

policy discussion on what we intend to do with the special education component, and the education component, and keep that separate from what we're discussing today, which is the funding formula. I don't think that the timing is right. I think...I would hope that the majority of people on this floor would feel the same way and oppose the Schimek amendment. Thank you.

SENATOR COORDSEN: Thank you, Senator Witek. Senator McKenzie.

SENATOR MCKENZIE: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the body. I want to go back and respond to Senator Robinson's question about four districts, three equalized, one nonequalized with high...high special education needs and costs maybe, and I have one district, school district in my area that has a high percentage of special education students, partly because they have a high percentage of low income families. What might happen in that scenario, if you look more accurately and target the actual costs, is that school district might end up equalized, identifying that real cost to the district instead of the average cost to the district. So I wanted to respond to Senator Robinson's statement about that. The other thing I think just in terms of policy, Senator Witek is right, and as I said, the 742 process is going ahead; 742 is about finding a completely different way to fund special education, rather than the 90 percent reimbursement. That process will continue because we know we have to address it, and we have to address high-need students. How that funding system flows through equalization or flows through to the schools is what we will have to decide next year. But as we look at actual costs, we look at special education as not only a state mandated program but federally mandated with very few changes being proposed at the federal level to provide state relief, this, in my mind, is probably even more...even more important in terms of real cost to a district than is transportation. Now I've had a concern all along that high-spending districts, those who choose to spend more in special education programs, should not be benefited to some extent, but we also need to look at those districts who have provided a bare minimum because of the averaging, because they have 15, 17 percent of their students identified for special education and have to deal with that cost within their average. Thank you.

SENATOR COORDSEN: Thank you, Senator McKenzie. Senator Hillman.