

type of funding. And Senator Withem calls...we had a debate last year over performance based or merit based pay and how to go about best...find the best possible means to support teachers. But performance based support is a concept that I feel that is needed in this state. When we make comparisons of our educational system we're not looking at Iowa or South Dakota or Kansas or California or New York, we have to look to the broader scheme of Japan, Germany, England, countries that have an educational system that, for some reason, has had higher test scores among their children. Now there's different theories as to why this is occurring. Some would say we need to expand the calendar year for our students so that they're in school longer, but there's also a strong theory that we should try to improve our educational system. And one means of accomplishing that goal is to encourage better performance by the teachers in the classroom. Now I feel, and I think most of us would, that you have to motivate individuals in order to do a better job in whatever occupation that they're involved with. Teachers are in the situation where it's very difficult to be fired. They can only be fired for cause. It's a lengthy process and it happens rarely in our educational system. So that if a teacher does a mediocre job in the classroom, they can even do a less than mediocre job in the classroom, that individual will probably never lose their job. And we have to find some way to keep that motivation. Now I don't mean to make generalizations about these teachers and that's not meant to be in 100 percent of the cases but the facts remain that we could have a better educational system in this country and one means to help motivate educators in this country would be financial. It's one means that the supporters of this bill have said is a way to get teachers into the profession and my perspective is once the teachers are in the system they need to do a better job and one way to do that is to provide incentives, financial incentives. I think the performance base is important. If it was my decision, everything as far as performance based would be performance based in this...in the funding for the teacher stipend bill. But the Legislature being a system of compromises, this was an approach after \$15 million was put into the fund to be spent, the additional money up to 20 was to be 100 percent performance based and then a different formula after that 20 million.

SPEAKER BAACK: One minute.

SENATOR ABBOUD: But I feel that we have to take this step. We