

there, is...there is only one school like Omaha Public. They would automatically, if they applied for this, because they are by themselves, and automatically get a grant?

SENATOR WITHEM: No.

SENATOR HARTNETT: Because you said you want to get both a mix of...I mean the state...in your bill and so forth, you want to get a mix between rural...small schools and large schools?

SENATOR WITHEM: We're talking about school buildings as opposed to districts.

SENATOR HARTNETT: Okay...

SENATOR WITHEM: And I would say...

SENATOR HARTNETT: So Senator Beck's, if a building would apply, then that would be a building rather than a system, that's right?

SENATOR WITHEM: Yeah.

SENATOR HARTNETT: Okay, thank you.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Schimek, please.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, I am rising with sort of mixed feelings here. First of all I want to, as others have done, commend Ron for bringing this idea to us because I think it is an idea worthy of looking at and one that we all need to think about. However, having been in the classroom and having had children in the public schools for the last 20 years, I'm at the point these days where I'm a little bit skeptical about some of these new ideas and I guess I don't think that restructuring is necessarily going to be a panacea for everybody. It might be for some school systems, but more than that, I'm wondering, and, Senator Withem, I guess I'd like to have you address this question. If we had this statewide discussion, and I think it would be a good discussion to have, would it not be possible to do it under the present staff and arrangements at the State Department of Education? Why do we have to have the...or does this indeed spend money for staff at the State Department of Education and, secondly, why cannot we encourage school districts to have these discussions without the