

lid. It appears that it will not be part of the spending limitations next year because it looks like within the Appropriations Committee that we can fund it fully with federal funds and a program that is a hundred percent federally funded does not count for the spending lid. So basically this exclusion is in the last year, it's in this next year probably due to the availability of federal funds. What I am concerned about is subsequent years when we may not have the federal dollars available, when, in fact, then we must provide state dollars for preschool special education. Those dollars, those state dollars, if they flow to a school district then would be counted in the spending limitation. They then would compete within the decisions of a school district against other programs...high schools, junior high, elementary school programs. It seems to me that we should not have this new function of schools, preschool special education in a competitive position for dollars with other programs, particularly because preschool special education is mandated in several different forms, and if the mandated program is competing within the budget against something that may be optional, let's say athletics, certain art programs, certain special programs, library books, things that aren't really mandated that are a part of education but we have never said, you shall provide X, that then the school district has no choice but to cut the optional programs for the regular program and go with the funding for preschool special education. Now Senator Lamb makes this a hundred percent state dollars and I think if we are taking a hundred percent of the responsibility for the dollars, then I believe that we should not penalize the local school district for accepting these. Therefore, I think we should continue the exclusion that we have already provided for this. Now I think the one argument against this is that maybe we should wait and see if state dollars are ever going to be sent to this program. I guess I would prefer to resolve the problem now. I think that it is hard to predict, but I think certainly with the move nationally to limit spending that it is fairly likely the federal government is not going to be as generous in sending dollars back to local governments as it has been in the past, and I think at some point we are going to have to face the question of putting state dollars in this program. I would not like to see us put state dollars in this program at the expense of kids in a local school district. For this reason I suggest that we add this now. As I have said the exclusion is in effect this year. It looks like essentially the exclusion will be in effect next year, and I think that we ought to just continue to keep this program as kind of a separate item outside of the regular school budgets and