

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
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FLOOR DEBATE

February 10, 2005 LB 126

moved to town. That's the way things work in rural Nebraska. That's the way they work in a Class VI district. But I will address Class VI's later. I believe I have some expertise in that, in that I have been on a Class VI or Class I school board for over 21 years. My first comments today, I would like to say that last year Governor Johanns, in his State of the State, specifically spoke to LB 698, which was a state aid bill. He said that when LB 698 came to the floor, that you senators need to look at state aid, because that could be the answer to the state's problems. State aid has been in a state of flux for many, many years. The state is currently faced with two separate lawsuits over our state aid formula. Yet this most important issue was not addressed by this body last year. And this year, what is our first bill to be discussed from the Education Committee? It's LB 126. Instead of addressing an issue, state aid, which affects all parts of our state, and that affects all the children in this state, and that affects all the taxpayers in this state, the members of this body are again looking at the affiliated Class I's and the Class VI-Class I K-12 system. As I said, that is the one I am familiar with. I believe this will be a factual debate this year. For many years, I've stood behind the glass and I've been frustrated when I've listened to all the misinformation and, I believe, the incorrect perceptions when we discuss school consolidation in the body. So I'm very pleased that I have the opportunity to discuss this issue on the floor as a member of the body. First of all, I would like to address the new fiscal note. In that new note, it says, data was obtained from the NDE showing Class I districts with less than 2.5 resident students per grade in 2004-2005; General Fund disbursements for the 2003-04; and Class I elementary attendance sites within ten miles of another elementary school within a Class II, III, or VI district. Based on this data, it is possible that school boards may opt to close current Class I elementary attendance sites, expending \$12.7 million in 2003-2004. The closure of these attendance centers will translate into a savings of about the same amount. The data indicates about 56 percent, or 96 of the 171 districts, of the Class I's currently having less than 2.5...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.