

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

April 2, 2004

LB 1091

SENATOR HARTNETT: Senator Raikes.

SENATOR RAIKES: Yes.

SENATOR ENGEL: You know, I could turn around and ask him this without getting on the mike here, and he'd probably understand me a little better because of my voice. But I'd like to have you explain the voluntary part of this, if you would, please.

SENATOR RAIKES: Well, Senator, this is...this is simply a program offered by the state or we the people, I guess you could say, that is something that individual school boards can take into account in their decision as to what to do about their structural future. Are they going to stay the way they are given the fiscal situation they faced, or are they going to move? If they decide to make a change, and they qualify under this program, then this is the amount of the money they would receive. Now a couple important points, one of them already I mentioned, is that if you're going to reorganize in a way that you get to 300 students instead of 390, then that's not going to be benefited by this program. If you're going to think about reorganizing maybe for five years and then possibly after that reorganize, that's not going to. This is strictly a two-year program. This is a window that's open, or will be open, in these two years and that's it.

SENATOR ENGEL: Thank you. Well, then there are some school districts out there, because of the distance between them, that if they put it all together they wouldn't make 390, so there would be no incentive for them to consolidate, right? Or, a second part of that, say they are close enough but they would not, if they consolidate, they would not reach that magic number, so what would their incentive be to consolidate?

SENATOR RAIKES: Well, Senator, if the reason that they couldn't accumulate 390 students in one system is because of geographical dispersion then, yes, yes, you're right. But the way we take account of that issue in school finance is through sparse and very sparse. But you may also have some school systems that were not faced with geographical dispersion but simply, you know, for whatever reason, decided, no, we want to maintain