

decreases in property taxes. That no longer is an argument that I will use with the same kind of vigor and force that I once used because I think the data really is in that an increase in state aid does not proportionately reduce local property taxes. Secondly, and this is the most painful subject of all for me to really discuss, and I am beginning, I guess, my own process of educating myself and maybe working with other members of the Legislature. I am persuaded that over time we need to engage in further restructuring of education because I think that we, today, have so much inefficiency, so much inefficiency in the way we deliver educational services in our state that to continue to throw state dollars into inefficient structures is both unwise and unwarranted. In conversations I have had with Joe Lutjeharms, the Commissioner of the Department of Education, the Commissioner has indicated to me that if the State of Nebraska had a school structure, had a school structure that provided a solid property tax base for schools, and in addition provided for responsible class size for children, we would be able to save \$100 million in revenues alone for the education of children, and that same \$100 million could then be used for teachers salaries, or property tax relief, or what have you, that there is a \$100 million inefficiency in our school structures. Now I'm going to say one thing that is going to be very difficult for rural senators, I think, to accept. Rural Nebraska today is not acting responsibly for the education of its school children. As you know the ACT results are now broken out by size of school. In Nebraska the results show that the children attending smaller schools are doing more poorly on the ACT examination than the children attending larger schools. In fact those seniors graduating with classes of 25 or fewer students are testing 15 percent below those seniors graduating with classes of 25 or more students. We have 159 high schools in our state that graduate fewer than 25 students annually, 159 high schools. Those children are testing more poorly than children graduating from other high schools. The time has come for us to address school structure issues. In addressing school structure issues the need for state aid of the kind of proportions that we are discussing will begin to fade away because as we begin to restructure education in our state we will pick up, over time, that \$100 million of savings that are there, of savings that are there simply through restructuring. In my view for us to continue to pour state aid dollars into an anachronistic structure, that doesn't educate our children