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tirement and midterm funding. Hager explained that with open transfer, parents could request that the receiving school provide the transportation for their children.

Hager explained that teacher retirement would still be appropriated through the formula. "If we line-item this appropriation, the requests for funding outside the formula would be unending."

Mid-term funding, he explained, would include chargeables and only address this year's funding. It would not address the loss in funding for the past two years. "I have a deep concern that we could come up empty handed on the second floor," he said.

Hager blasted claims that test scores by Oklahoma students were poor. "I want to see these numbers...I believe in public education," he said. He urged members to resist "nay-saying" comments on state public education.

"Get to know your legislator," Hager recommended. "The best advice I could give you is to find a few people at the Capitol you can talk with, this will enhance the dialogue on these issues."

KEATING CHALLENGES OEA CHIEFS TO EMBRACE EDUCATION REFORM PROPOSALS

From The Office of the Governor

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) Governor Frank Keating said Thursday the leaders of the Oklahoma Education Association should join him and President Clinton in supporting education reforms like school choice, charter schools and merit pay for outstanding teachers.

"I would hope those who claim to speak for Oklahoma's educators would join leaders of both parties, including the president they support, in a real discussion of what's best for our schools and our young people," Keating said. "Sometimes the OEA leadership tends to be far more liberal than the thousands of caring teachers out there who support school choice, charter schools and merit pay. They just don't get heard as often as the OEA leaders."

In a speech to the National Governors Association Education Summit on Wednesday, President Clinton endorsed school choice and charter schools and supported merit pay for teachers, specifically citing programs in South Carolina and Kentucky that were virtually identical to a merit bonus plan Keating has offered in Oklahoma.

"Some people had a fit when I suggested merit bonuses for outstanding teachers in schools where student performance improves," the governor said. "When President Clinton said the same thing, they said it was a worthy idea. That sounds like a double standard to me."

In his address to the NGA meeting, President Clinton said:

"I also believe anytime you're trying to hold teachers to higher standards they should be rewarded when they perform. I know that in South Carolina and Kentucky, if schools markedly improved their performance, they get bonuses and the teachers get the benefit."

President Clinton also said: "Let me also say I think that we ought to encourage every state to do what most states are now doing, which is to provide more options for parents. You know, the terms of the public school choice legislation and the charter schools — a lot of you have done a very good job with the charter schools."

Gov. Keating has repeatedly proposed school choice and charter schools for Oklahoma. Members of both parties have joined in supporting legislation this session on those two issues, although action in a House committee on Wednesday removed the school choice provision.

"I have no quarrel with those who are part of an emerging national consensus on public education," Keating said. "From a Democratic president to governors from both parties who attended the summit, there is a growing belief that new ideas will build better schools, while the same tired old ideas won't. I hope the OEA leaders will become a part of that discussion."

"I thought the president made an excellent point when he said we should keep the question of

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