

your goal in this? Or will it do that?

SENATOR WITHEM: That is my goal, Senator Moore. I would like to see a statewide accountability system in the area of education. We don't have that now. We need that. And did you say, do I have the balance of your time to attempt to answer that.

SENATOR MOORE: Yes.

SENATOR WITHEM: Okay, the Department of Education is responding to requests that they have heard coming from the Legislature, I think including legislation you have introduced, legislation I have introduced, the passage of LB 940, and the passage of 944. They are moving toward an accountability system at this point through changing their accreditation requirements from being input based, counting the number of library books, the number of degrees the teachers have, the number of administrators that are in a building, toward a system where they are looking at the performance of students, and they are painstakingly going through that process. It is a fairly difficult process. That process of establishing that accountability system is going on. This gathering the data from the schools concerning lots of things, student achievement, student performance, number of people that are attending schools, lots of different data that just currently is not available is needed to support that effort of going to their performance-based accreditation system.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Labeledz, please, followed by Senators Hartnett, Withem, and Smith.

SENATOR LABEDZ: Thank you, Mr. President. Senator Withem, I would have a question for you if you will yield.

SENATOR WITHEM: Certainly.

SENATOR LABEDZ: In at least two sections in the bill, there are references to collection and reporting of data about school financing. I assume those references are intended to mean public school financing only, am I correct?

SENATOR WITHEM: Oh, certainly, and frequently when we draft bills, we say schools and don't take that into account. If an amendment is needed to clarify that, I would be happy to support that.