

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

June 3, 2005

LB 126

schools will already close this year, voluntarily so, and probably most of those that Senator Raikes mentioned, given the costs that are some state mandates upon some of these schools that have no students, certainly they will experience some cost, I will tell you that the only way to save money in education truly today is by closing buildings. And if LB 126 is not about closing buildings, there's no savings in the fiscal note. Please remember that. Please remember that. Senator Raikes mentioned that I think 47 percent of the districts in Nebraska serve a very small percentage of the students. Absolutely. That's the nature of rural education. That's the nature of a rural environment. K-8 education is a thing of the future. That structure has been productive. Those Class I schools that still exist today, and especially those that will be here next year, are strong, viable. But the most important thing is that community support. We cannot afford, as policymakers, to alienate public education from the community. We need community support now more than ever, ever before. There's so many good examples I don't have time to list, but K-8 education is what we need. That local component is the most important. LB 126 is a boilerplate, one-size-fits-all approach that has nothing more than the board structure. It's not based on research. It's not based on the quality education needs. Please vote to sustain the Governor's veto on LB 126. Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Smith. On with discussion. Senator Fischer, followed by Senator Heidemann and others.

SENATOR FISCHER: Thank you, Mr. President and members, and I would like to thank the members for giving me one more chance to speak on this issue. I do applaud the Governor for taking into consideration the needs of the children and the families across the entire state of Nebraska, and I support his veto of LB 126. As I have said, this bill affects all Class I districts and all of their students in this state. I respectfully do not agree with statements made by Senator Raikes. In the Legislature's Education Committee study from a year ago, the Valentine rural high school Class VI-Class I system was held up as a positive example of a K-12 system in this state, and yet, under LB 126, no exceptions are made for systems that are currently providing