specify who's doing the training itself. Obviously, you've heard from an organization who does training, they're not licensed psychologist or psychiatrist. This is only about providing training so that people are aware of potential

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

symptoms you may see, how to make connections, and connecting the information to parents about the children they're seeing and what available resources there are in the community where the parents can access or address that.

**GROENE:** It's pretty vague, what it-- who defines what warning signs and symptoms are. I mean, who defines that?

**BRIAN HALSTEAD:** I think we would tap the experts, the psychiatrists, the psychologists, the licensed mental health practitioners for their expertise as to what are the warning signs in that regard and provide that information as part of the training.

**GROENE:** Is there any other health issues that the Department of Ed or schools do screenings and training on to spot cancer or childhood leukemia or any other health issues--

**BRIAN HALSTEAD:** Well,--

**GROENE:** --that we put somebody with a bachelor's degree with-- in English to diagnose?

**BRIAN HALSTEAD:** So right now, Senator, there are statutes this Legislature's enacted that require every school board to do health screenings of all of the students.

**GROENE:** And who does that, a licensed nurse?

**BRIAN HALSTEAD:** It can be done by a lot of people depending on the screenings they're doing. It could be a medical doctor from the community. It could be a registered nurse. It could be anyone who are only just doing screenings, they are not making a diagnosis.

**GROENE:** But it's not a bachelor's degree--

**BRIAN HALSTEAD:** No.

**GROENE:** --in math make-- doing the screenings, right? Which are giving a diagnosis or--

**BRIAN HALSTEAD:** No, you're not diagnosis, you're doing screening. So the optometrists do eye screenings where they provide that, and here's some information you may want to go see an optometrist or an ophthalmologist based on just what this screening has done. It doesn't require a medical degree in that regard. There is some training, if

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

you're gonna be doing-- read the eye chart from 30 feet and everything like that, but it is not making any diagnosis. It's a tool to help children and school officials and families. Now, whoa, you may need to go see an expert in that area. So there's that side of statutes.

**GROENE:** But, doesn't this happen already? Johnny's behaving badly or not doing his homework and have a parent teacher's conference, doesn't the teacher just matter of frank-- frankly tell the parent you have a problem with Johnny. I mean, isn't it already happening? Seems to me here we're bypassing the parents and going to the psycho-- school psychologist and the counselor.

**BRIAN HALSTEAD:** None of this bypasses the parents, Senator. You're only seeing two sections of state statute. There are a series of other statutes out there before any child can be seen or diagnosed. They aren't in front of you, because they're not amending those laws.

**GROENE:** Well, I'm a lay person, I'm reading this, so maybe we ought, ought to inject in the-- here that-- to train these school employees that the first thing they-- who they notify is the parents because the parents need-- it would make it clearer wouldn't it?

**BRIAN HALSTEAD:** Sure, if you want to put the-- making students and parents aware of services and supports--

**GROENE:** No, it's not students, parents.

**BRIAN HALSTEAD:** Right. Well, if you want to start the sentence by putting that as the first one instead of the last, that's in editing. Feel free, we're not opposed to that at all. I think they were just trying to focus on wording, but--

**GROENE:** Why do we inform the student? The student doesn't have the-- they're not the age of majority. They have no authority to be told that they have a mental health problem they ought to go see a psychologist. The psychologist can't even talk to that child unless they have parental approval. Is that not correct?

**BRIAN HALSTEAD:** Keeping in mind, Senator, the constitution says up to age 21. So we do have students in school who are 19--

**GROENE:** It's fine with 18, yeah. It's already in the statute.

**BRIAN HALSTEAD:** --19 and 20s, so they have that authority already, so this is a broadly written statute. There are some instances where

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

there is just the student. So it-- we're not looking to negate the parents at all in any of this. That's just one piece of a bigger circle. So--

**GROENE:** Thank you, sir.

**BRIAN HALSTEAD:** You bet.

**GROENE:** Any other questions? Next proponent. Go ahead.

**JENNIFER MOFFETT:** My name is Jennifer Moffett, J-e-n-n-i-f-e-r M-o-f-f-e-t-t. I am here speaking on behalf of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention Nebraska Chapter. Senators, I am here speaking today not only on behalf of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention as a field advocate representing our constituents across the state, and I'm also here as a loss survivor. I lost my father to suicide 15 years ago this month, and I understand what the impact is of a family who loses someone to suicide whether it be a parent or a child or a sibling. As the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention we believe that school personnel interact with children and teens daily, and are in a prime position to recognize the signs of suicide risk, and make the appropriate referrals for help. Regular training ensures educators have the necessary skills and confidence to intervene with youth at risk for suicide. Prevention efforts must also include educating students on the signs and symptoms of mental health and suicide risk and empowering them to know when to reach out for help when they notice warning signs in themselves and with peers. AFSP recognizes the importance of school staff having the knowledge and skills to address a wide-- wide range of behavioral health issues with students and with families. With the addition of the several topic areas, we do recommend that the requirement be extended to at least two hours. But, we are fine with leaving the mandate at-- as an hour for now. We just do not want to lose the suicide prevention aspect, which is the original intent of the original bill. And I'm open to questions.

**GROENE:** Thank you. Any questions? Thank you.

**RITA BENNETT:** Good afternoon. Thank you, Senator Groene, members of the committee, for this opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Rita Bennett, spelled, R-i-t-a B-e-n-n-e-t-t. I am a proud Nebraska public school teacher with a 28-year-long career teaching at the high school level. I'm also a member of the Nebraska State Education Association, and I'm currently serving as president of the Lincoln

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

Education Association. I'm here to encourage you to support and advance LB120 to General File. The Nebraska Association of School Boards, the Nebraska Council of School Administrators, and the Nebraska Rural Community Schools Association have also asked me to indicate their support for LB120 as well. I've had the privilege of teaching and working with thousands of students over the course of my career. Some of my students were struggling with behavioral and mental health issues. It has not been at all uncommon for me to lie awake at night thinking about and worrying about those students wondering what the day is going to bring and whether I'm doing all that I can to understand their needs and to support them in and-- in every way that I can. Teachers do need many items in their tool kit. We need a lot of knowledge and resources to do what we do each day, and to do it well. And to be able to give all the students the support that they need, and those needs are many. We have seen significant increases in the number of students who come to us with a variety of behavioral and mental health needs. And as the needs of students grow, teachers need to expand their tool kit. A few years ago the Legislature recognized that teachers needed deliberate training on suicide prevention, and senators took the lead and established a training requirement to deal with that issue. Since that requirement was established, I have completed the one hour of training each year. And while I've been appreciative of the training, and I do think that the content has helped me to expand my tool kit. The content has become a little bit stale and somewhat repetitive and redundant and so does lose some of its intended effectiveness each year. On the plus side though the training has made me aware of how much more there is that I don't know or understand. LB120 expands the curriculum of the mandated one-hour training to include not just suicide prevention which remains incredibly important to us, but it also adds training about depression and other behavioral and mental health topics. This is important because to discuss and learn suicide prevention strategies we must also have knowledge about the underlying conditions that may contribute to suicidal ideation. While some may scoff at a one-hour training being able to adequately address all these very complex topics, LB120 prescribes one hour as a minimum requirement. Schools can always go beyond that minimum requirement, and many do. We believe though that the more inclusive training called for in LB120 is important because it does ensure that every teacher receives at least some training on these issues. Mandating time beyond an hour right now could prove burdensome given at least some of the other professional learning needs that we also must juggle. So I do appreciate that this bill recognizes and respects the limits on time that might be

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

available for training at least initially. So the next time I find myself awake at night thinking of my most fragile students, I want to do so with a confidence from having more in my tool kit that will help me to better understand their needs and how best to help them. I also appreciate that it includes the training during contract time so that I can consult with and discuss these issues with my colleagues as I'm learning them. I want to thank, Senator Crawford, for recognizing those tools that teachers need, and I encourage the committee to advance LB120, and thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

**GROENE:** Any questions? You understand my line of questioning, I respect teachers.

**RITA BENNETT:** Yes, yes, of course.

**GROENE:** We expect you to do too much with a bachelor's, a master's degree in education.

**RITA BENNETT:** Indeed.

**GROENE:** This isn't your purvey. This is not what you do. And can you understand a concern of some when they say you get somebody who took a one-hour training at a Holiday Inn and then go out and think they're a psychiatrist and they start analyzing kids and, and I think it's just putting too much on the plate-- it's-- for teachers. Because when, when is a teacher-- I'm giving a lecture here, but when the first person whose, whose child commits suicide and sees this law and sues the school, you should have caught this. That concerns me, and-- but I, I respect everything you do. I just think we try to get you to do too much. Thank you.

**RITA BENNETT:** Certainly, I appreciate, I appreciate that recognition.

**GROENE:** Any other questions?

**WALZ:** Right here.

**GROENE:** Senator Linehan.

**LINEHAN:** Thank you, Chairman Groene.

**GROENE:** I missed you.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

**LINEHAN:** That's okay. I just raised my hand. This-- is part of what you're trying to do here is-- you're already doing the suicide prevention-- you all agree that's right. So it's like just expanding a little bit, because it-- you have to do that. We have to change the law so you can do that in the same hour. Is that why? Because if you have the Association of School Boards, and the councils-- school administrators, and Nebraska Rural Community Association, and I assume NSEA on board,--

**RITA BENNETT:** Yes.

**LINEHAN:** --you wouldn't have to have a law to do this, right? I mean, you could-- it could decide-- the worry I have is because frequently we get requests from schools and school boards to pass a law that says they have to do something and then a year later they come back and say we mandated it.

**RITA BENNETT:** I see what you mean. If I may, I, I believe that what this bill in particular-- we already have the requirement for the suicide prevention training, which I think has been a real positive for us to have. This simply allows us to expand what might be covered in that required training to include the behavioral and mental health topics that often play a part in suicidal ideation. So it enables an expansion to include some of those topics as well. I see it as simply exposure. So in the one- hour suicide prevention training that I currently have participated in each year, it gives me exposure, awareness, keeps it at the forefront of my mind. And I would see the addition of behavioral mental health issues being touched upon in the training to do the same thing. Would not make me an expert in any way shape or form, but certainly would give me some more tools so that I can recognize. For example, when I've had students who've had particular specific diagnoses of mental health issues, I have taken it upon myself to do further research so that I can better understand the underlying condition and what that might mean to their performance in my classroom. And so I think that's what this would do. And so, I see it more as expanding the kinds of concepts that can be covered during this already required training to give us more tools and to look at all of the affiliated issues that go along with the idea of suicide prevention.

**LINEHAN:** Thank you very--

**RITA BENNETT:** Um-hum.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

**LINEHAN:** --much for being here.

**RITA BENNETT:** Thank you.

**GROENE:** Any other questions? Thank you.

**RITA BENNETT:** Thank you.

**GROENE:** Next proponent.

**ANN HUNTER-PIRTLE:** Good afternoon, Chairman Groene, members of the committee. My name is Ann Hunter-Pirtle, A-n-n H-u-n-t-e-r, hyphen, P-i-r-t-l-e. I'm the executive director of Stand for Schools. We're proud to support LB120 because we know students' mental and behavioral health is key to their academic success. In addition, we believe our state's leaders have a responsibility to address this growing need which both teachers and administrators across the state have identified as the number one unmet need in our schools. Tragically, according to the Nebraska State Suicide Prevention Coalition, suicide is the second leading cause of death for 15- to 19- year-olds in Nebraska. That's why in 2014, the Legislature passed LB923, introduced by Senator Amanda McGill, to require all educators to receive one hour of suicide prevention training yearly. Yet in 2017, one in every four students reported experiencing depression. Educators are hungry for training and additional mental health topics with which a huge number of their students struggle daily such as depression and anxiety before students reach a crisis point of suicidal thinking. LB120 would build on LB923 to expand the range of topics districts can cover in this training to best respond to the needs of their students. We need to make sure that educators can identify early indicators of mental distress, and that they know who in their district or school or ESU to contact about appropriate interventions and community resources. LB120 is an important step toward improving school safety and academic outcomes. And to, Senator Linehan's question from earlier, my understanding is that a legal change is needed under this bill. We can make the case that the previous bill, LB923 was overly prescriptive, and I would encourage you and the members of the committee to keep that in mind with this and other proposals moving forward. Unintended consequences from perhaps well-meaning but, but overly narrow proposals. With that, I'm happy to take any questions.

**GROENE:** Senator Brewer.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

**BREWER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. All right. Because you seem to have a good working understanding of this, have you seen the amendment that goes with this, AM498? It was just handed to me. That's why it came up.

**ANN HUNTER-PIRTLE:** Yes, I believe, I have, I have seen it and I don't have it in front of me at the moment.

**BREWER:** OK. Well, let me, let me try and read through this and, and make sure you're tracking with me--

**ANN HUNTER-PIRTLE:** Um-hum.

**BREWER:** --so I don't ask you a question that doesn't seem like it fits. In going back to line 27-- or line 28, and it, it talks a bit-- a line through suicide awareness and prevention.

**ANN HUNTER-PIRTLE:** Um-hum.

**BREWER:** Now the amendment adds the word health. Wouldn't suicide awareness and prevention be a more clear definition rather than use the word health? Oh, I'll wait then.

**ANN HUNTER-PIRTLE:** I'm sorry, I don't have that in front of me.

**BREWER:** Never mind. OK. Well, I, I didn't know if that was like a more modern term and that's why it's used but I'll, I'll save that for the senator.

**ANN HUNTER-PIRTLE:** Sure. My guess is that, that maybe it was mental health in there-- again, not having it in front of me, I'm not sure. But, my understanding is that the purpose of LB120 is to expand, you know, include-- keep suicide prevention awareness, but include other mental health topics as well.

**BREWER:** All right, thank you.

**ANN HUNTER-PIRTLE:** Thank you.

**GROENE:** Any questions?

**ANN HUNTER-PIRTLE:** Thank you.

**GROENE:** Wouldn't you-- you just don't go commit suicide,--

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

**ANN HUNTER-PIRTLE:** Right.

**GROENE:** --you already are depressed. So isn't the suicide prevention already giving teachers indi-- indicators like depression and other issues-- sitting in a corner all by yourself and not playing with others, whatever they are.

**ANN HUNTER-PIRTLE:** That's a fi--

**GROENE:** Isn't that already incorporated into mental health-- I mean, suicide prevention?

**ANN HUNTER-PIRTLE:** I, I think you could make the case that it is-- that there, that there are warning signs that there's a lead up, right, to something like--

**GROENE:** Yeah.

**ANN HUNTER-PIRTLE:** --suicidal ideation. But also, I think the, the recognition in LB120 is that the topics that are covered in one hour of suicide prevention training may now-- may not be comprehensive and there may be struggles that students are having the teachers are seeing daily that are not covered. And if you're taking it to Ms. Bennett's point earlier, if you're seeing the same training every year, it's a good refresher. It's good to keep it sort of front of mind, but there may be additional struggles that you're seeing in your students in your building daily. And that's the purpose of the bill, is just to help teachers address what they're seeing in their classrooms.

**GROENE:** Thank you. Any other questions? Thank you.

**ANN HUNTER-PIRTLE:** Thank you.

**GROENE:** Next Proponent. If there's no more proponents, opponents? Opponents? No opponents. Neutral? Cold weather keeps the testifiers down. We had correspondence of proponents from Legislative Co-- Committee Co-Chair Nebraska Psychological Association; the National Association of Social Workers; School Social Workers Association in Nebraska; Inclusive Communities; from Brain Injury Alliance; from the Nebraska Council on Dealt-- Deloment-- Developmental Disabilities; Student Affiliates in School Psychology; and the Kim Foundation. There was no opponents and no neutral.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

**CRAWFORD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you committee for your time and attention. I want to thank those who came to testify, and those who wrote letters. I think the wide range of individuals and groups that support this language is testament to the fact that the current suicide prevention training is in need of refreshing, and they've come forward to say they would like to see this done, and they feel it needs to be done in statute, and so I appreciate that. It is an our-- an, an hour that's already required so we're not adding any additional hour requirements or-- it's just allowing more flexibility in that hour that's already provided. The-- and I'm glad to hear that the NAMI and other states helps schools with this kind of training and glad to hear from the, the Nebraska Department of Education that they support the bill and are willing to work on the bill, will-- willing to work to provide this training even with existing resources if necessary. So I think that's an important sign of its value. Just to answer, Senator Brewer's question, the-- on the amendment, the word health is there just because that's the point at which you insert the language after that. So it's not adding the word health, it's just-- that's giving you the, the place where you add the word and. And the bill still-- as-- if you look at page 3, line 14, the bill was including suicide awareness and prevention training as the top topic still, but the advocates wanted-- preferred that it was also in the description as well. And so that's why we went ahead and put that language back in the bill. So that explains the amendment and reasoning behind that bill. So-- and hopefully answer some of your questions that you've raised, but I'm happy to answer other questions.

**GROENE:** Senator Linehan.

**LINEHAN:** Thank you, Chairman Groene. I think one of the things that maybe the chairman has touched on and I'm questioning, too, it's not really-- we're not trying to pass a law here where they, they address the issue,--

**CRAWFORD:** No.

**LINEHAN:** --we're training them to recognize the issue.

**CRAWFORD:** Correct.

**LINEHAN:** And if they recognize it to, to help parents, so it --we're not trying to train them to be--

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

**CRAWFORD:** No.

**LINEHAN:** --counselors?

**CRAWFORD:** No.

**LINEHAN:** It's just recognizing symptoms.

**CRAWFORD:** Correct.

**LINEHAN:** Is that correct?

**CRAWFORD:** Correct. And, and how to work-- deal with parents perhaps, I mean, and recognize the symptoms so it's, it's, it's just recognition and how-- what is the teacher's appropriate role in responding.

**LINEHAN:** And letting the parents know.

**CRAWFORD:** Yeah.

**LINEHAN:** OK, all right. Thank you, appreciate it.

**GROENE:** Senator Brewer.

**BREWER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, I guess start with-- I, I kind of hear what you're saying on needing to update, because the Army used to have suicide prevention programs we'd have to listen to. Of course, they were like from the 1960s, and so by the time you were done it probably pushed you closer to it by having to listen to it. So I, I think it's a great idea to update it now. I got nine events in three days this weekend, so I'm sure they're gonna make me dance a jig on the issue of local control. This will be a mandate for the schools, right?

**CRAWFORD:** It is-- it-- there's already the hour mandate for the training.

**BREWER:** OK.

**CRAWFORD:** So this is providing more flexibility on what can be offered in that mandated hour.

**BREWER:** OK.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

**CRAWFORD:** So I would say, argue it provides more local control under an existing mandate.

**BREWER:** The cost from where it is now to where it will be, is that significant? I, I understand it has an A bill, but that A bill really does more, so that the updating of things can be done at state level not really at the school level. Is that accurate?

**CRAWFORD:** That's my understanding, too, that the, the expected cost would be to the Department of Education.

**BREWER:** So the school just needs to figure out what that updated version of the suicide prevention or whatever training that they'll be doing on mental health looks like?

**CRAWFORD:** Correct.

**BREWER:** And then the training will stay at, at an hour unless the school decides to make it longer?

**CRAWFORD:** Correct, the mandate is for an hour. And this doesn't change that mandate.

**BREWER:** All right. Thank you.

**CRAWFORD:** The existing mandate.

**GROENE:** Any other questions? But, this bill goes more than just training, I mean. What's, what's included in appropriate and effective responses for educators? That's, that's a pretty wide, wide area and then trauma informed care. I, I understand the trauma, but informed care, I mean, is the care being delivered by the teacher? It's, it's not very clear. When, when we had a statute that said, show "at least one hour of suicide awareness and prevention training each year. This training shall be provided within the framework of existing inservice training." We've had an awful lot of words and an awful lot of dictates that are not very clear. But there's more here than just training, there's appropriate and effective response. The response is not training. What do you mean by that?

**CRAWFORD:** What, what should a teacher do if she see-- if he or she sees a situation?

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

**GROENE:** You could eliminate all that, and say contact the parents. So anyway. Any other questions? Thank you.

**CRAWFORD:** Thank you.

**GROENE:** That ends the hearing on LB120, and brings us to LB416 by Senator Curt Friesen.

**FRIESEN:** Thank you, Chairman Groene and members of the Education Committee. My name is Curt Friesen, C-u-r-t F-r-i-e-s-e-n. I'm here today to present LB416. LB416 changes the distribution of the temporary school fund and the funds derived from fines and licenses related to school lands. Currently these funds are disbursed based on the total number of students aged 5 through 18 years of age in each school district. LB11416 [SIC] changes how the funds are disbursed based on the number of students who are attending public schools, and as a result does not count the students enrolled in private school. The intent of this legislation was to see how such policy would affect funding to our school districts. According the Nebraska Department of Education, there are clearly some districts that do very well and others that do not. The fiscal note on LB416 correctly states that equalized districts would stand to lose revenue as a result of the enactment of LB416 would qualify for more funds under TEEOSA thus creating an additional burden on a formula in need of change. I do have a spreadsheet that I can furnish anyone who wants it, but I'd kind of last-- maybe ask that you just hold this in committee. When we saw the numbers and looked at them not knowing, I guess, what the results would be and there good information right now, and I can answer any questions. If anybody wants to see the spreadsheet, I can furnish it to you, but it was a long, wide printout and would have been very fine print. So if anybody is interested, I would get them that spreadsheet. But, I think maybe this bill should be kept in committee at the time being. I'd be glad to answer any questions. So-- I mean, it-- there's, there's a lot of money that gets distributed. There's oil and gas rights. There's a lot of the school districts have sold their lands. That money was put into this fund, and so as a result, I mean, you have school districts now that have no more school lands located in their districts and yet out west there's a lot, there's a lot of revenue generated. But that revenue does not get to stay in those districts, so to speak, it gets put in this fund. And I, I think in the end it probably doesn't get distributed proportionally like it maybe should, but it could maybe be part of a bigger picture rather than by itself.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

**GROENE:** [INAUDIBLE]. I know you'll-- but I got to ask this question. This includes the school lands, too?

**FRIESEN:** Yes, those funds--

**GROENE:** The rents?

**FRIESEN:** -- that are generated, the rents-- the oil and gas leases.

**GROENE:** So it's all of it?

**FRIESEN:** So it had like a \$49 million--

**GROENE:** But, aren't the fines-- the speeding tickets and stuff confined to the county. So you're addressing both issues?

**FRIESEN:** I can't answer that. I, I thought that those were in that school district, but I'm not so sure because a, a county fine-- I don't think they take into account what school district that happened in, it might be also put in to those funds.

**GROENE:** All right, thank you. Any other questions? Senator Linehan.

**LINEHAN:** So setting the county fines aside, because I don't think-- because this is in the constitution, right? This is apportionment-- if we change this, don't we have to change the constitution?

**FRIESEN:** I have-- don't think this is in the constitution. This is, this is just how the funds are distributed currently.

**LINEHAN:** OK. So we can change that without changing the constitution?

**FRIESEN:** Yes.

**LINEHAN:** And right now just so I understand it, it goes to each district according to the number of kids that live in that district-- not necessarily anything to do with the number of children who attend that school?

**FRIESEN:** Right. It's distributed according to the number of census students in that district. So when you, when you have a district that also contains a number of private schools, the money is distributed only to the public school. Private school, obviously--

**LINEHAN:** So for like Madison County and Platte County, Norfolk and Columbus, where 25 percent of the kids go to private school, that's a

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

significant amount of money that goes. So what about schools-- another example, what about schools where you have a significant number of kids opting out? The school they opt out of still get the money, right, because they live there?

**FRIESEN:** We're, we're doing it by the daily attendance of that school so if they're not attending that school they would not. So, yes, where the-- wherever the sch-- student is attending school would count as a student in that.

**LINEHAN:** OK. That's what your bill would do. But, currently it goes to the home school district.

**FRIESEN:** Yes, it goes, it goes to this, but it's based strictly on census numbers versus the number of students attending public school.

**LINEHAN:** Do you have-- did you say this and I wasn't paying enough attention, how much per child it is? Because it's not per student, it's per kid, right?

**FRIESEN:** Well, it-- no, it, it varies. It's per kid, but I, I don't have that. That spreadsheet might contain that, but it was--

**LINEHAN:** It's not the same for every child across the state?

**FRIESEN:** Yes, it might be.

**LINEHAN:** I think maybe it is. OK, thank you very much for bringing this to us.

**GROENE:** Question. But the, the point is-- I don't believe this is-- the reason I believe they do it the way they do it now is, even though you might send your child to a private school or home school, you are a taxpayer. You are supporting your prop-- your, your public schools. So this is more of a, of a fairness issue for the taxpayer, not the school? If it was the other side of the argument, could be?

**FRIESEN:** If it was a fairness issue for the taxpayer then, yeah, some of those counties out west that generate a lot of revenue, and more of it should be left in those school districts where it's generated if you're talking a fairness issue only.

**GROENE:** Yes, I-- but, I-- since you said table it, we're wasting our time. It's a, it's a good topic that needs to be addressed.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

**FRIESEN:** It's interesting information. I-- when I looked at it I was not really surprised, I guess, but it did-- I didn't know what the impact would be and so it-- in the equalize schools, obviously, the loss of revenue there gets made-up immediately through state aid. But in the nonequalized school there's some of those get hurt to them they do not get made whole again. So this is an issue that needs to be looked at. And, and like I said, I'll furnish the spreadsheet and you can, you can study it for yourself. I'll just email it to you, rather than print it out. But it, it was rather interesting, but it does hurt some schools that do not-- would not get made whole by state aid.

**GROENE:** I understand that. In my county, I got-- North Platte has St. Pat's. They get that money, but Hershey and the smaller school districts don't get that-- they don't have a parochial school district. I understand. Thank you. Any proponents? Opponents?

**STEPHANIE SUMMERS:** Hi. Good afternoon, Senator Groene, members of the Education Committee. My name is Stephanie Summers, S-t-e-p-h-a-n-i-e S-u-m-m-e-r-s. I am a school board member from David City. I am in opposition, and it's nice to hear that it might be tabled for LB416. A little bit of history-- when the school lands was created, Butler County only has, excuse me, very little school lands left. However, those were sold off 150 years ago. So it's not the responsibility of-- or it's not anything that the current school boards or school boards of recent times have had the-- and, and a lot of the eastern counties as well. We necess-- we didn't necessarily do that. So I just wanted to make that clear that that's not-- that wasn't a, a choice or shouldn't be a choice. David City is a small community. We have 3,000 people in our community. We have us, David City Public, who has about 600 to 650 kids each year and we have Aquinas St. Mary's private school, who also have about 600 to 650 kids each year. We are a community that is very much split down the middle. Currently school land funds are calculated using census data and the number of students in the district. And the, like you heard, LB416 changes that, and it goes by enrollment number for the public school. If LB416 were to become law, it would decrease the revenue we receive by 35 percent. We are a nonequalized school district. Public school dollars are used to educate private school students every day and every year. We provide special education services to private school students. We encourage and invite private school students to enroll in courses in our public schools that are not available in their school. We have students who come to David City Public Schools for agriculture classes, industrial tech classes, and culi-- culinary classes every single day. We also

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

pay for the salary of the special education teachers that serve the students who attend the private schools. We aren't mandated by law to serve the students in private schools to serve all the students throughout our entire district. The resources that LB416 takes away are serving students in both private and public educational settings. Yet, it only lets us count those that actually come to our public school building. In addition, the decrease of the 35 percent funding could equate to an expansion of the mental health services that we provide to our schools. The loss of the \$40,000 that we would receive could be the salary of a preschool teacher that we would like to hire for the expansion of our preschool program that's going to benefit our entire community where private school families will send their students to our public preschool before taking their children and take-- and sending them to the private school elementary. So I just want to reiterate that, although this bill would allow us to only count the students that enter our school buildings, we actually serve all of the students and happily do so in our entire district every day. Thank you. I'll take any questions.

**GROENE:** Any questions? Senator Linehan.

**LINEHAN:** Thank you, Chairman Groene. But the parents of those students pay their property taxes, right?

**STEPHANIE SUMMERS:** Yes.

**LINEHAN:** Even though they go to private school, they pay the property taxes.

**STEPHANIE SUMMERS:** That is true, yep.

**LINEHAN:** And they-- so they're paying-- I mean, they're paying-- they're not paying any less than somebody that comes to your school full-time, right?

**STEPHANIE SUMMERS:** Yep, that's true, too. Yes.

**LINEHAN:** OK, thank you.

**STEPHANIE SUMMERS:** Um-hum.

**GROENE:** Thank you.

**STEPHANIE SUMMERS:** Thank you.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

**GROENE:** Any other opponents? Neutral? Proponents, we received letters, none. Opponents, Seward Public Schools Superintendent; David City Public Schools Board of Education; David City Public Schools Board of Education, Stephanie Summers. Neutral, none.

**FRIESEN:** Thank you, Senator Groene, members of the committee. So one of the questions was, if we can-- if this was a constitutional change or not. So if you wanted to leave more of the revenue where it was generated in that school district that would be a constitutional change. But if just the way you're distributing it by student numbers, I don't think it would. It's kind of spelled out in here is how they distribute it. But if you wanted to-- because it goes into this fund, and school fines and stuff do go into this fund also. If a school district dissolves and sells its building that money goes into this fund. The lands that have been sold over the years, that money goes into this fund. And then it's-- this is how it gets distributed. So I-- there are a lot of school districts that have sold land that do not have-- each, each county had so many acres of school lands in the day. And, and like in my area there's very few school lands left. They've been sold over the years. That money, I think, still ends up getting put into this pot of money and distributed.

**GROENE:** Senator Linehan.

**LINEHAN:** So are you saying that we could take this money-- because it's just the interest off of it, right? It's a fund that generates interest in what we spend every year, is that revenue goes to schools-- it's just the interest. Could we take that interest and put it in TEEOSA? Well,--

**FRIESEN:** I think,--

**LINEHAN:** -- after we change TEEOSA.

**FRIESEN:** --I think that is-- that, that probably is possible. I, I-- I'd have to look into that further, because TEEOSA still-- depends on, you know, it still distributes it out into a different--

**LINEHAN:** Right, it's just a different unfair formula.

**FRIESEN:** It's, it's not going by what's generated, it's still spread out. But I, I couldn't answer that.

**LINEHAN:** But it could be-- because I think part of a problem, at least I feel frustration, is we have so many little-- big and little pots of

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

money that to figure out where it's all coming from if we could like put it all together and then try to be fair to everyone. So it would be inter-- I would be interested whether that's possible. Whether--

**FRIESEN:** We, we can look into that.

**LINEHAN:** OK, thank you very much.

**GROENE:** To be clear, I believe the school lands is apportioned by the state by student, and then to each county. And then the county treasurer adds the local fines and sale of buildings and then it's-- that stays in that county. I don't think that fines go into the state as apportioned. But anyway--

**FRIESEN:** It, it says here that basically each county treasurer shall add all money received by the county treasurer from his or her county on account of fines and licenses and the proceeds of sale of sites and stuff like that.

**GROENE:** But after the state apportions the school land money. But, yes. All right, thank you. So you want me to IPP it and then I get even with the one you did on mine four years ago.

**FRIESEN:** I don't care. [LAUGHTER]

**GROENE:** Thank you.

**FRIESEN:** I mean, it was interesting information and, and I, I think it's something that-- it, it is a question-- a little bit of fairness, you know, because if you look at where that money is generated a lot of it was generated to oil and gas leases and those types of things which in those counties-- I mean, they would love to have access to these monies. They have not sold them off. But again, it is what it is, and I, I was interested more in seeing kind of how the distribution would be changed if we would just do it on the average daily attendance. And, again, some of those schools that would just get more state aid, it has really no impact. But if you're a nonequalized district and you take it away from them, it, it impacts them and does not replace that money so it puts more pressure on property taxes. So-- and again, if anyone wants the spreadsheet we'll email it to you and you can look at it and see how it affects the different places. But, I was just surprised at how much money, I guess, was in there and how it was distributed now.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

**GROENE:** Thank you, Senator.

**FRIESEN:** Thank you.

**GROENE:** That closes the hearing on LB416. We will now go to LB104, Senator Linehan.

**LINEHAN:** Good afternoon, Chairman Groene and members of Education Committee. My name is Lou Ann Linehan, L-o-u A-n-n L-i-n-e-h-a-n. I'm here today presenting LB104. LB104 would extend lottery funding of the Nebraska Opportunity Grant funding until 2016-- 20-- 2026-27. Under current law, Nebraska Opportunity Grant program is scheduled to sunset in '20-21. The committee is tasked with review of the lottery fund dollars directed at education and must submit a funding recommendations to the Clerk of the Legislature no later than December 31, 2019. The Nebraska Opportunity Grant program provides financial aid to students who meet the following criteria: they need to be residents of Nebraska who have not yet earned a bachelor's degree, a graduate degree, or professional degree; they have to have a financial need defined as having expected family contribution equal to or less than 11 percent of the maximum family contribution that qualifies students for a federal Pell Grant; and who are attending an eligible Nebraska college or university to earn a degree or credential. In addition to lottery funds, the Legislature provides a general appropriation as well. In 2017-18, there was a \$10.7 million appropriation of lottery funds and a \$6.7 million General Fund appropriation for a total of over \$17 million. In 2017-18, the program impacted 12,849 students with an average grant of \$1,353.61 per student. As a percentage of funds received by the postsecondary-- secondary sectors where the university system received 51.8 percent-- will the systems-- the students received this, I should say. The students at the university system received 51.8 percent of the funds. Students at independent colleges and universities received 19.4 percent of the funds. Students at the community colleges received 15 percent of the funds. State colleges received-- students received 7.4 percent of funds, and the private sector school students received 6.4 percent of the funds. Despite the Nebraska Opportunity Grant providing over 17 million in grants to Nebraska students, there are thousands of college students who don't receive any need-based aid in support of their bachelor's degree. It is critical for Nebraska to continue this important program. As of the 2016-17 academic year, Nebraska ranked 35th in the country in a need based undergraduate grant dollars. As some of you might be wondering why pass this bill before the committee

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

studies it, my answer is that Nebraska ranks the bottom half nationally in supporting Nebraska students who want to stay in Nebraska. This is part of our brain drain problem. The program is important enough to pursue right now. The postsecondary education sector both public and independent support this program. Which isn't a surprise. And I want certainly from Nebraska students they recruit to stay in Nebraska. I received the background on this bill from the annual report on the Opportunity Grant Program from the Coordinating Commission and I'm going to pass them out to the committee so you can look at them. So with that, I'll take questions if there are any. Chairman, do you have any questions? Questions?

**GROENE:** Any questions?

**LINEHAN:** Thank you. I'll stay.

**GREG ADAMS:** Senator Groene, members of the committee. My name is Greg Adams, G-r-e-g A-d-a-m-s, representing the Nebraska Community College Association. I'll keep my testimony very short. Realizing that you have by 2020, need to re-evaluate these lottery dollars and that's-- that is one of your charges. We certainly hope that we can keep this grant program afloat. Certainly, as you might imagine our community colleges see a, a big percentage of the students in our state that need some financial assistance to finish their program. And yet because of the amount of money that's there compared with the number of students who are eligible, the grants aren't particularly large. So at minimum we'd hope that you'd maintain the program, and I'd take any questions. I think, Dr. Baumgartner, behind me can probably answer them better, but I'd give it a shot.

**GROENE:** Is Sen-- is Mr. Baumgartner gonna testify?

**GREG ADAMS:** I hope so.

**GROENE:** Then I won't ask you the question.

**GREG ADAMS:** OK. Thank you.

**GROENE:** Any other questions?

**MIKE BAUMGARTNER:** Good afternoon, Chairman Groene and members of the committee. My name is Mike Baumgartner, M-i-k-e B-a-u-m-g-a-r-t-n-e-r. I'm the executive director of the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, and I'm testifying this afternoon in support of LB104. Senator Linehan did such a fine job of covering what I was

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

going to cover and even handed out some things I was going to hand out that I'm going to jump to the end of, of my testimony. Since FY '10, a majority of NOG funding has come from lottery proceeds through the Nebraska Education Improvement Fund. And in fact, the General Fund contributions barely budged from around \$6.6 million a year in a decade. Nevertheless, the General Fund contributes a very important part of this program and we're, we're pleased that LB104 stipulates that the lottery funds be in conjunction with funding from the General Fund and FY '19 lottery funds will provide \$11.9-- \$11.4 million of the \$17.9 million total. Recent growth in the lottery transfers will allow NOG funding to increase, and both the Governor's budget and the Appropriations Committee's preliminary reports have spending authority increasing for NOG by \$1 million in FY '20 and \$2 million in FY '21. The Nebraska Opportunity Grant is relatively small but important tool in making college affordable for Nebraskans. I would reiterate what Senator Linehan said about our position nationally in terms of the size of this program and the number of students we serve. Losing access to lottery funds in two years would be devastating for this program reducing funding by two-thirds. LB104 would maintain the proportion of the lottery funding received by NOG through 2027, which provides certainty for postsecondary institutions and some peace of mind from the students that depend on it. So we ask for your support for LB104.

**GROENE:** Thank you. Any questions? What is the trend on the lottery funds?

**MIKE BAUMGARTNER:** It is increasing. Really in the last, last two years there's been a jump that, that we are-- we're getting a balance that we're bringing forward which is why we had asked the Governor's Budget Office and the Appropriations Committee to increase the appropriation by \$1 million and \$2 million. So it's [INAUDIBLE]--

**GROENE:** What is the dollar amount?

**MIKE BAUMGARTNER:** In the fund right now?

**GROENE:** What is-- the last few years, what's the total dollar amount that was apportioned out into these programs?

**MIKE BAUMGARTNER:** In 2015-16, \$10.5 million; 2016-17, \$11.8 million; 2017-18, \$12.9 million; so we saw a big jump.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

**GROENE:** How much was it last year?

**MIKE BAUMGARTNER:** Twelve point nine million.

**GROENE:** Twelve point nine.

**MIKE BAUMGARTNER:** Yeah.

**GROENE:** But it's-- I don't understand-- the appropriations in statute, it's by a percentage, if it's there it should be appropriated.

**MIKE BAUMGARTNER:** It's--

**GROENE:** There not appropriating that by percentage?

**MIKE BAUMGARTNER:** They're appropriating a dollar amount-- a spending authority from a cash fund-- a dollar amount of spending authority from the cash fund. We get a proportion of lottery funding for this program, and then the Legislature gives us the spending authority from that cash fund every year.

**GROENE:** The way the legislation's written it sounds like if there's a fund that comes in from the lottery and then it's split up by percentage.

**MIKE BAUMGARTNER:** Um-hum.

**GROENE:** That's not what's happening?

**MIKE BAUMGARTNER:** Yeah, we are getting-- the money comes in from the lottery and it's getting split up into the various funds and we are getting the, the majority of the money that's going into the education fund. So that money then is in our cash fund and the Legislature appropriates the spending authority that lets us spend that for the program. As the amount of lottery funding increases, our proportion stays the same but we're getting a bigger piece of a bigger pie. We're getting a piece of a bigger pie. So the, the amount that's coming in from the lottery is, is getting bigger.

**GROENE:** There's a middleman here called the Appropriations Committee is what you're saying--

**MIKE BAUMGARTNER:** Yes, yeah. Um-hum.

**GROENE:** --that's diverting some of it.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

**MIKE BAUMGARTNER:** No, they're, they're not, they're not diverting it. They're, they're appropriating it each year. It's-- whenever we make the request-- you know, we're a couple of years behind on knowing how much money is going to come in, so we make a guess. And if more comes in, subsequently, than in the next biennium we will ask for additional funding-- additional spending authority from the program. So if you're looking at the last page on, on that handout the NOG funding by source you can see how, how the lottery funding has been--

**GROENE:** Page 6?

**MIKE BAUMGARTNER:** Page 4-- page 14, the very back.

**GROENE:** All right, sorry.

**MIKE BAUMGARTNER:** You can see the growth in the spending authority from the lottery funds and the money that we're getting in is increasing over what it had in the past, which is why we requested that the Governor and the Appropriations Committee commit to spending a million dollars more next year and 2 million more subsequently. So we, we are asking them to raise the spending authority to match what we're bringing in from the lottery each year. So as that grows, we, we will ask for the spending in--

**GROENE:** So when this committee addresses this next year-- maybe we ought to address that the money is deposited directly into a fund and then let us pull it out instead of going through the Appropriations Committee.

**MIKE BAUMGARTNER:** But, it's still appropriated.

**GROENE:** Well, just to make sure you get it all.

**MIKE BAUMGARTNER:** Oh.

**GROENE:** All right, thank you. Any other questions?

**MIKE BAUMGARTNER:** Thank you.

**JODI KUPPER:** Good afternoon, Chair Groene and members of the Education Committee. My name is Jodi Kupper, J-o-i-- J-o-d-i K-u-p-p-e-r. I'm vice chancellor for Academic Planning and Partnerships for the Nebraska State College System which includes Chadron State, Peru State, and Wayne State. I'm here today to testify in support of LB104. The position of the NSCS Board of Trustees is that we continue to

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

serve as colleges of opportunities for a Nebraska student. We are open enrollment institutions to many students who may not otherwise be able to afford a college education, are geographically place-bound, and or may not be able to succeed without the strong support services and individualized attention we provide. Last year 36 percent of our undergraduate students qualified for and received Pell Grants. Of our fall 2018 entering freshman class, approximately 46 reported they represent first-generation of their families to attend college. LB104 would continue the provision of lottery funds for the Nebraska Opportunity Grant program which provides a continuing and stable source of funding for eligible students across the state. The NOG program is critically important to the students who attend our colleges. For FY 2018, 1,156 students were awarded a total-- total of \$1,288,630 in NOG support resulting in an average award of just over \$1,100 for our students who received NOG funding. Without this program students with significant financial need who do find their way to college may have to rely on additional student debt. Even with all federal awards and loans as well as state assistance provided to our students, there's still a significant amount of unmet financial need based on the student and on their family's ability to provide financial support for their college education. Last year the amount of unmet need for the Nebraska State College System was over \$5 million. This reflects the critical need for as much support as possible to ensure that students who desire-- that attend-- to attend our colleges are given that opportunity. The Nebraska State College System strongly supports LB104 in the continuation of the lottery funds for the Nebraska Opportunity Grant. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

**GROENE:** Thank you. Any questions?

**JODI KUPPER:** Thank you.

**GROENE:** Next proponent.

**JUSTIN BROWN:** Good afternoon, Chairman Groene and members of the Education Committee. My name is Justin Brown, J-u-s-t-i-n B-r-o-w-n, and I serve as the director of Scholarships and Financial Aid at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. On behalf of the University of Nebraska, our 4 campuses, and 52,000 students, it's my privilege to be here today in support of LB104, a proposal which would make the current use of state lottery sales revenue as a dedicated source of funding for the crucial Nebraska Opportunity Grant. The University of Nebraska would like to thank Senator Linehan for bringing this

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

proposal forward. The NOG program is our state's only need-based financial aid program that provides state financial assistance to qualified low-income Nebraska residents to attend college of their choice in Nebraska. Over 4,000 students enrolled at the University of Nebraska, including the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture in Curtis, Nebraska, receive NOG grants out of nearly 13,000 students across the state of Nebraska. These funds are crucial in supporting student access and affordability for students to continue their education and training beyond high school. The state lottery revenue supports over half of the \$17 million program which is also made up of general state appropriations. As a result the NOG funding has increased as state lottery sales have increased, while general state appropriations have not increased allowing this program to maintain its positive impact to some degree as college costs increase. The University of Nebraska is committed to higher education access and affordability through public and private partnerships of financial support for students. The NOG program is an integral, integral part of that partnership along with federal campus and private sources to support low-income students. Through these partnerships and student support the university is able to generate over \$3.9 billion annually for Nebraska's economy. An independent report called Equality of Opportunity project also demonstrates that 16 percent of the University of Nebraska students advanced two or more income quartiles, providing upward social mobility for students to be engaged, active, and productive Nebraska citizens. Maintaining the NOG funding is a key component to student success and access in higher education at all education sectors in the state of Nebraska to help make college education financially within reach for our citizens and to retain students within the state to contribute to our economy. Allowing the current funding structure of the Nebraska Opportunity Grant program to expire, would mean a loss of financial aid funding for nearly \$8,000 college students across the state. Furthermore, as Senator Linehan spoke, Nebraska is currently ranked 35th in the country in state need-based financial aid support for college students. And finally, the NOG program in its current state still falls short of funding all eligible students. As it stands in nearly 13,000 students across the state that receive this grant are among over 36,000 students overall who could be eligible to receive it due to a funding gap in dollars available versus the number of students eligible. For these reasons, the University of Nebraska strongly supports LB104 to maintain the Nebraska Opportunity Grant funding from state lottery revenue. Thank

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

you again for your time and consideration, and I'd be happy to answer any questions.

**GROENE:** Any questions? Thank you, sir.

**PAULA KOHLES:** Good afternoon, Senator Groene and the Education Committee members. My name is Paula Kohles, P-a-u-l-a K-o-h-l-e-s, and I'm here today in support of LB104 on behalf of Creighton University. I currently serve as the financial aid director at Creighton, and I've been in there for almost 25 years. Creighton Uni-- Creighton supports LB104 because it's important the state of Nebraska supports all students seeking postsecondary education. A brief background on Creighton, we were founded in 1878, and for the 16th year in a row, Creighton's been named the number one Midwest regional university in U.S. News and World Report. We're the only university in the country that offers eight health profession programs including: dentistry, nursing, medicine, pharmacy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, mergec-- emergency management services, and public health; along with our arts and sciences, business, and law programs. Creighton's graduates have very tremendous impact on the state of Nebraska and further the brain gain within our state. Creighton graduates have an overall success rate of over 95 percent. Upon graduation, 55 percent of our graduation-- our graduates are employed, about a third of them move on to grad and professional school programs; another 7 percent volunteer in federal programs. Historically, over 50 percent of our graduating classes have stayed here in Nebraska. And considering 62 percent of our students come from outside the state of Nebraska, we are contributing to the brain gain within the state of Nebraska. In short then, Creighton University graduates have very positive outcomes. We feel that supporting LB104 benefits the education policy of the entire state of Nebraska, and we want to ensure that the funding of the NOG grant is extended. While Creighton has experienced a decline in our NOG funding in the last several years by about \$50,000 over the last six years, it's still an important funding source for our neediest Nebraska students. For the 2018-19 school year, we've awarded 93 students with NOG funds. But unfortunately this is only about 40 percent of our NOG eligible students, because we choose to award it just to the neediest students to be able to help them to be able to pay their education and cover their expenses with school. In our opinion, LB104 is essential in helping those students afford their education and to keep these Nebraska-- these high-need students in Nebraska. With LB104, this extends funding for an additional six years and assures the neediest students would continue

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

to have the opportunity to attend the postsecondary institution that best fits their need as this grant provides access to institutions for many needy Nebraska students. I would like to thank, Senator Linehan, for introducing this bill, and I urge your support of LB104. This bill is about extending the funding of grant assistance for our neediest students and will allow the state of Nebraska to retain its best and brightest students. Thank you for the opportunity to be here this afternoon, and I'd be happy to answer any questions.

**GROENE:** Thank you. Any questions? I have one.

**PAULA KOHLES:** Um-hum.

**GROENE:** Do you get a lump sum of money and then you prorate it to the students?

**PAULA KOHLES:** Correct, yes.--

**GROENE:** That's what--

**PAULA KOHLES:** Each school was allocated a number of, of-- a certain set amount of money.

**GROENE:** So that while the variance here at the University of Nebraska averages \$2,000, state colleges \$1,100, and I'm assuming you're under private career schools--

**PAULA KOHLES:** Correct.

**GROENE:** -- or are you under independent colleges?

**PAULA KOHLES:** Independent colleges.

**GROENE:** And you only average \$1,100.

**PAULA KOHLES:** Right, because we're trying to spread the money out to more students.

**GROENE:** But, it seems like the university gets a bigger appropriation and, and because they can get more per student, maybe we ought to look at that. Thank you.

**PAULA KOHLES:** That would, that would be outstanding.

**GROENE:** Senator Pansing Brooks, I'm sorry.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

**PANSING BROOKS:** Thank you. So are you saying that the university gets more because they give more per student than--

**PAULA KOHLES:** Well, they currently enroll more-- it's a formula based upon the number of Pell eligible students that-- because it--

**PANSING BROOKS:** Yes, but it isn't necessarily more per student at the university. Is that correct? I thought that's what Senator Groene just said, and you said, yes.

**PAULA KOHLES:** Well, their average awards is more per student. Correct.

**PANSING BROOKS:** More what?

**PAULA KOHLES:** The dollar amount that they're giving to their students is more than at the private schools, because--

**PANSING BROOKS:** But they get, they get a certain amount pro rata because of the number of students they have. Is that correct?

**PAULA KOHLES:** Correct, yes.

**PANSING BROOKS:** So it's, it's proration-- it's, it's pro rata share according to how many students are at each school.

**PAULA KOHLES:** Each school, correct.

**PANSING BROOKS:** So looking at the huge lump sum that Nebraska gets is because of the number of students that are, are eligible at Nebraska versus the numbers at the smaller schools.

**PAULA KOHLES:** Correct, yes.

**PANSING BROOKS:** OK, thank you.

**PAULA KOHLES:** Um-hum.

**PANSING BROOKS:** Just wanted to clarify that.

**PAULA KOHLES:** But, we would certainly welcome an, an increase to the funding.

**PANSING BROOKS:** I agree. I'm, I'm happy to increase the funding for everybody.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

**PAULA KOHLES:** Everybody. Exactly.

**GROENE:** To clarify,--

**PAULA KOHLES:** Yeah.

**GROENE:** --they have more students, but only 37 percent of the eligible receive them-- receive the grants. And the average, when it's prorated, it's \$2,000 per student who receives it. The independent colleges have a 64.7 percent eligibility who receive it, so they, they have more of those who are available who they try to make sure they get their share and it averages \$1,100 per student.

**PAULA KOHLES:** Yeah.

**GROENE:** So, thank you.

**PAULA KOHLES:** Um-hum, thank you.

**BLAIR MacDONALD:** Chairman Groene and members of the Education Committee. My name is Blair MacDonald, spelled, B-l-a-i-r M-a-c-D-o-n-a-l-d. I am here on behalf of the Council of Independent Nebraska Colleges, or CINC, in support of LB104. One of the pages is passing out just some background information on our member institutions. CINC is comprised of the 13 independent privately operated nonprofit colleges and universities located in Nebraska. It was organized and is operated on a not-for-profit basis and exclusively for charitable, religious, educational, and scientific purposes. We would like to thank, Senator Linehan, for introducing LB104 to extend the lottery dollars in the Nebraska Opportunity Grant funding. This funding is critical to provide scholarships to our students. Nebraska's independent colleges and universities educate nearly 35,000 students annually. In 2017, 22,000 of those students resided in Nebraska before matriculating to one of our schools. Many of those students qualify for and utilize nonfunding. And last year, award-- we awarded our-- over 30 percent of the state's bachelor's degrees. In fiscal year 2017-18, 3,003 of recipients of our member institutions received NOG grants and for a total awarded of \$3.4 million. In 2018, the CINC member institutions conducted an economic impact study which demo-- demonstrated that as many states are experiencing brain drain, as Senator Linehan mentioned earlier. As graduates choose to move out of state after achieving degrees, our independent colleges are contributing to Nebraska's brain gain. More of our graduating students with degrees in acute or-- more of our

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

students are choosing to stay in Nebraska after graduation. We are also graduating students with degrees in acute shortage areas, over 50 percent of the health care professional's degrees, over 45 percent of business graduates, and over 35 percent of the teacher education degrees in the state. By continuing to fund Nebraska Opportunity Grants through state, state lottery revenues, we can continue to give Nebraska students the best chance to graduate and stay in Nebraska. The Council of Independent Colleges encourages you to, please, advance LB104.

**GROENE:** Thank you. Any questions? Thank you.

**BLAIR MacDONALD:** Thank you.

**GROENE:** Any more proponents? Opponents? Neutral? We received no, no letters for proponents, no opponents, and no neutral. So that-- Senator Linehan, do you wish to close on LB104?

**LINEHAN:** I'm gonna be quick. Just thank you for listening. If you have any questions, I'm happy to answer them.

**GROENE:** Thank you.

**LINEHAN:** Thank you.

**GROENE:** LB650 by Senator Wayne.

**WAYNE:** Good afternoon, Chairman Groene and members of the Education Committee. First, I want to say, I support LB104. I think it's a great bill that, that was just before us and you guys should vote it out of committee. My name is Justin Wayne, J-u-s-t-i-n W-a-y-n-e, and I represent Legislative District 13, which is north Omaha, northeast Douglas County. LB650 is an attempt to increase academic opportunities for underserved students, and specifically to help bring more educators from underserved populations or underserved populations to the teaching field. It was originally brought as a University of Kearney. I'm telling you now, I am open to an amendment. I just haven't drafted it to allow all postsecondary schools to participate and to turn over how it is ran to the Nebraska Coordinating Commission. It's a simple bill. I won't go through all of the line by lines of what it does, although I have it all here and can answer any questions. We have a teacher shortage. We have to figure out as we look through education that there are students and teachers-- sorry, teachers who look more like the students they represent. And this is

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

just one attempt to make sure that we can do that. With that, I'll answer any questions.

**GROENE:** Questions? Senator Walz.

**WALZ:** I guess, I would like a little bit more clarification on--

**WAYNE:** OK, what do you want to know?

**WALZ:** The line by line.

**WAYNE:** OK. It's a six-week program that will include the following areas: accelerated learning in English literature, math, science, social studies, and foreign language. And this is mainly for students who have a 2.0 GPA or higher who qualifies for free or reduced lunch and is enrolled in one or more college preparatory courses in the upcoming year. It would start in 8th grade and be completed by 11th grade. And what we're trying to do is expose them to teaching, and what it is. And then at the end of that, if they're in this type of program, they could eventually go on to college and we would help them with some scholarship dollars. In return, they would go back to-- not go back to, but stay in Nebraska and teach.

**WALZ:** So it doesn't really necessarily reduce the number of hours you would have to have to get your teaching certificate.

**WAYNE:** No. And if there's some clarification in the bill that we need to have, no. The point was when we initially brought this, and actually this was initially brought by a different state senator when I was on the school board, there was a young man-- young individual who went to Kearney and wanted to be a teacher. And former, Senator Kristensen, helped to get this individual into Kearney and at the end of the day he got out of the neighborhood he was in and he got around different folks who were positive and doing positive things and went on to become a teacher at Omaha Public Schools. And since I did not ask him, I would say his name, that's why I didn't say his name. But, he came from a very interesting background in North Omaha. And so it was-- it just happened to be that I was a school board president and that I knew a couple of state senators and I knew former Kristen-- Senator Kristensen. We just got him linked up to UNK, and I thought how many other people would like to do this. And we started surveying kids in my former youth program and they thought if I can get out of neighborhood, see something new, it would be great. And so the first year that bill was introduced, we ran across the same problem we ran

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

across today which is UNO, UNL, Creighton, and other postsecondary institutions want to be a part of it. And I'm open to that, but the initial drafting [INAUDIBLE] the same on accident was the goal was to get them out of their neighborhood, into a new environment, and let them see the world in a different light.

**GROENE:** Any other questions? Senator Pansing Brooks.

**PANSING BROOKS:** Thank you for coming, Mr.-- Senator Wayne. So is this, is this like Teach for America, except you're changing it to Teach for Nebraska?

**WAYNE:** I don't have any reference to Teach for America, except for that I've heard of it. We've never used any teachers when I was in OPS, I think, from there. No, this is just a simple way to take kids who are from at, at-risk backgrounds, get them employed or interested in teaching, and hopefully go back and teach in the schools that they're from.

**PANSING BROOKS:** OK, so can you walk me through what happens-- somebody graduates from high school and then what?

**WAYNE:** They would go to college. So the way the current bill is written, they would go to Kearney or UNL. I would expand it to anywhere who does teaching, and we would offer them some dollars to go there in exchange. With the idea that they would stay in Nebraska and teach at a local school district. So my thought originally was Omaha kids will go somewhere and learn education and come back and teach in Omaha. There is no other agenda other than to create more teachers, but more importantly create a diverse work field. Here's, here's the reality, in Omaha, Nebraska, our first-year teachers are not from our neighborhood. And it's a culture shock, because just a six-month tour at some school does not necessarily give you the reality of working in an inner-city school dealing with inner-city problems. I think that's part of the reason we have burnout is because teachers aren't really prepared for what happens in an inner-city school. But, I think, that can be lessened if you have people from the neighborhood teaching in those schools.

**GROENE:** Are you done, Senator Pansing Brooks?

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

**PANSING BROOKS:** And, and so-- I'm sorry, I'm just looking at the-- so you're talking about \$1 million per each fiscal year in 20-- 1920 [SIC] and 2021?

**WAYNE:** Yes. And, I mean, I'm negotiable on any of them. I'm negotiable on one kid being able to go through a program similar to this and go back and teach in their neighborhood.

**PANSING BROOKS:** OK, thank you, Senator Wayne.

**GROENE:** Senator Linehan.

**LINEHAN:** Thank you, Chairman Groene. Do you know the percentage of people of color who are teaching in OPS right now?

**WAYNE:** I used to know that, and it was less than 10 percent. It was a lot less than that actually, actual teachers. And so in OPS, we started the para called Career Ladders, para to get your teaching certificate. You take classes while you still work there trying to get more people from those backgrounds.

**LINEHAN:** But, it's off kilter with the students' population.

**WAYNE:** Completely off, completely off kilter. We used to-- Omaha Public Schools used to fly down to historically black colleges and recruit in the 70s and 80s. And that's how Omaha got 80 percent of their principals from '90 to when I graduated-- '90 to 2005, you look at the elementary principals, most of them were from Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana. We quit doing that particularly around the time that the state Legislature put on the ballot the affirmative action ban. OPS and other institutions did not want to be questioned on whether they were spending dollars to recruit a specific race. As a result, we lost a lot of our minority teachers.

**GROENE:** Any other questions?

**LINEHAN:** Yeah, I'm-- I've got one-- I mean, so does this legislation-- is it kind of a program where if you-- if we help-- the state help pays for their college education then they are mandated-- they have to go back to the school for five years or is it more?

**WAYNE:** I would like that-- I would like-- not necessarily mandated to go back to a particular neighborhood, but I think it's important that if they come from a disad-- disadvantaged background or underserved

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

background that we-- they have some giveback program since we paid for their education.

**LINEHAN:** OK, thank you, Senator Wayne.

**PANSING BROOKS:** I'm still confused, sorry.

**GROENE:** Senator Pansing Brooks.

**PANSING BROOKS:** So I thought-- because this says that you've completed eighth grade or grade eleven at the end of the school year immediately preceding participation in the program.

**WAYNE:** Correct. So this--

**PANSING BROOKS:** So that means it's not a high school graduate.

**WAYNE:** No. So that is the first phase of what I would like to do. The first phase of what I would like to do is have elementary-- or middle school to high school kids get exposure at the college level. I think the next step is a scholarship that is needed to make sure they go to school. Without the exposure, we can-- this goes from, Senator McDonnell, talking about trades, to teachers, to any industry, we have to expose them early. But, yes, it would start in high school and then the scholarship institution would be there. As you'll read later on, there would be scholarships to help out later. And if that's not clear, again this is an old bill, I-- we just recopied it and we saw some mistakes. We're willing to make those amendments.

**PANSING BROOKS:** Thank you.

**GROENE:** Senator Kolowski.

**KOLOWSKI:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Senator Wayne, the a-- in the past we had the Future Teachers Association, FTA, that was working at, at different levels where students before college would be active in their high schools or middle schools, junior high. As far as the desire to become a teacher for the future, that's changed and it's now called, through the work of Phi Delta Kappa, it's called Educators Rising. And that's a national program that is expanding rapidly. And they have tremendous results that they're sharing around the country, and this would fit nicely with your concept of the early participation that those students would have been in high school or middle school.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

**WAYNE:** I, I agree with you wholeheartedly. This was, again, an attempt to get around some of the barriers we had with recruiting minority and underserved communities in the state of Nebraska, not just Omaha, in a, in a positive way to get around the race-- racial issue and gender issue to doing it from socio econec-- economic background. And I still think that's relevant today. And I think we have to figure out how do we recruit diverse. And I believe we invest in our own people and build up our own versus recruit from outside of the state sometimes works better.

**KOLOWSKI:** Absolutely.

**GROENE:** Any other questions? I'm confused because maybe I'm a dreamer or whatever, but I would think this is going on in our schools. Don't our schools tell kids the American dream is alive? Show up from school every day ten minutes earlier, pass a drug test, get at least a C average and you can do anything you want in this country, become a teacher. Don't we do that already?

**WAYNE:** I don't understand the question.

**GROENE:** Well, it sounds like these kids are lost-- they-- nobody's giving them direction. They're spending 13 years in our public schools. Nobody's telling them the American dream is alive, don't worry about being a straight A student, just show up do your best. If you're the B student or the C plus student, you go on to school, we got the opportunities. Nebraska Opportunity Grant Act, we got Pell money, somebody's not giving them the message that the American dream is alive and doesn't matter how poor you are. You're sitting in the same classroom with the rich kid and getting the same education in the public school. Why do we need this? I'm just, you know, my point.

**WAYNE:** It's the same reason we need exposure for trades, it's the same reason why in your county, in your, in your city you can't find welders. Many kids aren't exposed to that. So just saying that there's the American dream is not producing welders. You're gonna have to come up with welding programs or North Platte's gonna have bigger issues. I have to come up with teaching programs or Omaha's gonna have big issues.

**GROENE:** I'm kind of agreeing with you, but--

**WAYNE:** I know, we're agreeing.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

**GROENE:** --there's not welders in front of those kids every day, there's teachers setting an example about a career and what they can do every day.

**WAYNE:** Maybe, but you're not exposed to what all teachers mean. I mean, at the end of the day it took my sixth grade teacher to keep me going through some difficult times when my grandfather passed and those kind of things and so not everybody has the same teacher experience that I have. Let's not be confused, we have a dual education system in Omaha, Nebraska, and throughout the state. You have a one-education system full of resources, mentors, and great teachers. And we have other education system where there's not full of resources and, and they're struggling, and those students are struggling. You see the test scores more than I do. So there is a dual education system that this committee is in charge of fixing, and I just hope this is one option.

**GROENE:** Thank you. Any other questions? Senator Linehan.

**LINEHAN:** Thank you, Chairman Groene. I think what you're trying to do here, Senator Wayne, you're-- let me ask a question and see if I'm on the right track. You want these-- you're not having-- you want them to go to college and see what college is like when they're young enough to be exposed to.

**WAYNE:** Correct.

**LINEHAN:** So you-- you're talking about students who maybe have never been on a college campus, their parents didn't go to college, their big brother and sister, they didn't. They might be the only one in their family who's ever been on a college campus. So what you're saying is get them there, in the eighth grade, freshman, sophomore years because they can see another path. So that gets them-- so they actually graduate from high school.

**WAYNE:** Correct. Yes, I will, I will agree with that, and I'll take it one step further that you have the ability to impact lives as a teacher and not every student gets to see that. Sometimes you're sitting there teaching math or social studies or history, but they don't get to see the impact you have one-on-one with teachers or one-on-one with students. And this can expose them to that conversation, and that bigger picture of what our education system is supposed to be.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

**LINEHAN:** Thank you.

**GROENE:** Thank you. Thank you.

**WAYNE:** Oh.

**GROENE:** Proponents.

**MIKE BAUMGARTNER:** Good afternoon again, Chairman Groene and members of the committee. My name is Mike Baumgartner, M-i-k-e B-a-u-m-g-a-r-t-n-e-r. I'm the executive director of the Coordinating Commission for postsecondary education. I'm testifying this afternoon to support the goals and concepts of LB650 because I believe it could ultimately help Nebraska achieve its educational attainment goals and the social and economic benefits that come from high and equitable educational attainment. One of the Coordinating Commission's duties is to develop and keep current a comprehensive statewide plan for postsecondary education which we most recently updated in 2016. Among the areas we're required to access-- assess are demographic, social, and economic trends, and the needs of ethnic populations. We're also to recognize the role and relationship of elementary and secondary education and private postsecondary educational institutions and to plan. The problems LB650 seeks to address certainly fall into those areas. LB650 would address many of the statewide goals laid out in the comprehensive plan. For instance, Nebraska's institutions and policymakers will increase participation and success in postsecondary education particularly for low-income and underrepresented populations. Nebraska postsecondary institutions and policymakers will collaborate to ensure the lack of financial resources will not prevent students from accessing and completing postsecondary education in a timely manner without unreasonable debt. Nebraska will close historical educational achievement gaps between majority and underrepresented populations and be among the leading states in overall educational attainment. And postsecondary education will work effectively with elementary and secondary schools to improve teaching and learning at all levels, provide opportunities for early college enrollment, and ensure the college and career readiness of all high school graduates. In spite of these goals and the good work and efforts of our schools, colleges, universities, you as members of the Legislature, everybody in the state, Nebraska has achievement gaps at all levels of education. This shows up throughout the Commission's annual progress report to the Education Committee which you'll get in a couple of weeks. I did include one figure from it because it's pertinent to today's discussion and it's appendant to what I've handed

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

out. Low-income students from historically underrepresented groups score lower on measures of college preparation, graduate from high school at lower rates than non-low-income and white, non-Hispanic students, continue on to college at lower rates, persist in college at lower rates, and graduate from college at lower rates. At the end of the pipeline, the educational attainment of white Nebraskans is far greater than the attainment of African-American and Hispanic Nebraskans, Native-American Nebraskans and others. We've got to become more creative as a state in a nation including achievement gaps at all points in the pipeline including early in K-12 schools. According to the U.S. Department of Education, researches-- research has shown that having a teacher in the same race or ethnicity can have positive impacts on students' attitudes, motivation, and achievement. Minority teachers may have positive expectations for minority students' achievement more than non-minority teachers. In 2017-18, Nebraska's teaching work force was 95 percent white, non-Hispanic, 1 percent black, 3 percent Hispanic, half a percent Asian, two-tenths of a percent American-Indian, and half a percent two or more races. In 2016-17, Nebraska's postsecondary institutions awarded 12 bachelor's degrees in education fields to African-Americans, 61 to Hispanic students, 6 to Native-American students, and 1,110 to white, non-Hispanic students. As you know those figures are quite different from Nebraska's K-12 student population, which is 67 percent white, non-Hispanic, 19 percent Hispanic, 7 percent African-American, 1 percent American-Indian, 3 percent Asian, and 4 percent other. LB650 is a creative way to address our state's achievement gaps through diversification of the teaching work force. We do that through bolstering academic skills of underserved students in similar academies turning underserved students onto teaching careers and providing financial aid for them to become educators. I realize that the committee may consider this bill premature and may prefer to address the issues it raises in the future as it evaluates the use of lottery funds for educational purposes. But these issues must be addressed at some point. At that point, please be assured that the Coordinating Commission would be pleased to work with UNL, UNK, NDE, and all parties on successful implementation of a program like this. Thank you.

**GROENE:** Any questions? The Excellence in Teaching Cash Fund, how many individuals is that?

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

**MIKE BAUMGARTNER:** That is administered by NDE, and I don't have that in front of me, so I don't know.

**GROENE:** So my next question, you couldn't give me the ethnic breakdown of who's been receiving those scholarships?

**MIKE BAUMGARTNER:** I can't, no. I would, I would have to get those from NDE. They are not-- they are chosen on the basis of application. And I know enough to know that I should not continue talking about it.

**GROENE:** So you don't know if it's being expended now?

**MIKE BAUMGARTNER:** It is being expended. I have read the reports previous coming here, but I know my programs much, much, much better than I know NDE programs, and so I'm not comfortable talking about it.

**GROENE:** Which one of these programs do you [INAUDIBLE] Nebraska Opportunity Grant Fund, and which, which other ones?

**MIKE BAUMGARTNER:** Access College Early, the Community College Gap Assistance Fund. The ones that we administer, I know very well.

**GROENE:** All right. So maybe we'll have an opponent here about rating this eight percent.

**MIKE BAUMGARTNER:** It's very, very possible.

**GROENE:** All right, thank you. Any other questions?

**PANSING BROOKS:** I guess, I have a question.

**GROENE:** Senator Pansing Brooks.

**PANSING BROOKS:** Do you know if this is similar to-- thank you for coming today. Is this similar to Teach for America? Is that--

**MIKE BAUMGARTNER:** No, that's for college graduates who are going directly into the teaching field. That's not looking at students who are coming from high school and trying to, trying to encourage them into it.

**PANSING BROOKS:** OK, so these--

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

**MIKE BAUMGARTNER:** That's also Teach for America students from college who are not training as teachers [INAUDIBLE]. They're in other fields and then go on to become teachers.

**PANSING BROOKS:** OK. So is-- this is like an internship for young people? Or--

**MIKE BAUMGARTNER:** No,--

**PANSING BROOKS:** OK.

**MIKE BAUMGARTNER:** -- not as I understand it. I did not author the bill, but it's the program that would enhance the opportunities through, through summer experiences as Senator Wayne had mentioned at the college campuses and get them interested and understand-- have a better understanding what it takes to become a teacher before they make that selection and go into college and, and pursue that.

**PANSING BROOKS:** OK, great. Thank you very much.

**GROENE:** Do you know if there's any programs out there, which Senator Wayne has hit on something, where you've lived in your neighborhood all your life, you go to public school, and you don't know there's a big world out there. You don't know. I grew up on a farm like that. But anyway-- that these kids have a summer program where they can go to UNO and spend-- like a summer camp, an educational summer camp?

**MIKE BAUMGARTNER:** There are programs like TRIO.

**GROENE:** What's it called?

**MIKE BAUMGARTNER:** The TRIO. It's a, it's a program for low-income students. It's a federally funded program and it, it works for students-- works with students from high school up through their college, college years. Upward Bound TRIO--

**GROENE:** Does it-- is it operate in Nebraska?

**MIKE BAUMGARTNER:** Yes, there are TRIO programs in Nebraska.

**GROENE:** So do you know how many students take part in that?

**MIKE BAUMGARTNER:** I don't, no. That's a, that's a campus-based program funded by the U.S. Department of Education.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

**GROENE:** So the campus goes out into the schools and--

**MIKE BAUMGARTNER:** Yes.

**GROENE:** --invite certain kids into the program. All right, thank you.

**MIKE BAUMGARTNER:** Yeah, yeah, they have to meet income qualifications.

**GROENE:** Oh, they do.

**MIKE BAUMGARTNER:** Yeah.

**GROENE:** Thank you. Any other questions? Any other proponents?  
Opponents? Go ahead, light's on.

**CINDY COPICH:** Hi. My name is Cindy Copich, C-i-n-d-y C-o-p-i-c-h,  
teaching and learning specialist with the Nebraska State Education  
Association. I am offering this letter from NSEA in opposition to  
LB650. I am not delivering verbal testimony today, other than the  
letter. And I would ask that if you have any questions, I'd be happy  
to take those back to NSEA to get those answered. Thank you.

**GROENE:** Senator Linehan.

**CINDY COPICH:** Yes.

**LINEHAN:** The NSEA is concerned about this isn't it though? About lack  
of minority teachers. I mean, I thought that was one of your big  
drives this year.

**CINDY COPICH:** We, we actually support Ed Rising programs that were  
referred to by Senator Kolowski, yes.

**LINEHAN:** But those programs, do they specifically reach out to  
minorities?

**CINDY COPICH:** They do.

**LINEHAN:** Have they always?

**CINDY COPICH:** I can't answer that, but I know it's a big effort in,  
in--

**LINEHAN:** In the last year.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

**CINDY COPICH:** --partnership with our organization probably before the last year.

**LINEHAN:** So your concern with this bill is it takes money away from teachers who already have degrees?

**CINDY COPICH:** I'm just going to refer to the letter. If you read the second paragraph, I think, that sums it up. Basically, there are already two programs that are funded for scholarships, and NSEA believes that this would divert funds from those scholarship programs.

**LINEHAN:** But these are, these are teachers-- don't these funds go to teachers that already have degrees?

**CINDY COPICH:** I can't answer that question for you.

**LINEHAN:** Well, at the-- it's kind of an important question. Maybe you can get me the answer.

**CINDY COPICH:** Sure.

**LINEHAN:** Thank you.

**GROENE:** Question. I thought the Excellence in Teaching Cash Fund was for students who in, in the colleges who want to pursue teaching. I believe that's what it is. But-- so apparently you wouldn't know, I'd have to get to the-- in Department of Education-- if they track who received these funds and how many of them are in teaching five years later?

**CINDY COPICH:** That would be my understanding that they would track that.

**GROENE:** All right, thank you. So that would be the place to go.

**CINDY COPICH:** I would think so.

**GROENE:** All right, thank you. Any other questions?

**CINDY COPICH:** Thank you.

**JODI KUPPER:** Good afternoon, again. My name is Jodi Kupper, J-o-d-i K-u-p-p-e-r. I'm vice chancellor for Academic Planning and Partnerships at the Nebraska College System, and here today to testify in opposition of LB650 which creates the Teach for Nebraska Program Act. The Nebraska state colleges have a rich and long history of

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

preparing educators who in turn serve as PK teachers-- PK-12 teachers across the state of Nebraska and beyond. Over the past decade a significant number of these candidates have been financially supported through the current attracting excellence to teaching and enhancing excellence to teaching programs which were created and implemented in 2006. These programs are funded through the Nebraska Education Improvement Fund and provide scholarships to teacher candidates who are completing endorsement programs targeted to areas, areas of need for educators across the state per Nebraska Department of Education. Annual funding allocations are equitably distributed based on the number of teacher education candidates who graduated from that institution the prior year. These scholarships include a loan forgiveness assurance of one year of scholarship funding for every year that the individual teaches in a Nebraska school after his or her graduation or two years of scholarship funding forgiveness for every year that they teach in a high-need Nebraska school district. During the past three years the average total annual, annual allocation of attracting and enhancing excellence program funding to Nebraska institutions was just under \$1.5 million. Of those funds, the state college students majoring in teacher education received an average of 21.6 or \$113,483 of the attracting excellence scholarship funding awarded statewide and 18.4 or \$170,945 of the enhancing excellence scholarship funding. This average annual funding of almost \$285,000 each year is a significant amount of financial support currently being provided by these two programs to an average of 150 Nebraska state college students each year in the field of education. The passing of LB650 would create the Teach for Nebraska Program Act also funded through the Nebraska Education Improvement Fund. Based on the current language of this bill, the creation of this new program would divert funds from the attracting and enhancing excellence programs by \$1 million for the first two years to support summer programs held at UNO and UNK and then a decrease of funding of \$500,000 for the remaining years of the program to fund scholarships for students who have participated in these camps. While the initial fiscal note that we submitted indicated an expected decrease of \$100,000 in annual funding for teacher education candidates at the state colleges, discussions with Nebraska Department of Ed and continuing analysis of the fiscal impact of LB650 for just the first two years indicate that should this bill pass and the Teach for Nebraska program be created, teacher candidates attending Nebraska state colleges will lose access to approximately \$195,000 in annual funding for which they can apply as part of the existing attracting and enhancing excellence programs. During years three and beyond when the \$5,000-- 100-- \$500,000 is

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

allocated for scholarships, it is difficult to identify the potential impact to our teacher education candidates. While the existing attracting and enhancing excellence programs allocate funding based on the percentage of teacher education graduates that each institution produced the year prior, this funding has no such formula. It only requires eligible students to have participated in the summer program and enroll in the Teacher Education Program in Nebraska. Therefore, funding is awarded to and follows the student rather than is allocated to a specific institution. Over the past decade the attracting and enhancing excellence programs have successfully placed teachers across the state following graduation and specifically in high-need areas in rural school districts served by the NSCS. The allowance of loan forgiveness to graduates who remain in Nebraska to teach is a strong incentive to keep these teachers in our state. While we cannot predict the extent to which the loss of these funds will prevent a student from beginning or continuing their postsecondary education, the funding decreases [INAUDIBLE] represent a significant amount of financial support, support that will no longer be available to us. We appreciate the planning and foresight that went into the proposal and fully support the exploration of funding opportunities for low-income students across the state who wish to become educators. However, we find ourselves in a difficult position because we cannot fully support the proposal if it means the potential loss of a dedicated funding stream for the attracting and enhancing excellence programs which in turn provides critical financial support for teacher candidates at our state colleges. As a result, the NSCS opposes LB650 and the creation of the Teach for Nebraska Program Act if this dedicated funding source is to be used. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I'd be happy to answer any questions.

**GROENE:** Any questions? Senator Linehan.

**LINEHAN:** Thank you, Chairman Groene. So in the programs-- you were here when Mr. Baumgartner spoke.

**JODI KUPPER:** Yes.

**LINEHAN:** So what-- how are those programs addressing the fact that we get so few educators from-- that represent minority populations?

**JODI KUPPER:** At this point the attracted-- attracting and enhancing programs do not specify a certain ethnicity. They go to students who are in need and can demonstrate that they are preparing to be teachers in high-need areas as identified by Nebraska Department of Education:

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

science teachers; math teachers; special educators; music teachers. It has to be one of those high- need fields identified for teacher shortage-- shortages that provide eligibility for that candidate to be awarded the funds.

**LINEHAN:** So it doesn't do anything to address the fact that we are very short on teachers of color?

**JODI KUPPER:** It does not directly. It, it does not have that as part of the eligibility criteria.

**LINEHAN:** Thank you very much.

**GROENE:** Any questions? So you said, there's three or four different programs within this. They'd get scholarship money as they're going to school?

**JODI KUPPER:** The attracting excellence is for undergraduate students who are preparing and completing their bachelor's degree program for initial certification. The enhancing excellence is for students who are completing a master's degree program to enhance their skills while serving as teachers in a Nebraska school.

**GROENE:** So what, what-- you said something earlier about in high-need schools or a--

**JODI KUPPER:** The loan forgiveness.

**GROENE:** That's another program?

**JODI KUPPER:** No. As part of both of these programs there's an annual allocation of scholarship funding and that is forgiven if that individual after completing whatever degree they are working toward commit to teaching in a Nebraska school. It's a one year to one year forgiveness for any teacher in Nebraska. It's a two-year scholarship to one year of teaching forgiveness if they're teaching in a high-needs school district.

**GROENE:** So these individuals probably didn't get the tuition part of this earlier or are they are the same individuals?

**JODI KUPPER:** Would you rephrase that, please?

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

**GROENE:** Well, 104 students plus \$8,000 annually for other educational costs for 104 students at UNK and 24 and UNO. I'm reading NSEA--

**JODI KUPPER:** Oh, OK.

**GROENE:** --letter. My point is, they get, they get a loan,--

**JODI KUPPER:** Yes.

**GROENE:** --and if they don't stay in teaching-- decide not to be a teacher, they'd have to pay it back.

**JODI KUPPER:** That-- if they do not teach in Nebraska they have to pay it back.

**GROENE:** Or, or just decide--

**JODI KUPPER:** They could go to South Dakota and then they will have to repay.

**GROENE:** Or they could go to business college all of a sudden their senior year or drop out.

**JODI KUPPER:** Sure, sure. Yes.

**GROENE:** They have to repay the loan?

**JODI KUPPER:** If they are not, yes. They have to repay unless they can get it forgiven through teaching through Nebraska which the Nebraska Department of Education follows. And if you don't have access, I can send you a link to the-- their annual report. That Nebraska Department--

**GROENE:** You can do that?

**JODI KUPPER:** --of Education puts together that has-- let's just say, a wealth of information.

**GROENE:** We will be visiting-- this committee will be revisiting the lottery this next year.

**JODI KUPPER:** OK. I'd be happy to send that link.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

**GROENE:** And a-- how about adding in here that if they will go to a high-needs rural school, because they have a shortage? They can't find science teachers. They can't find music teachers to move out.

**JODI KUPPER:** Right now there's nothing that says that. Of course, our belief is that since we're, we're in rural communities that many of the students come to us and want to go back to rural communities, which is why, especially for us, we believe these scholarships provide that financial support and ensure--

**GROENE:** But the two-year forgiveness, not enough for coming back. They're staying in Kearney and Lincoln and Omaha. Once you take our kids, you seem to keep them.

**JODI KUPPER:** OK.

**GROENE:** But, anyway-- that's just an idea. Thank you.

**JODI KUPPER:** I would love to see that.

**LINEHAN:** Quick question.

**GROENE:** Yes, Senator Linehan.

**LINEHAN:** What's the defin-- thank you, Chairman Groene,-- the definition-- you said if they go to a high- needs school or a-- what, what was the def-- what was the term?

**JODI KUPPER:** High-needs school is how Nebraska Department of Education identifies the loan forgiveness.

**LINEHAN:** Do you know what the definition of that is?

**JODI KUPPER:** I believe it ties into both ethnicity and low-income students. So it might be predominantly some of those urban schools but not necessarily. We have some rural school districts who identify that way because of the poverty.

**LINEHAN:** [INAUDIBLE] Department of Education defines it.

**JODI KUPPER:** They do, they do. We-- all we-- all the institutions do is, is receive the allocated funds, accept the applications from the teacher candidates who would like to apply, process them and then send them to the Nebraska Department of Education who ultimately approves.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

**LINEHAN:** Thank you.

**GROENE:** That report would have those schools that qualify-- the school districts that qualify?

**JODI KUPPER:** I believe so. I know that this is on actually the people who receive the scholarships so you can tell who went to a high-needs school. I don't know if the definition is in there, but it might be.

**GROENE:** Or the school districts that qualify as a high-needs school?

**JODI KUPPER:** If they're not there, they're on the, the Web site that oversees or summarizes these programs.

**GROENE:** Thank you. Any other questions? Thank you.

**JODI KUPPER:** Thank you.

**GROENE:** Any other opponents? Neutral? We received, we received one letter of proponent from the Nebraska Association of School Boards. Opponents, none. Neutral, none. Senator Wayne would you like to close on LB650?

**WAYNE:** Sure. This is 100 percent why I chose not to be on the Education Committee, because I get emotional about this. If the programs are working, then why does OPS have less than 20 percent teachers of minority, not African-American, minority. Yet, 73 percent of the population is minority.

**GROENE:** Seventy-three.

**WAYNE:** Seventy-three percent. There is a failure in our system-- whatever programs are out there. And when you talk about loan forgiveness, let me give the historical context of why that doesn't work. If you are charged with a weed charge, you can't get a federal loan for education. There are many people who are disproportionately don't come from credit backgrounds, don't have an understanding to financial literacy, and when they hear loan for a job they're not thinking about 10 to 15 years of forgiveness or five years of forgiveness to apply to be a teacher. I can't solve that overnight. That is the historical context we have to deal with. I had four minority teachers in my entire public education: Mr. Browder, 6th grade; 7th grade, Ms. Kirksey; 8th grade, Mrs. Temple; and through 9th through 10th grade, I had Sergeant York, when I was in ROTC. There is a problem. The number one factor in determining the student's success

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

is the teacher. And that triples when you have somebody who can understand and relate to them from their background. And today for any organization to come up and say we're a little afraid we're going to take some money from us to go after some teachers in key areas is a problem for me. I wasn't planning on making this a huge deal today, but those who know me well, know I don't do well with this. We need to solve this problem. And now this is raised up to really high on my priority list. Whether it's this program or whether it's taking money from whatever program to make sure we are recruiting people from underserved population-- underserved populations and giving them an opportunity to teach. Yeah, I'm a little frustrated. Because one, I didn't know about any opposition. We could have sat down and talked about them. I'm not on Appropriations. We could look at all these different cash funds and figure it out. But to sit here and say that everything is working fine, when the department gives me a list of over 12 fields that aren't being currently filled, and they're short teachers. Don't tell me everything is fine. And when I look at the public institutions that I represent and I don't see people who look like me in there, don't tell me everything is fine. We're gonna have more conversations about this on the floor. And I'm at a point where I don't do promotions-- but now I'm that serious, we're gonna have real conversations about what our work force and teachers look like and how we get there. Because that's unacceptable to come here and say everything is fine, when I have kids who are hopeless in my community. I'll submit with that.

**GROENE:** Thank you, Senator.

**KOLOWSKI:** Question.

**GROENE:** Any-- do you want to take questions or are you--

**WAYNE:** Sure.

**GROENE:** Senator Kolowski.

**KOLOWSKI:** Just a-- have you had contact with the new superintendent and where she's coming from as far as this?

**WAYNE:** Yes. Yes, this is an issue. They are looking at-- from my conversations with her and President Snow, they are looking at recruiting more at the HBCUs and other institutions. They're looking at-- they started teaching programs inside of Omaha Public Schools at the high school level. And let me just be clear on how this program is

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 4, 2019

designed to work, 8th grade through 11th grade you attend a summer program. After you complete the summer program, you are eligible for a scholarship to go to college. After that, you are going back to school and are going to teach in a, in a-- hopefully, a school in which you came from or a neighborhood which you came from, but within a low-income area. That's how the program's designed. But, yes, the superintendent and President Snow are working to recruit. But, we are bound still by our state constitution that makes that very difficult.

**KOLOWSKI:** There are very close ties with money sources in Omaha that could be used. And I hope they would be used in the future as far as some of the dreams that you're sharing with us that would be very appropriate, I think, as far as some of the directions for the future.

**WAYNE:** I agree. Totally agree.

**GROENE:** Senator Pansing Brooks.

**PANSING BROOKS:** Thank you for coming and bringing this. What, what about the kids-- what-- so the kids get chosen for the scholarship-- what if those kids don't want to return to that community? Is it only for if they return to the community?

**WAYNE:** Well, it would be returned to a high-poverty, high, high-needs area. So I guess technically that could be rural. But it's just like the loan forgiveness, that's the same argument there that we currently have is what if they don't want to go back to one of those areas. Then they wouldn't qualify. They would have to-- I didn't put in a claw back provision, but I guess I could. That wasn't my intent. My intent's to get people engaged in schools and in their neighborhoods and make a difference in the community that they're from.

**PANSING BROOKS:** We had a bill like that today on the floor getting people engaged and welcoming them to Nebraska and making sure we aren't precipitously cutting off our work force. So, thank you.

**WAYNE:** Thank you.

**GROENE:** Any other questions? Thank you, Senator Wayne.

**WAYNE:** Thank you.

**GROENE:** That will close the hearings-- ends the hearings for the day.