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create a safeguard in our formula that ensures the survival of rural schools that are small out of necessity. It is true that the new formula will cause rural schools that are small by choice to make decisions regarding their future, but we purposely allowed those decisions to be decided at the local level. They may choose to merge, reduce costs, or, by a vote of the people, remain open and continue to spend at their current level. Members of the committee were fully aware of the consequences for many high-spending districts. But that leads us back to 1114. Why did a majority of us vote for it? We stated over and over again that it was time for schools to become more efficient. It is no surprise that many still believe that to be a worthy goal, just as long as it has no consequences for schools in their district. The question we must keep before us is, how do we gain efficiencies unless we establish a statewide average per pupil cost? The same for every student across the state, unless you live in a sparsely populated area, or have numbers of students living in poverty or coming to school with limited English proficiency, how can a statewide average be so unfair? The dictionary defines average, to distribute proportionately. Plainly and simply that is the main goal of 806, to distribute proportionately to schools the limited tax dollars we have based on need. For years, the basic principle of Nebraska school finance has been to measure a school's needs and resources. If needs have out measured resources, a district has received equalization aid. A large majority of students in this state attend schools that receive equalization aid. In fact, 258,281 students are the average daily membership students in schools that receive equalization aid. LB 1114 set the stage and makes necessary the reorganization of Class I schools. I promise you there is no one on the Education Committee that looked forward to tackling reorganization in addition to a new funding formula, but we had no choice. In fact, the solution we voted for was at the suggestion of the Class VIs and Class Is. Let me repeat that, the idea to give the budgeting authority to high schools was presented to us by a representative of the Class VI-Class Is, and in fact, it was at a large meeting of those school superintendents that this solution was voted upon, not by the Education Committee. It is true that the Education Committee then decided to apply the same method to the Class Is that are affiliated with the high schools. As we discussed creating a