

What about the Learning Community?

You might remember hearing the “One City, One School District” phrase. Some perceived that phrase to mean Omaha Public Schools wanted to “take over” Millard School District to have better funding. Meanwhile in Sarpy County, Bellevue Schools wanted to reclaim land that had been sold to Papillion-LaVista Schools in the early 80’s. Some lawsuits ensued, and the Legislature got involved and passed a bill known as LB1024 in 2006. One of the provisions of this law included dividing Omaha Public Schools into three districts. A District Court judge ruled that a “stay” be put on the bill. The next session, the Legislature went back to work and passed LB641 in 2007. According to Governor Heineman’s press release at that time, the purpose of the bill was, “to resolve educational and boundary issues among several school districts in the Omaha metropolitan area.” The law provides for a Learning Community Coordinating Council to make decisions concerning the sharing of resources. These resources are to include more than just money. It’s an attempt at preventing the duplicating of efforts in educational content, as well. The Council will be made up of 18 members based on six districts that have been drawn throughout the two county area. [Click to See map](#). Gov. Heineman said, “The learning community will be governed by an 18-member council selected from six new election districts. Voters will elect 12 members. The remaining members will be appointed by existing school boards.” We are to vote for one, and the two top vote getters will serve in that district. The other six members of the council will be appointed by the 11 school boards in the Douglas/Sarpy area. The law is very extensive with many specific requirements placed on the council with the intent of allowing local districts to maintain autonomy.