

SENATOR STUHR: I know that we have been talking about the Special Education Accountability Commission. When was that established? And what were the primary objectives and goals of that committee?

SENATOR McKENZIE: Senator Stuhr, the Special Education Accountability Commission was established in 1993. Their primary goals and responsibilities were to, if you will give me a minute, review all applicable federal and state laws, examine the funding mechanism for special education, review regulatory or procedural changes to determine compatibility with existing law, fiscal impact and impact on student findings, review findings of previous committees which have conducted similar studies, and develop broad frameworks for special education program standards, establish a system for assessing student outcomes, focus efforts on the establishment of a system for management and monitoring of special education costs and their impact on total education costs, select demonstration sites for the purpose of pilot implementation of program models which can document cost containment while maintaining appropriate services to children with disabilities. Let me see if that's...

SENATOR STUHR: Okay, I mean, could I just ask you, I mean, have they had an opportunity to, you know, present any information on their findings?

SENATOR McKENZIE: Yes, Senator Stuhr, they have submitted a preliminary report and now a second report to members of the Legislature with their recommendations.

SENATOR STUHR: And did the...did that address the escalating costs? I mean, have those findings addressed some of the things that, you know, we've been concerned about?

SENATOR McKENZIE: Yes, Senator Stuhr, in fact, LB 623, if you will recall, their request for additional time for the pilot projects was based on their recommendation or their view to move to a different approach, a block grant approach outside the state regulation to do things differently.

SENATOR STUHR: Okay, so your amendment is addressing more responsibilities, changing the responsibilities, adding responsibilities. Could you clarify that?

SENATOR McKENZIE: Yes. It is adding the responsibility or