

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
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SENATOR BEUTLER: Okay. What is that rule? I mean, under the law, as such, you don't have to stay unified for very long. Whenever the term of the agreement ends or, by agreement, you can disunify also at any point in time, right?

SENATOR BOHLKE: You can disunify, but if you disunify before seven years, you have to pay the money back.

SENATOR BEUTLER: The entire amount back?

SENATOR BOHLKE: Yes.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Okay. And how many school districts in the last couple years have consolidated, and how many of them have unified?

SENATOR BOHLKE: And, Senator Beutler, I'm not going to be able to give you an exact count, but I can tell you that with the unification, I'm aware of, I believe, three unified districts. And there have been some mergers or interlocal agreements, because some schools have closed. I can tell you right now we have 580 school districts. And I...as you recall, I think it was about 640 when we...a few years ago. So we've moved in that direction. That would be since about...that would be since about 1996.

SENATOR BEUTLER: How many school districts have qualified and taken advantage of this fund since we changed it two years ago? I mean,...

SENATOR BOHLKE: Well, we had...

SENATOR BEUTLER: ...we're saying there's not enough money...

SENATOR BOHLKE: We had the...

SENATOR BEUTLER: You know, a couple of years ago, when we talked about the Hardship Fund, it was so clear to everybody that at least all this \$2 million and more was needed. And as it turns out, none of it was needed, apparently.