

to speak to this.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Baack.

SENATOR BAACK: Yes.

SENATOR HIGGINS: I'm looking purely for information. As I understand it, Senator, the new formula, is it going to be based upon the number of students in each school district?

SENATOR BAACK: We don't...there is no legislation in there that would change the formula at all. This is the formula that we are presently using as the excess cost formula. We have nothing in there that would change that. The one thing that we do have in, as far as legislation that is going to change it a little bit, is the definitions and the verification guidelines. We're going to make it more...make those rules more stringent so it is...so that we have some consistency across the state in who is verified as reimbursable.

SENATOR HIGGINS: Senator, does it say that, I have not seen it, but does it say that we would eliminate the education or attempt to educate mentally retarded below a certain age?

SENATOR BAACK: No, it puts no limitations on that at all. I mean because we already have the zero to three guidelines, and we supported those. We support the zero to three program, and we continue to support the program clear up to 21, the way we have it right now, the study concluded that.

SENATOR HIGGINS: Okay, thank you very much, Senator, for answering my question.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Nelson, please.

SENATOR NELSON: Mr. Speaker, I also rise in support of this. I think Senator Morehead and Senator Baack have also explained this very well. I happen to have been involved on the phone in other education issues, and I didn't get in on the very first part of the debate. I guess that is what I get when I leave the floor listening through the telephone booth. But we did go in depth on the various formulas and what would be fair, or what would not be fair for the number of students. That did not seem fair to us. This is simply the same formula that was used. Through a lot of scrutiny