

would like to give the rest of my time to Senator Schimek, if she'd like to have it.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Schimek.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Thank you, Senator Janssen. I appreciate the time. Members of the body, I'd just like to clarify a couple of things here. First of all, I didn't know this amendment was going to come up on the floor this fast this morning. I just filed it last night so I had not talked with the Education Committee members, and I really appreciate their quick response and standing up to outline some of the history of this. Secondly, I am not sure that the Appropriations Committee ever discussed this matter, although it was my impression that they had. But, regardless of that, I do think it's a critical issue. It is not a new issue, and there was a bill on it this year, Senator Avery, and there was a bill on it two years ago. It is not a new issue. It's critical, and I think what Senator Janssen just said may very well be true. I think that if any individual parent wanted to take a school district to court to say my child is not learning to read and my child deserves this education just the same as any other student in this school district, they may very well have a valid case. I think reading is basic. We're not even asking for that in this particular amendment. All I'm asking for is a little money for the in-service training and for the computer technology that's out there. Staff has just told me that the training program really is already in place at the University of Nebraska. These additional funds would be because there might be some increased demand if we actually do this. But the technology for this computer is wonderful, and I'm not sure every school district would go out and buy this technology, although I would think if you were a larger school district, you might want to, particularly if you had a number of students that could use it. So I...I really want to make clear that this is not a mandate. It isn't, although I think, inherently, every school district is mandated already to provide reading for everyone of their students, but that's beside the point. All this does is ask for \$14,000 on an ongoing basis for the training, and \$23,000 for the initial computer, computer program costs. And with that, I'd...I'd still be willing to answer any questions that you might continue to have.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Thank you. Senator Bohlke, followed by