

SENATOR LINDSAY: Senator Wickersham, you have about seven minutes.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Oh, thank you. Thank you, Senator Withem, I appreciate the extra time, and I don't plan on taking seven minutes. But I appreciate the amendment that Senator Withem is offering. I think it does address the defects that are in the proposal because it allows school districts a number of options to meet the needs of their students, and then, finally, if they have not chosen any of those options, they would be required to have in place a program that was defined by the State Department of Education. But certainly they would have a wide range of other alternatives not defined by the State Department of Education, and hopefully that would produce the result that Senator Bohlke indicated she hoped was going to be in place, and that is that this would not cause any additional costs to be incurred by school districts. And notwithstanding the language that they shall have in place a program, and, in fact, then it makes all of the other optional provisions, one of those, at least, become mandatory, I would be able to support the bill after the adoption of this amendment, because I am not amongst those who, if there are any amongst us, who believe that expelled kids simply ought to go home and sit and watch television; I don't think that's appropriate policy. I saw no way to implement a different kind of a policy with the language that we were originally presented with, and I think we've made some progress. It's perhaps one of those rare occasions when you actually get something done on the floor and it will work once it gets out of here. But whether it's rare or not, I'm glad that it's able to occur in this instance. Now some language is deleted by Senator Withem's amendment, it is the language about either within a district or through agreement with one or more districts, talking about how school districts can implement the alternative school, class or educational program. Frankly, that language is probably redundant because in existing law there are provisions for school boards to join together in providing what is referenced as such school, classes or programs, and then it provides for them to have an agreement to conduct that. So I think clearly that existing language contemplates that the program might be delivered outside of a given district and with the agreement of one or more districts, and, obviously, you could always have a program within your district, if you're required to have it. So I think the language...it is appropriate to delete that language as