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LB 812

SENATOR RAIKES: Thank you.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Senator Stuhr.

SENATOR STUHR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature. I wanted to draw your attention to one of the bullet points on the back of the page and it's the one right underneath the dark space. First of all, I do want to say that I will support Senator Beutler's amendment on the number of tests. I would prefer additional tests, but we're actually talking very much about the same thing. It's how many different ways can you test on...ask one question, so to speak? And this would give us like four different ways to test on or asking one question. So I think that we could certainly compromise on that one issue. But I did want to point out that we will also be adopting criteria for the inclusion of students with disabilities, students entering the school for the first time, and students with limited English proficiency. In other words, all students will be included in the assessments. And I think that that is an important point and also we did talk about the confidentiality of individual students. They will only...we will have only schools rated, not individual students, and I think that's important. Last week I passed out a sheet on what makes a good accountability system, and I just wanted to go over a couple of those points with you; and one of those was set standards that are high. And I think that we're certainly doing that and schools may even set their standards higher than what the state does. Develop the standards first and then the assessments, and that's certainly what we've been working on. The State Board has worked for a number of years getting those standards up to par. Also number three was include all students in the testing program, and that is one issue then that we have dealt with. Don't rely solely on a single test when making important decisions about students. So again we've been talking about multiple assessments here using...getting teachers involved in writing those assessments. Place more emphasis on comparisons of performance from year to year than from school to school, and I think that's an important point also that we need to look at again, concentrating on the student achievement and student progress. And at that point I just want to mention last year we did talk about the state report card. I believe Senator Bohlke passed all of you a copy of that last week. And what it