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call it arithmetic--and general learning skills for their students that attend all-day kindergarten. All-day kindergarten also has positive effects on social and behavioral skills. Children engaged in all-day kindergarten are able to interact with more child-to-child relationships, and they make significantly more progress in learning social skills. Not only is all-day kindergarten beneficial to the child, it is also of benefit to the teacher. All-day teachers feel less rushed in accomplishing the kindergarten objectives. Teachers also feel that they have a better chance of knowing their children and their parents better. Children have time to develop close relationships with their teachers, and they are more relaxed about learning. There is also more time available for individual instruction, which is critical for this age group. I appreciate the leadership of the State Board of Education and the stand they have taken on this issue. During the discussions on this bill, I have talked with many school districts, including Omaha and Lincoln, about how this will impact them. All have expressed support for LB 228, because they realize that this is what is best for the students and best for the families. A wise teacher once told me that you can spend all the money in the world building a beautiful building out of fine materials and using the finest craftsmen, but if that building is not built upon a solid foundation it will simply collapse into a pile of debris. Early childhood education, including all-day kindergarten, is a foundation of our educational system. By passing LB 228, we are allowing all of our children the chance to build a solid foundation for their future. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Howard for that opening. Senator Raikes, there are committee amendments. You're recognized to open, as Chairman of the Education Committee.

SENATOR RAIKES: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the Legislature. Senator Howard has done a good job of describing the bill, and in doing so has also described the committee amendment. The committee amendment makes the bill very simple. It simply says that beginning in the 2009-2010 school year, a minimum of 1,032 instruction...well, I should say, full-day kindergarten would need to be offered by every school. Current provisions allowing a minimum of 400 clock hours for