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February 21, 2023

To: Chairperson Murman and Members of the Education Committee  
From: Anahí Salazar, Policy Coordinator for Voices for Children in Nebraska  
**RE: Support for LB 231, to change provisions related to student attendance and require plans for excessive absences.**

Education is necessary for children's development into healthy, productive adults. Attending school is one of several factors that impact children's educational success. Efforts to ensure attendance are important but must focus on resolving obstacles to attendance for children and families in a supportive manner. For these reasons we support LB 231, which creates a more extensive plan for students and families when they are absent for 20 or more days.

Student success and positive educational outcomes are important to the future of Nebraska, and research supports the association between high rates of absenteeism and poor educational outcomes.

Nebraska statute currently states that if the child has been absent more than twenty days, the school shall notify family and the county attorney. In order to better help students and families, LB 231 adds an educational evaluation with permission of the educational decisionmaker to better help schools identify if intellectual, academic, physical, or social emotional barriers are adding to the students excessive absences.

**Social anxiety is one of the biggest reasons students are absent from school. Close behind are academic struggles and being bullied.**<sup>1</sup> If students feel like they are not understanding content or are afraid of their peers their enthusiasm for school dwindles and they may try to stay home. Students with ADHD, autism or developmental delays are twice as likely to have excessive absences.<sup>2</sup> By conducting an evaluation, schools are better able to help students by providing opportunities for intervention, identifying any disabilities that can be accommodated to resolve the attendance, and allowing for reteaching and enrichment.

For all these reasons, we thank Senator Dungan for bringing this bill and thank the Committee for considering this important matter. We respectfully urge you to advance LB 231.

<sup>1</sup> "Chronic Absenteeism | Effects of Being Chronically Absent." [www.understood.org](http://www.understood.org), [www.understood.org/en/articles/chronic-absenteeism-what-you-need-to-know](http://www.understood.org/en/articles/chronic-absenteeism-what-you-need-to-know).

<sup>2</sup> Black, Lindsey, and Benjamin Zablotzky. "Chronic School Absenteeism among Children with Selected Developmental Disabilities: National Health Interview Survey, 2014-2016." *National Health Statistics Reports Number*, vol. 118, 2018, [www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhsr/nhsr118.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhsr/nhsr118.pdf).