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LB 577

that point would have been added in the upcoming budget biennium. So I think the total additional cost in the first year of the out-biennium is \$4 million. And I think it's about the same in the second year of that biennium.

SENATOR FISCHER: In the...okay. We realize that in a few years these students are going to be counted in the formula, and early childhood education programs will be included as a factor in the formula?

SENATOR RAIKES: No, they would be...they would actually be counted as students. And this is a point you raised, I think, maybe on the budget bill discussion. And it's a good question. Is it...well, are these additional students going to simply get added in the denominator, so that the effect is to reduce the cost group cost? And the answer is, no. We have made the change so that that does not happen, that there is no reduction in the cost group cost as a result of counting four-year-olds in the aid formula.

SENATOR FISCHER: Will all districts be able to count their four-year-olds? Or do these districts have to have programs, early childhood programs?

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR RAIKES: The latter. The latter. Only the students...only the four-year-olds who have been a part of a program that has been in existence for three years. The program has to have been in existence for three years.

SENATOR FISCHER: Okay. That...

SENATOR RAIKES: The child doesn't necessarily...

SENATOR FISCHER: That brings up another question, then. Who approves the programs in order for districts to receive the grants currently?

SENATOR RAIKES: Okay. We would, in LB 577, establish criteria for prioritization of grant applications.