

specific amendment, because we do need some of this background information. As Senator Withem has stated, when we passed LB 183, the open enrollment bill last year in the Legislature, part of that bill on an amendment put in by Senator Schellpeper was that we would do a study of the...and take some hearings around the state, which we did last fall. We had four hearings around the state. They were attended by approximately 800 people across the state. We had excellent hearings, I think, and got a lot of good input from the people at these hearings. That is what 843 is meant to address is those concerns that they had. And, first of all, 843 is going to change the funding mechanism because many schools felt that there were not...there were not enough dollars transferring with these students to allow them to properly educate those students. So we're going to change that in 843. The funding mechanism of 843 is meant to tie in very well with LB 1059 which we have already talked about. And what it does is it would transfer an amount equal to the statewide average per pupil cost or the district's per pupil cost, whichever is less, that is the amount of money that would transfer with an open enrollment or choice student. This...and under LB 1059 we are considering that if 1059 is going to pass, and I'm assuming that it will, then this would just be part of the way that those funds in 1059 would be distributed. They would just be part of that...part of that distribution formula. So, in the bill, we tried to make it very clear that any monies that they receive for an option enrollment student will be...will be called an accountable receipt and also an expenditure of equal amounts so that it's an absolute wash, so that there are no equalization funds that would go with option enrollment students. They would receive purely their cost per pupil or the statewide average cost per pupil and no more dollars for that. That would not enter into their equalization part of their formula. We also had to make a couple of changes in the way that we do the special education funding just because we're changing the dollar amounts and changing the way that we're going to fund the rest of the bill. We had to make the changes in the special education funding to correspond with those. We do that. Another criticism of the open enrollment was that some students would not be able to take advantage of it because transportation would not be available to them to transfer to other districts, thus making it more of an elite kind of system. In an effort to try and address that, I have put in this bill that there is available through the state transportation based on need and need is based on the same thing that the schools now have the statistics to base need on free or