



March 22, 2021

Dear Senator,

As you debate LB 281 this afternoon, NASB would like to reemphasize why we testified in opposition of this bill in front of the Education Committee last month.

First and foremost, school boards understand the sensitive nature of this bill, and do not oppose the intent behind LB 281. The message brought forth by both Colby Coash, NASB's Director of Government Affairs, and Connie Duncan, Lincoln Public Schools Board of Education member, as well as NASB Legislation Committee member, focused on our preference that the process for curriculum adoption go through the deliberative process involving educators and the elected State Board of Education. Making curriculum decisions through statutory change results in measures that cannot be adjusted to meet evidence-based practices by educational professionals. We believe educators and local school board members are in the best position to make these curriculum decisions.

We would ask you and your peers to consider the ramifications of putting curriculum in statute, and remember that compared to regulatory curriculum standards, statutory standards are difficult to change. In addition, this bill is broadly written to include mandated training for "other school personnel" which could include staff who have no direct contact with students, such as kitchen staff. Instead, we would ask for some discretion on the part of the Superintendent to decide who should receive this training in order to allocate funds to those personnel who have direct contact with students.

We also have concerns with any bill that includes a fiscal note that will not cover the costs for all districts. LB 281 appears to be a uniquely unfunded mandate as it requires a district to redirect its existing federal programming budget to make room for this curriculum, classroom instructional time, professional training of teachers and parental involvement components. Three of the new mandates involve paying educator time, which sometimes appears "free" when it really isn't. The required educator elements include teaching the four sessions, attending professional training, and providing a parent involvement component. No specific state requirements are being removed from schools to offset the addition of these new requirements.

Thank you for taking the time to read our concerns as you consider your vote on LB 281.

Brad Wilkins  
NASB Legislation Committee Chair  
Ainsworth Board of Education

Stacie Higgins  
NASB President  
Nebraska City Board of Education