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January 28, 2025

To: Chairperson Murman and Members of the Education Committee

From: Policy Coordinator for Voices for Children in Nebraska

RE: Support for LB 296- Require the State Department of Education to create a centralized education records system and employ registrars relating to students under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court and change provisions relating to graduation requirements and the State Department of Education Improvement Grant Fund

Children in Nebraska deserve a quality education. When children are taken away from their school, whether that's because they have entered the child welfare system or the juvenile justice system, maintaining continuity in education is necessary. Voices for Children in Nebraska supports LB 296 because a centralized education system and registrar can significantly streamline students educational progress and improve graduation rates.

Children in out-of-home care often face frequent moves, which can disrupt their education. In 2022, there were 7,919 children involved in the child welfare system, 70% of which were school-age and teens.¹ 6,388 young people were living in out-of-home care.² Too often children in child welfare bounce to different foster placements or residential placements and their records may or may not follow or credits count. This makes it harder to keep track of their credits, and they end up having to retake classes. LB 296 would also affect young people in juvenile justice. There were 1,334 young people were supervised on probation who were placed in out-of-home care in 2022.³

A central education system and registrar for kids in out-of-home care would smooth this process and help ensure that changes in placement don't prevent kids from staying on track with education and graduating. This allows for timely interventions and support to address any educational gaps or challenges.⁴ It facilitates better communication between child welfare agencies, youth justice detention and rehabilitation centers, schools and other stakeholders. Ensuring that all parties are informed and can work together to support the child's educational journey.

Continuity in education for every student in Nebraska is necessary, despite court ordered placement changes. Thank you, Speaker Arch, for bringing this important legislation, and the committee for your time and consideration.

¹ 2023 Kids Count Report, Child Welfare, pg.62, [2023-Kids-Count-in-Nebraska-Report.Full-Documet-PDF.pdf](#)

² 2023 Kids Count Report, Child Welfare, pg. 66, [2023-Kids-Count-in-Nebraska-Report.Full-Documet-PDF.pdf](#)

Out-of-home care placements include group home, foster & adoptive homes, kinship care, relative home, detention facility, youth rehabilitation and treatment center (YRTC)

³ 2023 Kids Count Report, Juvenile Justice, Pg.62, [2023-Kids-Count-in-Nebraska-Report.Full-Documet-PDF.pdf](#)

⁴ National Center for Homeless Education, *A Look at Child Welfare from an Education Perspective*, [The Educational Rights of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness: What Service Providers Need to Know](#)