

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

March 18, 1998 LB 1228

only, I'm telling you this is something that should be included and balanced. However, balanced can mean many things. Even whole language teachers now maintain that their approach is balanced, which you just heard that they're already doing this, they're already putting phonics in, because after all they do address phonics. But I'll tell you something, they don't do it consistently, and they don't do it systematically and explicitly. And, yes, those words are very important to what this is asking people to do. There are elements of phonics instruction that cannot be diluted, it goes on to say, it must be systematic and explicit if the full benefit is to be derived from it. To deprive children of that benefit is destructive. We are allowing the destruction of children's reading ability to go on every single day in schools across this state, and we're not doing anything. As leaders in the Legislature, we're not doing anything. There's no bill that came out of the Education Committee. What you're doing in this bill is tying this to the State Board standards. And if you read on page 2 of the bill that we're discussing, 1228, it says, each district in a local system has adopted academic standards adopted and promulgated by the State Board of Education, or academic standards approved by the State Board as generally more rigorous than the academic standards adopted and promulgated by the State Board. Well, let me tell you that the academic standards that are generally more rigorous that they're talking about is the NEEDS document, which includes the use of systematic phonics. So, all this is doing is duplicating what you've already got in this piece of legislation; it's just spelling it out a little more clearly to people who might not understand it in educationese, that the generally more rigorous academic standards that were adopted by the...

PRESIDENT ROBAK: One minute.

SENATOR WITEK: ...State Board include the NEEDS document. And if that isn't what you're intimating by that language, that needs to be clarified by the proponents of this bill. So by asking schools to comply with this, if they want to have this...these dollars for quality education, to me makes perfect sense and is something that probably should have been done in one way or another a long time ago. And a lot of parents are pretty angry. As far as the core knowledge program in Millard,