

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

April 27, 1999 LB 144

the commissioner has said as far as the necessity of really trying to measure the standards and if they're making a difference. We have gone...we have spent a great deal of money on standards and implementing them, a great deal of time and energy. I believe the State Board of Education has been about it for about three years, and I think they make a very strong case when they say why have we gone through these standards, if we do not measure if they're successful or not? Then the point is, how do we measure if they're successful or not? And what we present to you is that there are some things that measure that now at the local district, and we would then allow schools to pick a number of other ways to add on to those standardized tests that would be more criterion reference tests. Therefore, I do support the suspension of the rules. Thank you.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Senator Wickersham.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Mr. President, members of the body, I support Senator Bohlke's motion to suspend the rules so we can consider AM0880 to LB 144. It isn't because I am necessarily so set on a single test. I don't, frankly, know that there is a particularly right answer to the testing issue. Any decision that you would make would be soundly criticized. But I think that AM0880 certainly represents a direction that I'm willing to support and see how things go. The fact of the matter is that if the proposal from the Department of Education doesn't work out, all of these multiple tests in many school districts across the state of Nebraska, if that doesn't work out to meet our objectives, if we can't make any sense out of it, that we can always come back and do something else later. And so from that standpoint, I think we're keeping our options open. Senator Bohlke suggested to you that a part of AM0880 might be controversial, the NAEP test. Well, if it's controversial, let's have the discussion, try to figure out why it's controversial, and maybe after we're all done it won't be controversial, because I don't frankly see in my estimation why it should be. It's incomprehensible to me that that would be a controversial issue, but what...you know, I'm from western Nebraska. The air is thinner out there. Maybe there's some things I don't understand. But I don't mind having the debate so that we can figure out whether it's just thin air or wrong thinking that's affecting my judgment on that particular issue.