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

February 15, 2005 LB 126

is the fact that Class I schools are already closing on their own, much like they did in Senator Stuhr's district, voluntarily School districts are closing, according to the Department of Education, one school district every two weeks, on average. That's without a state mandate. LB 126, as it stands right now, is this overreaching, overly broad, boilerplate approach that has nothing to do with quality, zero. We need to foster an environment that enhances the option enrollment, not the We need to foster that environment of option enrollment by keeping the Class I schools so that we have, number one, options for students but, number two, a healthy competition. And I realize that sometimes the competition might get a little stressful, but I would much rather the competition be between two existing schools than a hypothetical level established by the government that some bureaucrats in Lincoln or Washington established. The local level is the best place to make decisions, especially when it involves the livelihood of a community and the education of children. I suppose I could go on and on and on, do it for the kids, do it for the kids. That's an overused term. But let's look at quality that is a component nonexistent in LB 126. The boilerplate approach is not the right way to go. And just because a school board can hire a kindergarten teacher and the math teacher in the high school does not make it a quality system. There's so much more that needs to be involved with that, and we can do that. We can provide that. We can provide a system and encourage a system that is based, number one, on quality, followed closely by efficiency as it relates to cost. As many reports and numbers that are shifted around at the State Office Building, you would think we could come up with a way that puts quality ahead of the numbers, but the numbers closely follow so that we can track, and we can keep a hand or keep at least a finger on the costs of administration, because that's where we see more and more dollars spent consistently. This is not an isolated scenario the number of administrators increasing at a rate two or three times that of the decline, decline, emphasis, in the number of districts. I know of a school district with declining enrollment who keeps adding administration. And LB 126,...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.