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To: Chairperson Murman and Members of the Education Committee

From: Katie Nungesser, Policy Coordinator for Voices for Children in Nebraska

RE: Support for LB 567- Authorize school policies relating to community engagement

Children thrive when they have a network of supportive adults—inside and outside of school. Strong school-family connections are directly linked to higher academic achievement, better attendance, and improved social-emotional well-being.¹ Voices for Children supports LB 567 which encourages districts to create and implement strategies tailored to their unique communities, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

LB 567 empowers the State Department of Education to develop a model policy that fosters meaningful engagement between schools, students, families, and communities. By providing clear guidance and best practices, it will help schools across Nebraska build stronger relationships with families and local stakeholders to support students' academic and personal growth.

Additionally, this bill highlights the importance of addressing students' basic needs. When children face hunger, housing instability, or other barriers, their ability to focus and succeed in school is significantly impacted. By encouraging schools to partner with families and community organizations, LB 567 can create pathways to connect students with essential resources, from food assistance to after-school learning opportunities.

Many families want to be involved in their child's education but face barriers such as language differences, work schedules, or unfamiliarity with school systems. LB 567 could help with these gaps, ensuring families are informed, empowered, and actively engaged in their child's learning journey.

LB 567 also promotes collaboration between school districts, allowing them to learn from one another, share successful engagement strategies, and elevate existing community partnerships. This cross-district cooperation can lead to innovative solutions and better resource allocation, ultimately benefiting students statewide.

Investing in our children's education means investing in their future. LB 567 recognizes that a child's success is a shared responsibility, and that schools, families, and communities must work together to create environments where all children can thrive. I thank Senator Quick for introducing this legislation and urge the committee to support this bill to help build stronger, more connected school communities across Nebraska.