



**Dave Heineman**  
Governor

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Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, and  
Members of the Legislature State  
Capitol  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509

Dear Mr. President and Members of the Legislature:

I am returning LB 126 and LB 126A without my signature and with my objections.

Almost without exception in Nebraska's history, decisions regarding the mandatory merger or closure of our local school districts are permeated with strong emotion. You and I have received immeasurable public input from both supporters and opponents of this significant legislation.

After having diligently reviewed the very detailed provisions of LB 126, I do not believe the bill achieves its original goals of improved efficiency and of an improved quality education that the students of our small schools receive. The legislation now requires the expenditure of nearly three million dollars during the first three years to implement its provisions.

Furthermore, I firmly believe that the forced consolidation presented by the bill will, in the long run, alienate parents from their schools rather than involving them even more in the decisions affecting the management and structure of their children's public education. Voluntary school district consolidation is already occurring without government intervention. Voluntary consolidation implemented by local decision-making rather than a state mandate has a better opportunity of uniting communities.

I have visited several Class I school districts and I have been in many K-12 districts over the years. Both are providing a quality education for Nebraska students.

I commend Senator Raikes and those who worked tirelessly to try to achieve a final legislative solution; however, the compromise proposed in LB 126 neither advances the cause of efficiency in school governance nor ensures a better quality of education for children who are educated in Class I and Class VI schools throughout Nebraska.

For these reasons, I urge you to sustain my vetoes of these bills.

Sincerely,

Dave Heineman  
Governor