

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
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March 23, 1999 LB 495

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you, Senator Chambers. Before we continue with the debate, Senator Dwite Pedersen and Senator Mark Quandahl have, as their guests, this morning 100 twelfth grade civic students from Millard South in Omaha with their teachers. (Introduced teachers.) They're in the south balcony. Would all of you please stand and be welcomed by your Legislature. Thank you for being here. To continue the discussion on LB 495, the amendment, Senator Stuhr.

SENATOR STUHR: Thank you, Senator Crosby and members of the Legislature. I'd like to continue with the breakdown of the funding that I have proposed in LB 495. As I said earlier, 80 percent of the funding goes to the Quality Education Accountability Act with 10 percent out of that 80 percent going to mentor teacher program. I am proposing to target 15 percent of the remaining funds to the vocational technical education area, which would also include technology, and this leaves 5 percent to be allocated by the Governor through incentive grants. And one thing I want to point out, that about 90 percent of the schools throughout the state of Nebraska, only those, and that leaves 10 percent that doesn't have an approved program but could work towards an approved program. But these grants, and some people have voiced some concern about, well, is this money going to be targeted for an area, the local school will have the decision on how to do that program. There may be six programs in the school. They may select one program to purchase some new equipment in that area, but whatever is their greatest need is where they will allocate or could allocate those dollars. And it also, the bill also provides for accountability. The schools have to report how the money was spent and what they did with it. There will also be some follow up and that was in Section 7, I believe, which tightened up and also gave some accountability to the Department of Education. Also, there was a question yesterday. Some people were expressing some concern in supporting ongoing programs. Again, I want to emphasize that these funds would be used to enhance the quality of these programs. It's like painting your house and not doing the trim or painting the shutters. It would...it doesn't give you possibly an entire good look, and so this is what these grants will provide to improve the quality of the program. And there has been a lot of concern expressed by