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SENATOR RAIKES: Yes.

SENATOR FISCHER: Senator Raikes, can you...you made the comment that many districts need to get involved in distance education. Do you know how many districts are not currently offering any distance education?

SENATOR RAIKES: I can't give you an exact count, Senator, but I can get that for you. Generally speaking, school districts from here east don't participate. Most of the participation currently in distance education is west of here, and particularly in...probably west of Grand Island.

SENATOR FISCHER: Thank you, Senator. As a rule, Senator, I see a problem with that. If school districts in the east, if our larger urban districts aren't participating in distance education, those are the districts that have expanded curriculums, they have master teachers, they are offering their students opportunities that more central and western districts in the state aren't able to offer their students, mainly because they do not have the faculty on board to teach those classes. I would be more enthusiastic with this proposal for distance education, if somehow we could get these more urban districts involved. If we can have teachers in the metro area, master teachers in the metro area teaching physics and calculus classes, and having those classes beamed out to central and western Nebraska, where they are truly needed by students, that would be great. And to me, that's what distance learning and distance education in this state should be about.

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR FISCHER: It shouldn't be about a group of small rural schools struggling to help each other, when they don't have the resources. When I say they don't have the resources, we could throw all the money we want at distance education, we can throw all the money we want at providing the equipment, but we need to have those teachers out there, and if the teachers aren't out there, I think we need to figure out a way that we can have the teachers in urban areas of the state provide that opportunity to