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early. And we did this originally for the purpose of doing that. But it appears that not as many took advantage as it appears are going to now, and many of them, through...without much other recourse, in fact, to go ahead and unify the districts or consolidate the districts in order to take advantage of what we have been telling the people of this state that they have to do. If they want to continue to get state aid, they really don't have any choice in the matter. So I guess I feel it's an important issue. And it's...it appears to be a bit of good luck that they were able to find that there was some of this money that was never utilized, that was appropriated and is now laying there to be used. And so it gives us an opportunity to continue to encourage those schools to unify or consolidate and in fact get those funds that they were originally told would be available if they would in fact move ahead with this. And as Senator Bohlke said originally, we talked about the fact that if there are more came in than the money was available, it would be prorated accordingly. Because not so many came in, there's actually money that's left to be used. And so I would hope that you would look at that favorably and consider the amendment that's coming up, and in fact continue to encourage these school districts to take advantage of the unification-consolidation process that's put in place. With that, I'll turn the rest of my time back to the Chair. Thank you.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Senator...thank you. Senator Coordsen.

SENATOR COORDSEN: Well, it's amazing sometimes, Mr. Speaker, how quickly things can change around here. The one thing, though, that hasn't changed is the need for additional encouragement for those talks that are going on among primarily Class II and III schools across the state of Nebraska. A number of things are happening. Certainly, the valuation increases that have happened in spite of anybody's ability to make money has created a situation where in many cases state aid has declined for districts that are in need of consolidation. That has in...who feel they're in need of consolidation. That has increased the number of districts in the state of Nebraska in the last several years, although the program, I think, has been in effect for three or four years. Again, as I spoke to earlier this evening, the amount of lead time, I think, we had not