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Education officials want special session

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school districts that received less than their share of funding because of calculation errors by the Department of Education.

Language formally closing the Nebraska School for the Deaf.

Kathleen McCallister, president of the State Board of Education, said schools need to have a special education funding formula in place as they plan their budgets.

Schools are required to provide special education. If they are unsure of the amount of funding they will receive, they may have to cut other programs to ensure special education is paid for, she said.

LB1175 is a routine funding bill that shouldn't be politicized, she said.

"We'd like to see it go back into obscurity and not be a big deal anymore," she said.

Katherine Endacott, vice president of the State Board of Education, agreed students' interests shouldn't be held back by political wrangling.

"This is a housekeeping chore that has been left undone," she said. "It should be taken out of the political arena."

The seven senators who appeared at the press conference, and two more who participated via telephone, said the issue was important enough to warrant a special session.

Sen. Shelley Kiel of Omaha said the issues of LB1175 should be handled this year so schools can go on educating students.

"I'm tired of our schools becoming the punching bag for whatever ails the state," she said.

Sen. George Coordsen of Hebron said via telephone that although he is busy with farm work, he would be willing to return to Lincoln for a special session.

"If I have to come in the middle of planting season, so be it," he said.

Sen. Bob Wickersham of Harrison, who sponsored the amendment that led to Nelson's veto, phoned in to the conference. He insisted his amendment would not, as Nelson has said, obligate the state to \$70 million in funding.

In a statement, Wickersham said that although his amendment would have changed the means of calculating state aid, it would not obligate the state to additional spending.

"It does nothing that 25 votes in the Legislature and a governor's signature can't change," he wrote.

Bohlke also noted that an appropriations bill was not passed along with LB1175. There can be no obligation for future spending without an appropriation, she said.

Nevertheless, Wickersham said he would be willing to table his amendment if a special session was called to restore LB1175's original provisions.

"The amendment has been misinterpreted and misunderstood," he said Wednesday. "But I'm more than willing to put that behind and go ahead with what's best for our schools."

Doug Christensen, state education commissioner, said the coalition of legislators and education officials at the press conference were united by a desire

to see LB1175's main provisions passed this year.

He said schools need the assurance of funding these provisions would provide. The controversy surrounding the Wickersham amendment should not hold back this education funding, he said.

"The veto of 1175 creates yet another crisis and uncertainty," he said. "Enough is enough."

Nelson has said he will take the next two weeks to decide if a special session is needed.

James Joyce, a spokesman for Nelson, said it would take more than a desire for a special session on the part of legislators to persuade him to call one.

State senators face some uncertainty as to the means of calling a special session. State statute allows legislators to call a special session, but the Constitution grants this power to the governor.

Bohlke said it would be easiest if the governor would simply call a special session.

Joyce maintained that the Wickersham amendment would require the \$70 million in future spending despite the absence of an appropriations bill.

"An obligation is an obligation," he said, "whether or not there's an appropriation bill."

Bohlke said that in the event of a special session, a bill containing LB1175's original provisions would have strong support.

"The support would certainly be there," she said. "I think it would be a slam dunk."

Run-off election finishes with victory for ACTION

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the complex.

"More students voted in this year's election than last year's," he said. "That's definitely a victory for us all."

Overall, ACTION took 61 percent of the vote, leaving opposing party ENHANCE with 39 percent of the vote.

Willis said he is not upset for losing the election.

"I don't mind losing by the rules," Willis said. "Things were changed and done properly this time - the election was fair."

Chuck Rensink, interim adviser for RHA, said he was pleased how the election commission and candidates handled all issues raised by the election.

"Many individuals were challenged by the election," he said.

In light of concerns brought forward by the ENHANCE party,

Stenger said, the election commission took many precautions to make sure everything ran smoothly.

Aside from making sure there was an ample supply of ballots at the polling site, Stenger said, the commission made all poll workers sign a sheet stating that they understood proper polling site procedures.

"We didn't want any confusion or mix-up," Stenger said. "We wanted the run-off election to go as smooth as possible."

Both ACTION and ENHANCE said they campaigned heavily; however, ENHANCE was disappointed more students did not vote.

All candidates said they were looking forward to next year's RHA senate. Willis and Knobbe will be serving as Husker Hall president and Abel Hall senator, respectively, next year.

"We are all a team now," Morrow said. "We represent RHA and the students of this university."

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