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NAEP test that will provide the state the information that looks at how we are ranking as a state when we look at Nebraska and...

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Time.

SENATOR BOHLKE: ...sometimes provide us the information or warning that we need. Thank you.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Kristensen, members of the Legislature, I think this is a very important debate. And I'm sure there will be people all over the spectrum on this. So let me state clearly where I am on the spectrum and why and argue to you, for a particular perspective. My perspective is that we should stay with the current law. And the current law is one test for everybody. When the whole reform of recent years began, it became very important to the Education Committee, and is still very important to the Education Committee, that the reform be real, and that the reform be measurable and assessed, and that based on that measurement and assessment action might be taken with regard to our school system to improve it here or there or everywhere, or nowhere, depending on the results of new standards and new assessments based on those standards. So we have gone through the process now of establishing the standards. However, unlike I think most of the states, and correct me if I'm wrong, Senator Bohlke, unlike most of the states, we did not mandate those standards onto the local school districts. We said, you can abide by the State Department of Education standards, or you can let them go, you can do either. And so in one sense, to me, we have opened the door to failure, to some extent, because some may let them go. And that would be a terrible failure from my perspective, because the original thrust of the argument was to solidify the core curriculum, to identify standards in particular areas of education that were central and absolutely essential, and to be sure we were meeting those standards. With these new statewide standards that are not mandatory, there is no assurance that those standards will be met at all. They can be totally ignored. But the key to it, with standards that were not mandated, was that there would be a public understanding of how close they are to approaching the state standards, notwithstanding that they were not mandatory.