

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

April 5, 2005

LB 689

are going to provide educational, equal educational opportunity in all parts of the state, it is my belief it's critical that if we're going to do it cost effectively and in a manner that provides relatively equal quality, we are going to have to take advantage of distance education. We're going to have to take advantage of the technology. We're going to have to take advantage of the fact that some school systems in the state can have specialties and can have staff people on line or have staff people in place that can provide educational opportunities that are not available throughout the state. Recognized in that is that we simply cannot afford to have, for example, an AP math teacher and an AP literature instructor in every school system in the state. We've got to be able to figure out ways that we can share those resources throughout the state. This becomes then very important, this task force in the works, and its work becomes very important toward that end. We need not only to have the technology available, we need to provide individual school systems, both on the sending and receiving ends, incentives to participate in the delivery of these educational services. A final thing I'll mention. A projected cost we have is something on the order of \$25 million over a three-year period to do what is needed to do to provide the technological upgrade and also the enhanced distance learning package. We, as you know, are in the process now of creating a biennial budget. You'll see, and we'll talk more about this, the green copy proposed a \$10 million appropriation for this. At that point, the thinking was that there would be \$10 million needed for each of three years for a total of \$30 million. We have probably without great reason backed that down to \$8 million per year. Perhaps the reason is growling by Senator Pederson. But the point is, this task force itself is in place strictly to figure out a plan as to what should happen. None of the money would be spent until the Legislature had the plan of the task force to work with and make a decision on, which would happen next session. On the other hand, if, in fact, the \$8 million is a reasonable number, the beginning expenditure for that would be at the...in the second year of the biennium that we are now budgeting for. So the reason for the intent language to appropriate the money is that we need to make allowance in our budgeting decisions now that we provide for this amount of money which would again be spent only after the Legislature had