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LB 812

Iowa Basic, those tests that are generally a multiple choice test. Those are norm reference tests. Those norm reference tests, it has been indicated, would cover about 40 percent of the standards, but would not cover the rest of the standards. And so to cover the standards, you need a criterion reference test. And so the plan would be that each school may develop their own criterion reference test. The ESUs have been training teachers over the last year in order that they will be able to help to develop these tests. We have a number of schools who have developed their own criterion reference test and other schools may duplicate those tests. Some of those would be Beatrice was one of the first school districts that really, and Nebraska City come to mind, really led the way in developing their own criterion reference test. And those tests would be available to other school districts if, in fact, they wanted to model theirs after that or by going through their ESU assisting them in developing a criterion reference test. After that test would be given in those school districts, the commissioner has a formula that would be used that would eventually come out for a grade on the state report card. As I said earlier, the one criticism I think most people have felt that this, although somewhat complicated, if you think that it's a little difficult for you to understand, it's been difficult for schools along the way to understand. I think giving them the extra year that we did last year there's a better understanding and broader support for going this direction. The problem, the only problem I saw coming before you doing only this was that people would say, but you aren't comparing apples to apples. Because if you let each school district develop their own criterion reference test, we are not having one common measurement and that would be true. However, with this what we are doing is allowing school districts to know if the standards are making a difference in their classrooms. You saw a while back an Attorney General Opinion that first caused some concern for those of us interested in LB 812. Senator Stuhr had a chance to have a conversation and actually has a letter from the Attorney General saying that that had in no way any implications for LB 812. And so what this amendment does is allow the Department of Education to go forward with their plans of the multitest, for school districts to develop those, to norm those tests, and to eventually have those come out in this report card that will be distributed statewide for the general public to see throughout