

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA
ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH LEGISLATURE
FIRST SESSION

LEGISLATIVE BILL 200

Introduced by Vargas, 7; Hunt, 8; Morfeld, 46.

Read first time January 08, 2021

Committee:

- 1 A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to schools; to amend section 79-729, Reissue
- 2 Revised Statutes of Nebraska; to add a high school graduation
- 3 requirement and provide an exception as prescribed; to provide a
- 4 duty for schools to submit data to the State Department of
- 5 Education; to provide duties for the Commissioner of Education and
- 6 require an annual report to the Legislature; to provide for rules
- 7 and regulations as prescribed; and to repeal the original section.
- 8 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1 Section 1. Section 79-729, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is
2 amended to read:

3 79-729 (1) The Legislature recognizes the importance of assuring
4 that all persons who graduate from Nebraska high schools possess certain
5 minimum levels of knowledge, skills, and understanding.

6 (2) ~~Each Beginning in school year 1987-88,~~ each high school student
7 shall complete a minimum of two hundred high school credit hours prior to
8 graduation. At least eighty percent of such credit hours shall be core
9 curriculum courses prescribed by the State Board of Education.

10 (3)(a) ~~Beginning with the 2022-23 school year, each public high~~
11 ~~school student shall complete and submit to the United States Department~~
12 ~~of Education a Free Application for Federal Student Aid prior to~~
13 ~~graduating from such high school except as otherwise provided in this~~
14 ~~subsection.~~

15 (b) ~~A public high school student shall not be required to comply~~
16 ~~with subdivision (3)(a) of this section if:~~

17 (i) ~~A parent or legal guardian of or a person standing in loco~~
18 ~~parentis to such student signs and submits the appropriate form~~
19 ~~prescribed by the Commissioner of Education pursuant to subdivision (3)~~
20 ~~(c) of this section indicating that such parent, legal guardian, or~~
21 ~~person standing in loco parentis authorizes such student to decline to~~
22 ~~complete and submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid;~~

23 (ii) ~~The school principal or the school principal's designee signs~~
24 ~~and submits the appropriate form prescribed by the Commissioner of~~
25 ~~Education pursuant to subdivision (3)(c) of this section authorizing such~~
26 ~~student to decline to complete and submit a Free Application for Federal~~
27 ~~Student Aid for good cause as determined by the school principal or the~~
28 ~~school principal's designee; or~~

29 (iii) ~~A student who is nineteen years of age or older or is an~~
30 ~~emancipated minor signs and submits the appropriate form prescribed by~~
31 ~~the Commissioner of Education pursuant to subdivision (3)(c) of this~~

1 section stating that such student declines to complete and submit a Free
2 Application for Federal Student Aid.

3 (c) The Commissioner of Education shall prescribe the forms to be
4 used by each public high school for purposes of subdivision (3)(b) of
5 this section. Such forms shall be made available:

6 (i) By each public high school to students, parents and legal
7 guardians of students, and persons standing in loco parentis to students;
8 and

9 (ii) In English, Spanish, and any other language spoken by a
10 majority of the students enrolled in any English learner program at such
11 public high school.

12 (d) The school principal or the school principal's designee of each
13 public high school shall provide such compliance information to the
14 school district or governing authority for such public high school and to
15 the State Department of Education without disclosing, for any student who
16 has complied with the requirements of this subsection, personally
17 identifiable information distinguishing whether such compliance was
18 pursuant to subdivision (3)(a) of this section or subdivision (3)(b) of
19 this section. Such school principal or school principal's designee shall
20 provide separately the aggregate number of students who have not complied
21 with this subsection, who complied pursuant to subdivision (3)(a) of this
22 section, and who complied pursuant to subdivision (3)(b) of this section,
23 unless otherwise prohibited by federal or state law regarding the
24 confidentiality of student educational information.

25 (e) On or before December 31, 2023, and on or before December 31 of
26 each year thereafter, the Commissioner of Education shall electronically
27 submit a report with the information received by the State Department of
28 Education pursuant to subdivision (3)(d) of this section to the Clerk of
29 the Legislature.

30 (4) The State Board of Education may establish recommended statewide
31 graduation guidelines. This section does not prohibit the governing board

1 of any high school from prescribing specific graduation guidelines as
2 long as such guidelines do not conflict with this section.

3 (5) This section does not apply to high school students whose
4 individualized education programs plans prescribe a different course of
5 instruction. This section does not prohibit the governing board of any
6 high school from prescribing specific graduation guidelines as long as
7 such guidelines do not conflict with this section.

8 (6) For purposes of this section, high school means grades nine
9 through twelve and credit hour shall be defined by appropriate rules and
10 regulations of the State Board of Education but shall not be less than
11 the amount of credit given for successful completion of a course which
12 meets at least one period per week for at least one semester.

13 (7) The State Department of Education shall adopt and promulgate
14 rules and regulations as necessary to implement this section. Such rules
15 and regulations shall include, but not be limited to:

16 (a) A timeline for the distribution of the Free Application for
17 Federal Student Aid and the forms prescribed pursuant to subdivision (3)
18 (c) of this section by public high schools and for the submission of the
19 Free Application for Federal Student Aid and the forms prescribed
20 pursuant to subdivision (3)(c) of this section by students;

21 (b) Standards regarding the information that a public high school
22 must provide to students regarding:

23 (i) Instructions for filling out the Free Application for Federal
24 Student Aid;

25 (ii) The options available to a student under subdivision (3)(b) of
26 this section if a student wishes to decline to complete and submit a Free
27 Application for Federal Student Aid; and

28 (iii) The method by which a student shall provide proof to the
29 public high school that such student has completed and submitted the Free
30 Application for Federal Student Aid or a form prescribed pursuant to
31 subdivision (3)(c) of this section; and

1 (c) A requirement for each public high school to report the number
2 of students who completed and submitted a Free Application for Federal
3 Student Aid and the number of students who instead submitted a form
4 prescribed pursuant to subdivision (3)(c) of this section.

5 Sec. 2. Original section 79-729, Reissue Revised Statutes of
6 Nebraska, is repealed.