

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: You know I talked to Superintendent Richardson on this topic yesterday, and we're somewhere around, I think, 40, the number of 40 that have actually optioned out. And there are not as many that have optioned in.

SENATOR ROBINSON: That tells you something for a small school, I guess.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: It certainly does.

SENATOR ROBINSON: Thank you.

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you, Senator Robinson. Senator Maurstad.

SENATOR MAURSTAD: Thank you, Madam President. I rise to oppose the Eernard-Stevens amendment. A couple years ago, when I served on the school board back home, we at that time addressed the situation...we have four elementary schools in four different areas of our community, following the traditional neighborhood school concept. But at that time there was an effort made to allow choice or open enrollment within the school district, that would allow...instead of having territorially to go to a particular elementary school, a parent could decide which of the four elementary schools they would send their children. My point being that this issue came up during that discussion, and it was one where there was very strong feelings on the part of parents that they be allowed to maintain that family unit. Now I'm not intending to get into a discussion whether that's reasonable for parents to feel that way, or whether it's a practical, from the school districts' perspective, to have a different policy. I just know what the strong sentiment is relative to this particular issue in my school district. And I would have to think that it's probably a fairly universal feeling around the state that if in fact a parent had one student that optioned into a school district, the next student came along, since most parents don't understand or know, not that they can't understand but don't know what the current law is, they would naturally assume that that sibling could also go to that school also. And I think when they found out that that school district would have the ability to not allow that, that they would not understand, nor would they agree with that policy even though there might be very strong fiscal, financial, space, and a variety of other reasons that would be