

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

February 11, 2005 LB 126

and they were funding them at a lower rate than they were the students in my district, I would be on them at least as hard as I am on any Class I district.

SENATOR SMITH: Okay. Thank you. Because it concerns me a great deal that we're singling out...I mean, Senator Stuhr talked about bad Class I schools yesterday and low-quality Class I schools, and I hope she expounds on that today because I want to know where those low tests scores are, where the poor quality education is in the Class I's. I would like to know more specifically where it is because, on average, they do well across Nebraska. I think they set an example of what can and should take place in education with class size, with opportunities that they can take across Nebraska. The only classes that get to come to visit the State Capitol are Class I 8th graders, from my district, because that distance is too great across the state and too expensive, and the state aid formula doesn't reflect any distance. But if we want to get to the bottom of the problems facing education funding and structure, we need to look at the state aid formula. We can't blame the structure on the poor formula that we have and expect to get anything done. I would yield...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR SMITH: ...the balance of my time to Senator Fischer.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Fischer, about one minute.

SENATOR FISCHER: Mr. President, members of the body, thank you, Senator Smith. As I was saying, LB 126 does take a broad-brush approach in regard to Class I schools. This discussion is targeting efficiencies and now race has been brought into the debate. If that is the reason, if these are the reasons that LB 126 has been introduced, then we need to discuss those reasons. As I said before, what about Omaha Westside? Why are we only targeting Class I's? Is that because we're the easy target here, because we don't have the votes, we don't have the influence in this body, and I would argue even across this state; we don't have the influence that Omaha Westside has, not just with votes but with the business community in this state?