LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA ONE HUNDRED FIFTH LEGISLATURE SECOND SESSION

LEGISLATIVE BILL 779

Introduced by Groene, 42. Read first time January 03, 2018 Committee: Education

1	A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to learning communities; to amend sections
2	79-1014 and 79-2118, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, sections
3	79-1013, 79-2104, and 79-2104.02, Revised Statutes Cumulative
4	Supplement, 2016, and section 77-3442, Revised Statutes Supplement,
5	2017; to remove a limitation on the use of a levy; to change poverty
6	and limited English proficiency plan approval requirements; to
7	change a reporting deadline; to change provisions relating to
8	diversity plans; to harmonize provisions; and to repeal the original
9	sections.

10 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

Section 1. Section 77-3442, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2017, is
 amended to read:

3 77-3442 (1) Property tax levies for the support of local governments
4 for fiscal years beginning on or after July 1, 1998, shall be limited to
5 the amounts set forth in this section except as provided in section
6 77-3444.

7 (2)(a) Except as provided in subdivisions (2)(b) and (2)(e) of this 8 section, school districts and multiple-district school systems may levy a 9 maximum levy of one dollar and five cents per one hundred dollars of 10 taxable valuation of property subject to the levy.

(b) For each fiscal year prior to fiscal year 2017-18, learning communities may levy a maximum levy for the general fund budgets of member school districts of ninety-five cents per one hundred dollars of taxable valuation of property subject to the levy. The proceeds from the levy pursuant to this subdivision shall be distributed pursuant to section 79-1073.

(c) Except as provided in subdivision (2)(e) of this section, for 17 each fiscal year prior to fiscal year 2017-18, school districts that are 18 members of learning communities may levy for purposes of such districts' 19 general fund budget and special building funds a maximum combined levy of 20 the difference of one dollar and five cents on each one hundred dollars 21 of taxable property subject to the levy minus the learning community levy 22 23 pursuant to subdivision (2)(b) of this section for such learning 24 community.

(d) Excluded from the limitations in subdivisions (2)(a) and (2)(c) of this section are (i) amounts levied to pay for current and future sums agreed to be paid by a school district to certificated employees in exchange for a voluntary termination of employment occurring prior to September 1, 2017, (ii) amounts levied by a school district otherwise at the maximum levy pursuant to subdivision (2)(a) of this section to pay for current and future qualified voluntary termination incentives for

-2-

1 certificated teachers pursuant to subsection (3) of section 79-8,142 that 2 are not otherwise included in an exclusion pursuant to subdivision (2)(d) of this section, (iii) amounts levied by a school district otherwise at 3 the maximum levy pursuant to subdivision (2)(a) of this section to pay 4 for seventy-five percent of the current and future sums agreed to be paid 5 to certificated employees in exchange for a voluntary termination of 6 employment occurring between September 1, 2017, and August 31, 2018, as a 7 8 result of a collective-bargaining agreement in force and effect on 9 September 1, 2017, that are not otherwise included in an exclusion pursuant to subdivision (2)(d) of this section, (iv) amounts levied by a 10 school district otherwise at the maximum levy pursuant to subdivision (2) 11 (a) of this section to pay for fifty percent of the current and future 12 13 sums agreed to be paid to certificated employees in exchange for a voluntary termination of employment occurring between September 1, 2018, 14 and August 31, 2019, as a result of a collective-bargaining agreement in 15 force and effect on September 1, 2017, that are not otherwise included in 16 17 an exclusion pursuant to subdivision (2)(d) of this section, (v) amounts levied by a school district otherwise at the maximum levy pursuant to 18 subdivision (2)(a) of this section to pay for twenty-five percent of the 19 current and future sums agreed to be paid to certificated employees in 20 exchange for a voluntary termination of employment occurring between 21 September 1, 2019, and August 31, 2020, as a result of a collective-22 bargaining agreement in force and effect on September 1, 2017, that are 23 24 not otherwise included in an exclusion pursuant to subdivision (2)(d) of this section, (vi) amounts levied in compliance with sections 79-10,110 25 and 79-10,110.02, and (vii) amounts levied to pay for special building 26 funds and sinking funds established for projects commenced prior to April 27 1, 1996, for construction, expansion, or alteration of school district 28 buildings. For purposes of this subsection, commenced means any action 29 taken by the school board on the record which commits the board to expend 30 31 district funds in planning, constructing, or carrying out the project.

-3-

1 (e) Federal aid school districts may exceed the maximum levy prescribed by subdivision (2)(a) or (2)(c) of this section only to the 2 extent necessary to qualify to receive federal aid pursuant to Title VIII 3 4 of Public Law 103-382, as such title existed on September 1, 2001. For purposes of this subdivision, federal aid school district means any 5 6 school district which receives ten percent or more of the revenue for its 7 general fund budget from federal government sources pursuant to Title 8 VIII of Public Law 103-382, as such title existed on September 1, 2001.

9 (f) For each fiscal year, learning communities may levy a maximum 10 levy of one-half cent on each one hundred dollars of taxable property 11 subject to the levy for elementary learning center facility leases, for 12 remodeling of leased elementary learning center facilities, and for up to 13 fifty percent of the estimated cost for focus school or program capital 14 projects approved by the learning community coordinating council pursuant 15 to section 79-2111.

16 (g) For each fiscal year, learning communities may levy a maximum levy of one and one-half cents on each one hundred dollars of taxable 17 property subject to the levy for early childhood education programs for 18 children in poverty, for elementary learning center employees, for 19 contracts with other entities or individuals who are not employees of the 20 learning community for elementary learning center programs and services, 21 and for pilot projects, except that no more than ten percent of such levy 22 23 may be used for elementary learning center employees.

(3) For each fiscal year, community college areas may levy the 24 levies provided in subdivisions (2)(a) through (c) of section 85-1517, in 25 accordance with the provisions of such subdivisions. A community college 26 area may exceed the levy provided in subdivision (2)(b) of section 27 85-1517 by the amount necessary to retire general obligation bonds 28 assumed by the community college area or issued pursuant to section 29 85-1515 according to the terms of such bonds or for any obligation 30 31 pursuant to section 85-1535 entered into prior to January 1, 1997.

- 4 -

(4)(a) Natural resources districts may levy a maximum levy of four
 and one-half cents per one hundred dollars of taxable valuation of
 property subject to the levy.

(b) Natural resources districts shall also have the power and 4 authority to levy a tax equal to the dollar amount by which their 5 restricted funds budgeted to administer and implement ground water 6 7 management activities and integrated management activities under the 8 Nebraska Ground Water Management and Protection Act exceed their 9 restricted funds budgeted to administer and implement ground water management activities and integrated management activities for FY2003-04, 10 not to exceed one cent on each one hundred dollars of taxable valuation 11 annually on all of the taxable property within the district. 12

13 (c) In addition, natural resources districts located in a river subbasin, or reach that has been determined to be fully 14 basin, appropriated pursuant to section 46-714 or designated as overappropriated 15 16 pursuant to section 46-713 by the Department of Natural Resources shall 17 also have the power and authority to levy a tax equal to the dollar amount by which their restricted funds budgeted to administer and 18 19 implement ground water management activities and integrated management activities under the Nebraska Ground Water Management and Protection Act 20 exceed their restricted funds budgeted to administer and implement ground 21 water management activities and integrated management activities for 22 FY2005-06, not to exceed three cents on each one hundred dollars of 23 taxable valuation on all of the taxable property within the district for 24 25 fiscal year 2006-07 and each fiscal year thereafter through fiscal year 2017-18. 26

(5) Any educational service unit authorized to levy a property tax pursuant to section 79-1225 may levy a maximum levy of one and one-half cents per one hundred dollars of taxable valuation of property subject to the levy.

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(6)(a) Incorporated cities and villages which are not within the

-5-

1 boundaries of a municipal county may levy a maximum levy of forty-five cents per one hundred dollars of taxable valuation of property subject to 2 3 the levy plus an additional five cents per one hundred dollars of taxable valuation to provide financing for the municipality's share of revenue 4 5 required under an agreement or agreements executed pursuant to the Interlocal Cooperation Act or the Joint Public Agency Act. The maximum 6 levy shall include amounts levied to pay for sums to support a library 7 pursuant to section 51-201, museum pursuant to section 51-501, visiting 8 community nurse, home health nurse, or home health agency pursuant to 9 section 71-1637, or statue, memorial, or monument pursuant to section 10 80-202. 11

(b) Incorporated cities and villages which are within the boundaries 12 of a municipal county may levy a maximum levy of ninety cents per one 13 hundred dollars of taxable valuation of property subject to the levy. The 14 maximum levy shall include amounts paid to a municipal county for county 15 16 services, amounts levied to pay for sums to support a library pursuant to section 51-201, a museum pursuant to section 51-501, a visiting community 17 nurse, home health nurse, or home health agency pursuant to section 18 71-1637, or a statue, memorial, or monument pursuant to section 80-202. 19

(7) Sanitary and improvement districts which have been in existence 20 for more than five years may levy a maximum levy of forty cents per one 21 hundred dollars of taxable valuation of property subject to the levy, and 22 23 sanitary and improvement districts which have been in existence for five 24 years or less shall not have a maximum levy. Unconsolidated sanitary and improvement districts which have been in existence for more than five 25 years and are located in a municipal county may levy a maximum of eighty-26 five cents per hundred dollars of taxable valuation of property subject 27 28 to the levy.

(8) Counties may levy or authorize a maximum levy of fifty cents per
one hundred dollars of taxable valuation of property subject to the levy,
except that five cents per one hundred dollars of taxable valuation of

-6-

1 property subject to the levy may only be levied to provide financing for the county's share of revenue required under an agreement or agreements 2 3 executed pursuant to the Interlocal Cooperation Act or the Joint Public Agency Act. The maximum levy shall include amounts levied to pay for sums 4 to support a library pursuant to section 51-201 or museum pursuant to 5 section 51-501. The county may allocate up to fifteen cents of its 6 7 authority to other political subdivisions subject to allocation of 8 property tax authority under subsection (1) of section 77-3443 and not 9 specifically covered in this section to levy taxes as authorized by law which do not collectively exceed fifteen cents per one hundred dollars of 10 taxable valuation on any parcel or item of taxable property. The county 11 may allocate to one or more other political subdivisions subject to 12 allocation of property tax authority by the county under subsection (1) 13 of section 77-3443 some or all of the county's five cents per one hundred 14 dollars of valuation authorized for support of an agreement or agreements 15 16 to be levied by the political subdivision for the purpose of supporting that political subdivision's share of revenue required under an agreement 17 or agreements executed pursuant to the Interlocal Cooperation Act or the 18 Joint Public Agency Act. If an allocation by a county would cause another 19 county to exceed its levy authority under this section, the second county 20 may exceed the levy authority in order to levy the amount allocated. 21

(9) Municipal counties may levy or authorize a maximum levy of one dollar per one hundred dollars of taxable valuation of property subject to the levy. The municipal county may allocate levy authority to any political subdivision or entity subject to allocation under section 77-3443.

(10) Beginning July 1, 2016, rural and suburban fire protection districts may levy a maximum levy of ten and one-half cents per one hundred dollars of taxable valuation of property subject to the levy if (a) such district is located in a county that had a levy pursuant to subsection (8) of this section in the previous year of at least forty

-7-

1 cents per one hundred dollars of taxable valuation of property subject to 2 the levy or (b) for any rural or suburban fire protection district that 3 had a levy request pursuant to section 77-3443 in the previous year, the 4 county board of the county in which the greatest portion of the valuation 5 of such district is located did not authorize any levy authority to such 6 district in the previous year.

(11) Property tax levies (a) for judgments, except judgments or 7 orders from the Commission of Industrial Relations, obtained against a 8 9 political subdivision which require or obligate a political subdivision 10 to pay such judgment, to the extent such judgment is not paid by liability insurance coverage of a political subdivision, 11 (b) for preexisting lease-purchase contracts approved prior to July 1, 1998, (c) 12 for bonds as defined in section 10-134 approved according to law and 13 secured by a levy on property except as provided in section 44-4317 for 14 bonded indebtedness issued by educational service units and school 15 districts, and (d) for payments by a public airport to retire interest-16 free loans from the Division of Aeronautics of the Department of 17 Transportation in lieu of bonded indebtedness at a lower cost to the 18 public airport are not included in the levy limits established by this 19 section. 20

(12) The limitations on tax levies provided in this section are to 21 22 include all other general or special levies provided by law. Notwithstanding other provisions of law, the only exceptions to the 23 24 limits in this section are those provided by or authorized by sections 25 77-3442 to 77-3444.

(13) Tax levies in excess of the limitations in this section shall
 be considered unauthorized levies under section 77-1606 unless approved
 under section 77-3444.

(14) For purposes of sections 77-3442 to 77-3444, political
subdivision means a political subdivision of this state and a county
agricultural society.

-8-

1 (15) For school districts that file a binding resolution on or 2 before May 9, 2008, with the county assessors, county clerks, and county treasurers for all counties in which the school district has territory 3 pursuant to subsection (7) of section 79-458, if the combined levies, 4 except levies for bonded indebtedness approved by the voters of the 5 school district and levies for the 6 refinancing of such bonded 7 indebtedness, are in excess of the greater of (a) one dollar and twenty cents per one hundred dollars of taxable valuation of property subject to 8 9 the levy or (b) the maximum levy authorized by a vote pursuant to section 10 77-3444, all school district levies, except levies for bonded indebtedness approved by the voters of the school district and levies for 11 the refinancing of such bonded indebtedness, shall be considered 12 unauthorized levies under section 77-1606. 13

Sec. 2. Section 79-1013, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2016, is amended to read:

79-1013 (1) On or before October 15 of each year, each school 16 17 district designating a maximum poverty allowance greater than zero dollars shall submit a poverty plan for the next school fiscal year to 18 19 the department and to the learning community coordinating council of any learning community of which the school district is a member. On or before 20 the immediately following December 1, (a) the department shall approve or 21 disapprove each poverty such plan for school districts that are not 22 23 members of a learning community based on the inclusion of the elements 24 required pursuant to this section and (b) the learning community 25 coordinating council and, as to the applicable portions thereof, each achievement subcouncil, shall review each poverty plan submitted by a 26 school district that is a member approve or disapprove such plan for 27 28 school districts that are members of such learning community based on the inclusion of such elements and offer suggestions to improve the plan and 29 the coordination between such plan and the community achievement plan. On 30 or before the immediately following December 5, each learning community 31

-9-

coordinating council shall certify to the department the <u>review</u> approval
 or disapproval of the poverty plan for each member school district.

3 (2) In order to be approved pursuant to this section, a poverty plan 4 shall include an explanation of how the school district will address the 5 following issues for such school fiscal year:

6 (a) Attendance, including absence followup and transportation for 7 students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunches, regardless of the 8 method of qualification, who reside more than one mile from the 9 attendance center;

10 (b) Student mobility, including transportation to allow a student to 11 continue attendance at the same school if the student moves to another 12 attendance area within the same school district or within the same 13 learning community;

(c) Parental involvement at the school-building level with a focus on the involvement of parents in poverty and from other diverse backgrounds;

(d) Parental involvement at the school-district level with a focus
on the involvement of parents in poverty and from other diverse
backgrounds;

(e) Class size reduction or maintenance of small class sizes in
 elementary grades;

(f) Scheduled teaching time on a weekly basis that will be free from
 interruptions;

24 (g) Access to early childhood education programs for children in 25 poverty;

26 (h) Student access to social workers;

27 (i) Access to summer school, extended-school-day programs, or
 28 extended-school-year programs;

29 (j) Mentoring for new and newly reassigned teachers;

30 (k) Professional development for teachers and administrators,
31 focused on addressing the educational needs of students in poverty and

-10-

1 students from other diverse backgrounds;

2 (1) Coordination with elementary learning centers if the school district is a member of a learning community; and 3

4 (m) An evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the elements of 5 the poverty plan.

(3) The state board shall establish a procedure for appeal of 6 decisions of the department and of learning community coordinating 7 councils to the state board for a final determination. 8

Sec. 3. Section 79-1014, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is 9 10 amended to read:

79-1014 (1) On or before October 15 of each year, each school 11 district designating a maximum limited English proficiency allowance 12 greater than zero dollars shall submit a limited English proficiency plan 13 for the next school fiscal year to the department and to the learning 14 community coordinating council of any learning community of which the 15 16 school district is a member. On or before the immediately following 17 December 1, (a) the department shall approve or disapprove each limited English proficiency plan such plans for school districts that are not 18 members of a learning community, based on the inclusion of the elements 19 required pursuant to this section and (b) the learning community 20 coordinating council, and, as to the applicable portions thereof, each 21 achievement subcouncil, shall review each limited English proficiency 22 23 plan submitted by a school district that is a member approve or 24 disapprove such plan for school districts that are members of such 25 learning community, based on the inclusion of such elements, and offer suggestions to improve the plan and the coordination between such plan 26 and the community achievement plan. On or before the immediately 27 28 following December 5, each learning community coordinating council shall certify to the department the review approval or disapproval of the 29 limited English proficiency plan for each member school district. 30

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(2) In order to be approved pursuant to this section, a limited

English proficiency plan must include an explanation of how the school
 district will address the following issues for such school fiscal year:

3 (a) Identification of students with limited English proficiency;

4 (b) Instructional approaches;

5 (c) Assessment of such students' progress toward mastering the6 English language; and

7 (d) An evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the elements of8 the limited English proficiency plan.

9 (3) The state board shall establish a procedure for appeal of 10 decisions of the department and of learning community coordinating 11 councils to the state board for a final determination.

Sec. 4. Section 79-2104, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement,
2016, is amended to read:

14 79-2104 A learning community coordinating council shall have the 15 authority to:

16 (1) For fiscal years prior to fiscal year 2017-18, levy a common
17 levy for the general funds of member school districts pursuant to
18 sections 77-3442 and 79-1073;

(2) Levy for elementary learning center facility leases, for
remodeling of leased elementary learning center facilities, and for up to
fifty percent of the estimated cost for focus school or program capital
projects approved by the learning community coordinating council pursuant
to subdivision (2)(f) of section 77-3442 and section 79-2111;

(3) Levy for early childhood education programs for children in
poverty, for elementary learning center employees, for contracts with
other entities or individuals who are not employees of the learning
community for elementary learning center programs and services, and for
pilot projects pursuant to subdivision (2)(g) of section 77-3442, except
that not more than ten percent of such levy may be used for elementary
learning center employees;

31 (4) Develop, submit, administer, and evaluate community achievement

-12-

1 plans in collaboration with the advisory committee, educational service 2 units serving member school districts, member school districts, and the 3 student achievement coordinator or other department staff designated by 4 the Commissioner of Education;

5 (5) Collect, analyze, and report data and information, including,
6 but not limited to, information provided by a school district pursuant to
7 subsection (5) of section 79-201;

8 (6) Approve focus schools and focus programs to be operated by9 member school districts;

10 (7) Adopt, approve, and implement a diversity plan pursuant to
 11 sections 79-2110 and 79-2118;

12 (8) Through school year 2016-17, administer the open enrollment 13 provisions in section 79-2110 for the learning community as part of a 14 diversity plan developed by the council to provide educational 15 opportunities which will result in increased diversity in schools across 16 the learning community;

(9) Annually conduct school fairs to provide students and parents the opportunity to explore the educational opportunities available at each school in the learning community and develop other methods for encouraging access to such information and promotional materials;

(10) Develop procedures for determining best practices for
addressing student achievement barriers and for disseminating such
practices within the learning community and to other school districts;

(11) Establish and administer elementary learning centers through
 achievement subcouncils pursuant to sections 79-2112 to 79-2114;

(12) Administer the learning community funds distributed to the
 learning community pursuant to section 79-2111;

(13) <u>Pursuant to sections 79-1013 and 79-1014, review, in</u>
 <u>conjunction with the applicable achievement subcouncils, Approve or</u>
 disapprove poverty plans and limited English proficiency plans <u>submitted</u>
 <u>by for member school districts pursuant to such sections and offer</u>

-13-

suggestions to improve the plans and the coordination between such plans
 and the community achievement plan through achievement subcouncils
 established under section 79-2117;

4 (14) Establish a procedure for receiving community input and
5 complaints regarding the learning community;

6 (15) Establish a procedure to assist parents, citizens, and member 7 school districts in accessing an approved center pursuant to the Dispute 8 Resolution Act to resolve disputes involving member school districts or 9 the learning community. Such procedure may include payment by the 10 learning community for some mediation services;

(16) Establish and administer pilot projects related to enhancing the academic achievement of elementary students, particularly students who face challenges in the educational environment due to factors such as poverty, limited English skills, and mobility;

(17) Provide funding to public or private entities engaged in the juvenile justice system providing prefiling and diversion programming designed to reduce excessive absenteeism and unnecessary involvement with the juvenile justice system; and

(18) Hold public hearings at its discretion in response to issues
raised by residents regarding the learning community, a member school
district, and academic achievement.

Sec. 5. Section 79-2104.02, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement,
23 2016, is amended to read:

24 79-2104.02 Each learning community coordinating council shall use 25 any funds received pursuant to section 79-1241.03 for evaluation of programs related to the community achievement plan developed with the 26 assistance of the student achievement coordinator or other department 27 staff designated by the Commissioner of Education and evaluation and 28 research regarding the progress of the learning community pursuant to 29 plans developed by the learning community coordinating council with 30 assistance from the Educational Service Unit Coordinating Council and 31

-14-

1 adjusted on an ongoing basis. The evaluation of programs related to the community achievement plan shall be connected to the 2 evaluation 3 components of the member district poverty and limited English proficiency plans. The evaluation regarding the progress of the learning community 4 shall be conducted by one or more other entities or individuals who are 5 not employees of the learning community and shall measure progress toward 6 the goals and objectives of the learning community, which goals and 7 objectives shall include reduction of excessive absenteeism of students 8 9 in the member school districts of the learning community and closing academic achievement gaps based on socioeconomic status, 10 and the effectiveness of the approaches used by the learning community or pilot 11 project to reach such goals and objectives. Any research conducted 12 13 pursuant to this section shall also be related to such goals and objectives or programs related to the community achievement plan. Each 14 learning community shall report evaluation and research 15 results 16 electronically to the Education Committee of the Legislature on or before 17 February January 1 of each year.

18 Sec. 6. Section 79-2118, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is 19 amended to read:

79-2118 (1) Each learning community, together with its member school 20 districts, shall develop a diversity plan to provide educational 21 opportunities pursuant to sections 79-769 and 79-2110 in each subcouncil 22 district designed to attract students from diverse backgrounds, which 23 24 plan may be revised from time to time. The initial diversity plan shall be completed by December 31 of the year the initial learning community 25 coordinating council for the learning community takes office. The goal of 26 the diversity plan shall be to annually increase the socioeconomic 27 diversity of enrollment at each grade level in each school building 28 29 within the learning community until such enrollment reflects the average socioeconomic diversity of the entire enrollment of the learning 30 31 community.

-15-

1 (2) Each diversity plan for a learning community shall include 2 specific provisions relating to each subcouncil district within such 3 learning community. The specific provisions relating to each subcouncil 4 district shall be approved by both the achievement subcouncil for such 5 district and by the learning community coordinating council.

6 (3) The learning community coordinating council shall report 7 electronically to the Education Committee of the Legislature on or before 8 <u>February January</u> 1 of each odd-numbered year on the diversity and changes 9 in diversity at each grade level in each school building within the 10 learning community and on the academic achievement for different 11 demographic groups in each school building within the learning community.

Sec. 7. Original sections 79-1014 and 79-2118, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, sections 79-1013, 79-2104, and 79-2104.02, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2016, and section 77-3442, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2017, are repealed.