



LB547: An Overview

Maximize existing resources and increase the flexibility communities need to provide young, at-risk children with early experiences that close the achievement gap before kindergarten

Problem: *A significant number of Nebraska's youngest, most at-risk children arrive at kindergarten unprepared to learn, due in part to a lack of high-quality developmental experiences during the infant and toddler years.*

- Over 60,000 Nebraska children ages 0-5 are at risk of failing in school. Of these, approximately 30,000 are infants and toddlers who do not receive the kinds of early experiences known to support strong brain development during the first 3 years of life. These children are likely to arrive at kindergarten 1-2 developmental years behind their more advantaged peers. School districts are required to spend extra resources to help at-risk children keep pace in the K-12 system, often with mixed results.
- School districts want to start or expand early childhood efforts, but face barriers related to funding and available space. Many families need full-day, year-round early learning opportunities that match their work schedules, but the traditional school day and calendar doesn't stretch far enough.
- A fiscally responsible, locally driven, and family-centered approach must go beyond the education system, because schools cannot (and should not) solve this problem on their own.

Solution: *Maximize existing resources and increase the flexibility needed to provide infants and toddlers most at risk with early experiences that close the achievement gap.*

LB547 (with amendments) — Speaker Priority Bill

- Transforms the already successful early childhood public-private partnership known as Sixpence and addresses local workforce shortages by engaging the licensed child care community in partnerships with school districts.
- Strengthens efforts proven to build parents' abilities as caregivers and educators of their infants and toddlers, helping them foster the emerging cognitive and character traits children need for success in school and life.
- Allocates federal child care funds to support Sixpence partnerships between school districts and private child care providers.
- Fiscal impact: \$0 state dollars (with proposed amendments); utilizes roughly \$2 million in existing federal CCDBG funds.

LB547 equips Nebraska communities to reduce the achievement gap by supporting the healthy development of their youngest children at risk at precisely the time it is most effective and least expensive to do so.

Supporters of this Legislation

Business sector entities

Nebraska Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce
Norfolk Area Chamber of Commerce
Nebraska Early Childhood Business Roundtable

Child care entities

Nebraska Child Care Directors Association
KinderCare Learning Centers in Nebraska
Saint John Child Development Center (Seward, NE)
Westminster Preschool (Lincoln, NE)

Education entities

Crete Public Schools
Greater Nebraska Schools Association
Ralston Public Schools
Schools Taking Action for Nebraska School Children's Education (STANCE)
State Board of Education
Nebraska Department of Education

Others

American Academy of Pediatrics – Nebraska chapter
Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska
Fight Crime: Invest in Kids (Association of Police Chiefs and Sheriffs in Nebraska)
First Five Nebraska
Nebraska Resource Project for Vulnerable Young Children at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln
Nebraska Children and Families Foundation
Mission: Readiness (Association of Retired Generals and Admirals in Nebraska)