

Those would be preliminary recommendations based on their study of any rules, regulations that need to be modified, state statutes that need to be repealed or modified and suggestions about the program scope from 0 to 21. The second thing the amendment does is ask that the Special Education Accountability Commission review and consider using a block grant approach instead of a reimbursement approach for funding special education costs. And in that description we have outlined a number of considerations we are asking them to review. Those are listed beginning on page 2 in line 24. How to establish the basis for distribution of the block grants; how to provide for financial support of students with those extremely high-cost disabling conditions; how do we help districts deal with those students in a block grant approach; how to establish a proper funding level for block grants; how to assure funding for special education is maintained at the same level of growth or decline as funding levels for general education; how to establish educational practices for delivery of quality services. We do not want to affect the quality of the service that we have been able to deliver. How the block grant funding would be integrated with general state aid to be consistent with principles of equity underlying our equalization efforts; how to phase in the block grant funding so that we have a minimal financial impact on districts; how accountability will be connected to receiving the block grant money; and how the state department can integrate the block grant funding to eliminate duplication in aid payments. Currently special education money is distributed in a completely different system through a completely different formula than is 1059 money, and we're looking for a way to merge the system, not necessarily the money, so that we can deliver that in a more efficient manner. We also have asked the School Finance Review Committee to be involved as their role in monitoring equalization efforts is critical and special education is certainly an important part and funding an important part of what we're doing in the efforts to equalize. Again, we have allowed for the pilot projects, which we charged the Special Education Accountability Commission to begin two years ago, for those pilot projects to go ahead. Those will kind of be the testing ground for the block grant approach, and we ask then that the Special Education Accountability Commission make recommendations to the Education Committee at the end of this year as well. So in summary, we are asking the Department of Education and the Special Education Department, the State School Board to review what we have in rules, regulations and state statutes. We're asking Special