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(Neb.)-Nebraska Schools Feel Squeeze In Special Ed. Funding

By: Dennis and Kathi Brown Posted at: 02/03/2013 08:38 AM

By GRANT SCHULTE

Associated Press

LINCOLN, Nebraska (AP) - Nebraska schools are keeping a close eye on a state budget proposal to increase funding for special education, a growing expense that has forced them to divert money away from other priorities.

Gov. Dave Heineman has proposed a \$29.6 million increase in special education funding in his two-year budget, a 5 percent annual bump.

Gordon-Rushville Public Schools Superintendent Merrell Nelsen says his district spends \$992,000 on special needs services out of its \$8.8 million annual budget.

Nelsen says those costs have risen, but state aid has remained largely flat. Lawmakers approved a \$10 million increase last year, but it followed three straight years of flat-lined funding.

Nebraska state government gives schools about 50 cents for every \$1 they spend on special-education teachers, transportation and training.