

LEGISLATIVE BILL 960

Approved by the Governor April 7, 1990

Introduced by Withem, 14

AN ACT relating to school restructuring; to state intent; to establish a commission; to provide powers and duties; to authorize waiver of barriers to restructuring; and to declare an emergency.

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

Section 1. (1) The Legislature hereby finds and declares that:

(a) Global economic competition is making new demands upon the school system of the state;

(b) The competitiveness of the United States in the new global economy will require that schools effectively educate all students and prepare them to develop the capacity to learn new skills and tasks quickly and to apply this knowledge in creative and imaginative ways, in novel contexts, and in collaboration with others;

(c) The need to fundamentally restructure education to meet the challenges and opportunities of a constantly changing technological economy is recognized and endorsed by such diverse groups as the Committee for Economic Development, an organization of some eighty chief executive officers of American corporations, the Education Commission of the States, the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, and the National Governors' Association;

(d) The restructuring of the school system is a long-term, evolving process with the principal goal being to develop a system that ensures that all students learn to use their minds well as a result of their education;

(e) The Legislature's December 1988 symposium on school restructuring revealed significant interest in restructuring among Nebraska teachers, parents, administrators, school board members, business persons, and state education policymakers and also revealed that some classrooms and schools are now engaging in restructuring in one form or another;

(f) Restructuring the school system is consistent with the long-term strategies identified in the New Horizons for Nebraska process, including those

strategies that call for investing and not just spending, for public-private partnerships, for active citizen involvement in developing visions for the future, and for the leveraging of public resources through interagency cooperation; and

(g) Significant efforts to reform and restructure the school system have been initiated at the local level through the Decade of Change project, a program of school improvement involving coalitions of teachers, school administrators, school board members, students, parents, and business and community leaders.

(2) It is the intent of the Legislature to stimulate ideas and visions that go beyond the traditional models of schooling and to encourage the development of public-private partnerships in establishing and supporting reform in education.

Sec. 2. (1) There is hereby established the School Restructuring Commission within the State Department of Education. The commission shall establish goals for the improvement of education and restructuring of schools in Nebraska. The commission shall establish plans to test the effectiveness of school restructuring principles which include (a) mastery of learning and knowledge essentials, (b) active student involvement in the teaching and learning process, (c) teacher collaboration in planning curriculum, schedules, and learning goals and objectives, and (d) development of student higher-order learning skills.

(2) The commission shall consist of twelve members as follows:

(a) Two persons shall be appointed by the Governor upon the recommendation of the Legislature's Committee on Education;

(b) One person shall be appointed by the Commissioner of Education as a representative of the State Department of Education;

(c) One person shall be appointed by the Governor as a representative of the Governor's office;

(d) One person shall be appointed by the Governor as a representative of a local school board;

(e) One person shall be appointed by the Governor as a representative of school administrators;

(f) One person shall be appointed by the Governor as a representative of teachers;

(g) Two persons shall be appointed by the Governor as representatives of higher education;

(h) Two persons shall be appointed by the Governor as representatives of the business community; and

(i) One person shall be appointed by the Governor as a representative of educational service units.

(3) Appointment of the members of the commission shall be made within thirty days after the effective date of this act and shall be approved by a majority of the Legislature during its next session. Vacancies on the commission shall be filled in the same manner as the initial appointments and shall be made within thirty days of the creation of the vacancy.

(4) The commission may receive staff support from the Legislative Council, the Governor's Policy Research Office, and the State Department of Education.

(5) The commission shall make annual reports to the Legislature, the Governor, the State Board of Education, and the State Department of Education on the commission's progress in establishing goals and plans as required by this section.

(6) Members of the commission shall be reimbursed for their actual and necessary expenses as provided in sections 81-1174 to 81-1177.

(7) The commission shall terminate and be dissolved effective June 30, 1992.

Sec. 3. The State Board of Education may waive any rule or regulation of the State Department of Education and the board of education of each participating school may waive any school board policy which has been identified as a barrier in any school restructuring plan upon a showing that such rule, regulation, or policy will be a substantial impediment to success of the plan.

Sec. 4. Since an emergency exists, this act shall be in full force and take effect, from and after its passage and approval, according to law.