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(Neb.)-Funding Debate Shows Nebraska School Budget Pressures

By: Dennis and Kathi Brown Posted at: 05/05/2013 07:45 AM

By GRANT SCHULTE

Associated Press

LINCOLN, Nebraska (AP) - A fight for Nebraska school-aid dollars was driven by large districts that have dwindling options to generate local revenue and small districts that pay more per-student for transportation and teachers.

Both sides won concessions, even though the tentative funding formula steers most of state aid to Nebraska's largest schools. The largest schools around Omaha and Lincoln complained about flat-lined property values and larger student enrollments. Smaller schools worried about competing for teachers with Omaha, Lincoln and border states.

Of Nebraska's 249 public districts, 114 will receive no equalization aid under the proposed funding formula. Those districts account for about 13 percent of students statewide.

The bill has won tentative approval from lawmakers but hasn't cleared the Legislature. It's scheduled for a second vote as early as Tuesday.