

providing incentives for innovative programs that are designed for the purpose of improving the quality in education. There are proposed in LB 699 a system of providing both mini grants and major grants to school districts. The mini grants would be eligible to every local school district for the purpose of developing a strategic local plan. One of the other things I heard a lot of last year when we talked about 1059 was if you give more money from the state level, you'll have less local control. It need not be that way. Kentucky is a great example of the role that the state should play in providing initiatives and definitions of what quality and outcomes ought to be for education and providing monitoring systems as well as accountability systems, but that only if we have local investment and local control will we get at the real issue of how to provide quality education. Mini grants would help school districts establish their strategic plan that would allow them to identify their specific needs and their specific goals and objectives. The major grants then would be available to school districts to do innovative programs that would help them accomplish the goals established in their strategic plans. In Section 3 of LB 699 it identifies several of the priorities based on the knowledge that we have now about what quality education is all about. The question was asked of me in the committee hearing, if you're talking about local control, a local flexibility, how does that happen if you establish priorities within the bill? Those priorities reflect what we know needs to be done to accomplish quality education. The flexibility for the local school districts comes in two ways. One is they can pick which one of those priorities they want to work on and, two, they can decide how they want to accomplish that specific priority. For example, if they decide that early education is one of the priorities that they want, they may decide to do that early education in a variety of ways. They could do a center based program for four-year-olds only, they could do a home based approach much like Missouri does with the parents as teachers first. They could do a collaboration and coordination with existing day-cares and preschools to try and get an early education for all the children in a community. So the flexibility comes in establishing what priorities the local school districts want and how they want to accomplish those priorities. LB 699 proposes that we establish a Council on Excellence in Education composed of people representing all the Congressional Districts as well as educators, state agencies, parents, business community and other strong leaders within the community. And now we come to the somewhat troublesome aspect