

Senator Hannibal.

SENATOR WARNER: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, this particular amendment, I think that Senator Hall has indicated last...I don't recall now exactly when I read in the paper the story, anyway we contacted the Department of Education and made inquiry as to whether or not, not whether or not, but how much they would estimate that an appropriation may be necessary for this, and we received this letter back from them right toward the end so we did not have an opportunity to consider the issue in the drafted amendment. It is one that we discussed briefly and at least I had assumed that we would need to come back at some point before the bill was enacted to put in some level of funding in order to do this, because as I assume the handout, I didn't read all of it, Senator Hall, but I assume that in there it indicates where we changed the statute a couple of years ago, as I recall, to have the books that would be loaned to be from state funding rather than from the local school districts, and, of course, the request reflects that. But the letter that we received from the department, the 13th of April was when it was written, indicated that they were anticipating about a \$26,000 operating cost within the department, slightly less the second half of the biennium because there was some start-up costs that would be involved, and then they were estimating that if based upon the average cost of school books at the public schools, they average around \$30 per pupil over the last couple of years, prior to '87-88, and if that same level of funding was to be anticipated at the private schools, the projected impact could be around \$1,084,000, that is assuming a 36,159 students enrollment in both approved and accredited private schools. If the...it was the judgment of the department that the highest amount that the Legislature would probably need to consider initially would be that 1,084,000, and we are assuming that initially at least that request would be maybe in the vicinity of half of that which would be like \$500,000 for the annual appropriation, but, again, one would have to see. I guess my personal position is since we have not had an extended discussion of the issue within the committee is that some level of funding would be appropriate initially, and it may well be based upon the request because, as I recall, it is a reimbursement to the school district after the fact. It may well be that a different level of funding than is proposed here is what would be required and that a maximum could be up to \$1 million I suspect over time, but, initially, it obviously would be most likely substantially less, and I,