



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 75

2nd Session

34th Legislature

HANSARD

Tuesday, March 27, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2018 Spring Sitting

SPEAKER — Hon. Nils Clarke, MLA, Riverdale North
DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Don Hutton, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun
DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Ted Adel, MLA, Copperbelt North

CABINET MINISTERS

| NAME | CONSTITUENCY | PORTFOLIO |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| Hon. Sandy Silver | Klondike | Premier Minister of the Executive Council Office; Finance |
| Hon. Ranj Pillai | Porter Creek South | Deputy Premier Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources; Economic Development; Minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation |
| Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee | Riverdale South | Government House Leader Minister of Education; Justice |
| Hon. John Streicker | Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes | Minister of Community Services; Minister responsible for the French Language Services Directorate; Yukon Liquor Corporation and the Yukon Lottery Commission |
| Hon. Pauline Frost | Vuntut Gwitchin | Minister of Health and Social Services; Environment; Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation |
| Hon. Richard Mostyn | Whitehorse West | Minister of Highways and Public Works; the Public Service Commission |
| Hon. Jeanie Dendys | Mountainview | Minister of Tourism and Culture; Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board; Women's Directorate |

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

Yukon Liberal Party

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| Ted Adel | Copperbelt North |
| Paolo Gallina | Porter Creek Centre |
| Don Hutton | Mayo-Tatchun |

OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

Yukon Party

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|-----------------------|---|-----------------------------|--|
| Stacey Hassard | Leader of the Official Opposition Pelly-Nisutlin | Scott Kent | Official Opposition House Leader Copperbelt South |
| Brad Cathers | Lake Laberge | Patti McLeod | Watson Lake |
| Wade Istchenko | Kluane | Geraldine Van Bibber | Porter Creek North |

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Liz Hanson | Leader of the Third Party Whitehorse Centre |
| Kate White | Third Party House Leader Takhini-Kopper King |

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Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Tuesday, March 27, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.
 We will proceed at this time with prayers.

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

Speaker: We will proceed with the Order Paper.
 Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In remembrance of Patrick Van Bibber

Mr. Hutton: I rise today to pay tribute to Patrick William Van Bibber, who passed away on March 4, 2016 — just two short weeks away from celebrating his 95th birthday. I want to thank all members of the Van Bibber family for giving me the privilege of delivering this tribute on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government.

Pat was born on St. Patrick's Day, March 27, 1922 — a very interesting coincidence indeed, as 18 months prior to Pat's birth, his father Ira had decided that his next-born son would be named Patrick William after Ira's brother Patrick, who was living in Fairbanks, Alaska, at the time. Pat was the eighth child born to Ira and Eliza, and Pat grew up with seven brothers and six sisters.

What a legendary family, Mr. Speaker. Every member of this family has had a lasting impact, not only on the communities they chose to live in, but on the entire Yukon Territory.

Ira and Eliza instilled in their children a tremendous work ethic, which led them all to having extremely fulfilling and productive lives. Their generosity and willingness to help others has cemented their place in Yukon history. They have left behind a tremendous legacy — all the people they shared with and taught, whose lives are better today for knowing members of this amazing family.

Pat was a great hunter. I always knew when hunting season had started, as Pat was always the first hunter in Mayo to get a nice fat moose in early August, and the wonderful aroma of wood smoke and dried meat wafted across the alley that separated the Van Bibber house from mine, where I grew up.

Pat worked for Highways for many years and was the best grader man the government ever hired. When his day's work was done for Highways, you would see him cutting wood and tending his beautiful garden — Pat had a very green thumb — looking after the meat in his smokehouse, or heading out hunting with his son Pat, or in later years, with his grandsons.

Pat was an incredible provider for his family, and he passed on his tremendous knowledge and skills to all of his children. Pat and his brother JJ were partners from the time, as young men, when they were taught to trap by their father, to

the many adventures they shared during their long, amazing and productive lives.

When they both lived in Mayo, they did a lot of prospecting. The machinery of choice for exploring during the late 1960s and early 1970s was a D6 or D7 Caterpillar. Some of these exploration trails are still heavily used today, not just for exploration, but for hunting, fishing and simply for access to some beautiful country. The Davidson Creek and Janet Lake roads are just a couple of these roads that continue to be used to this day. These roads are a small part of the legacy left behind by Pat Van Bibber. This small contribution pales in comparison to the true legacy of a life well lived.

Pat was a tremendous role model, Mr. Speaker. He was kind, gentle, patient and humble — qualities that all of us would wish to have. Pat did not have a great deal of formal education, but you could not find a better teacher. Whether it was operating heavy equipment, teaching hunting or gardening skills, or simply quietly explaining that, even if things seem difficult, if you just kept your head down and worked hard, everything would turn out as it should.

I doubt if Pat truly knew how many students he taught and how many lives he helped change. There are many of us in my hometown of Mayo and across Yukon who have become better people because of the things that we learned from Pat.

In closing, I would echo the wishes of Pat's father Ira, as expressed to Pat's siblings: "Why can't you be more like Patty? He's always so good." Our Yukon would be an even greater place if we were all a little more like Patty.

My hometown and our Yukon is a better place because of Pat. I would like to say thank you and mahsi' cho for all you have done, Pat.

I would like to ask the House to welcome members of the Van Bibber family here today, and I will introduce them in introduction of visitors.

Applause

Ms. Van Bibber: I thank the Member for Mayo-Tatchun for that wonderful tribute. I rise today on behalf of the Official Opposition and the Third Party to pay tribute to my father-in-law Pat William Van Bibber, who is sorely missed. It has been two years since his passing and, at the time, the Yukon Party's Highways and Public Works minister, and now Member for Copperbelt South, gave a wonderful tribute. However, I agree that Pat Sr. is so special that he deserves another tribute.

This month, on March 17, he would have been 96 years young. I reached out to Pat's son Pat and his daughters Shirley, Carol, Deb and Karen and asked what one word would describe their father. You will see a theme here: gentle, genuine, loving, patience and strength. My children, Stuart and Ann-Marie, remember him as easygoing and kind-hearted, as do I.

Pat Sr. and I had a special bond, and we chatted regularly about everything. As was mentioned, Pat was the eighth child of Ira and Eliza Van Bibber and part of the amazing legacy that was the first generation. Some of the Van Bibber brothers

and sisters went in search of their father Ira's family in West Virginia and, of course, their own relatives.

It was a wonderful journey for them. Sister Lucy was given copies of all of her father's letters that he had sent to his family through the years telling of his life in Yukon. In one, it read: "Mother and child doing well, we are calling him John James. When the next one comes and it is a boy, we will call him Patrick William." And so it was. It just so happened it was also St. Patrick's Day, so what an appropriate name for the new baby boy.

Yukoners have heard many stories of this strong, self-sufficient generation. Father Ira was a strict but fair man, and mother Eliza was a strong matriarch. They both ensured that each of their children were able to fend for themselves, no matter what they faced. Pat eventually met a beautiful young lady from Hellsgate on the Yukon River, just south of Fort Selkirk. Her name was Ada Blanchard. It was not long before he asked her to marry him.

As stated on their marriage certificate, on April 9, 1949, Pat Van Bibber, a trapper, and Ada Blanchard, a spinster, were married. Alex and Sue Van Bibber stood as their witnesses.

In 2015 they celebrated their 66th anniversary. Pat loved anniversaries, birthdays and holidays. I think it gave him a reason to enjoy cake, which was not his regular diet — and, of course, his large family. Trapper, ferry operator, various employment jobs and then 35 years with YTG Highways — most of those years as road foreman for the Mayo-Keno region — he retired at age 65, but he never slowed down. He had amazing energy and stamina.

This was one case where the pension plan worked in the favour of the recipient. He drew a pension almost as long as he worked. Pat, along with his daughters and granddaughter, Sherri, travelled to Nashville, New Orleans and all over the region. Just to let you know, most insurance companies don't insure elders over 80. I found a company in Edmonton that would insure him, but it was a touch costly — \$1,500 for a 10-day trip. He was a bit put out. "Do you mean when you turn 90, you can't travel anymore?" he asked. I said, "Dad, most people who turn 90 don't even think about it, and better you pay \$1,500 than \$15 million." He laughed. Then it was on to the Dominican Republic for a wedding. Pat so enjoyed all his experiences. He found it too hot there. He said it was the first time that he had worn short pants since he was a kid.

As you can see, Pat loved new experiences, new adventures, to try new food and to meet new people and, as with all the elder Van Bibber boys, he had a wonderful sense of humour and was very observant. As was mentioned, he was an avid bushman, fisher and hunter. Right to his last year, he was supplying for his family. He was always willing to share his knowledge, and I know for sure, Pat Jr. misses his main hunting partner very much.

Ada passed away in August of 2015 and Pat followed her six months later in March of 2016. Both are resting peacefully in the Van Bibber family plot overlooking the Pelly River and Mica Creek.

I will leave you with a quote from Clarence Kelland — and I quote: "He didn't tell me how to live; he lived, and let me watch him do it."

Applause

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Hutton: I would like to ask all Members of this Legislative Assembly to join me in welcoming some members of Pat's family to this House. We'll start left to right, with grandson Derek Patterson — if you could just wave, thank you — Pat's daughter Karen; Pat's granddaughter Sherri and her partner Dwight; Sherri's mom and Pat's daughter Carol; Carol's sister from another mother, Joan; Pat Van Bibber Jr.; great grandson Evan; Jean Van Bibber — Pat's niece — in the back; and another one of Pat's beautiful daughters, Deb Van Bibber; and JJ's granddaughter Shannon Van Bibber.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, I am so excited to welcome some friends to the Assembly today.

Mr. Speaker, if I could please have you help me welcome Mike, Rachel and Sam Suto, who are here today. Hi, Sam, how are you doing? He is very excited — he was over to visit us.

Rachel and I had the privilege of going to university together. We haven't seen each other in a long time, and they are here on vacation visiting her brother Ben Kielb, as well, so I would like to welcome them to the Assembly today.

Applause

Mr. Hutton: Last, but certainly not least, I would like all Members of this House to join me in welcoming Pat's favourite daughter-in-law, the Member for Porter Creek North.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, I just want to welcome and also thank Sherri, who is here today and is one of my constituents — and Evan. I know that the Member for Porter Creek North and I have talked about some of the challenges with Twelfth Avenue. Certainly, the first time it was brought to my attention was by Sherri, but also Evan — just talking about his experiences going to school. That is something that we're looking to remedy, and we will be discussing that, so I just want to thank you, and I'm proud to be your MLA for Porter Creek South.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any further introductions of visitors?

Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Ms. Frost: I have for tabling a legislative return detailing the transfer payment agreement between the Government of Yukon and the Salvation Army.

I also have notification received from the Child and Youth Advocate that I indicated I would provide yesterday — and that is with permission.

I also have for tabling policy related to client access to service provided by the transitional units at the Salvation Army.

Speaker: Are there any further returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

Mr. Kent: I rise today to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to introduce legislation in order to protect Yukon consumers who possess gift cards, gift certificates or any other prepaid service or item which contains expiry dates or are unused at the closure of a business.

Mr. Istchenko: I rise in this House today to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue to support local initiatives and events that promote and recognize one of Yukon's oldest industries — trapping — including, but not limited to:

(1) UnFURled, organized by the Yukon Trappers Association and the North Yukon Renewable Resources Council;

(2) the Alsek moose recovery program, administered by the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and the Alsek Renewable Resources Council; and

(3) the Dawson fur show, organized by the Dawson District Renewable Resources Council.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motions?

Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Children in care

Ms. McLeod: We have received a document from a concerned whistle-blower regarding the allegations of abuse within government-run group homes. This individual says that, despite what the minister has stated in this House, staff are afraid of reprisal if they speak out. This is troubling.

First, we have serious allegations of abuse that the minister was aware of for six weeks, and then the minister did not act upon these allegations. Now, the public servants who are concerned about the safety of these kids are afraid for their

jobs and are being targeted through something like a witch hunt.

We have received a lot of talking points from the minister, but talk is cheap, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister show some leadership and take immediate action to ensure that the kids who are in group homes today are safe, and ensure that the brave public servants who are bringing this to light are not targeted?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I really do thank the member opposite for bringing this to our attention again, because the more I can say it, perhaps the clearer it will be. This government wants to know what is going on within the halls of government. We want to make sure that our citizens, our children and our students are safe when they attend our facilities. We want that information given.

We have legislation, the *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act* that has been passed by this House. That act protects civil servants and people who come forward with serious wrongdoings that may be committed within a public entity covered by the act. That piece of legislation is there to make people feel comfortable coming forward with those concerns.

I want to say it again: Please, if you have concerns, bring them to our attention so that they can be dealt with. This is a culture change, perhaps, for the government and for this society, but it has to be done so that we can actually get to the root causes of the things that are going on within our society. Please bring these things forward.

Ms. McLeod: The Minister of Health and Social Services likes to say that she took immediate action to address these serious allegations, but let's just go through the facts. First, the minister was told of these allegations six weeks ago, and in that period of time, what happened? Silence, Mr. Speaker.

It was not until the CBC was about to break the news story that the government issued a last-minute press release to announce that they would conduct a review. Further, the review that the minister is doing isn't even looking at these specific allegations. It's a larger review of the group homes as a whole, and I think it's clear it's required, but we need to address these specific allegations as well. We need to know who knew what, when they knew it and what they did when they found out.

Will the minister agree to launch an examination of these specific allegations? Will this examination also look at the minister's actions, including when she knew, what she did and what she found out?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I will not breach confidence. I will ensure, as I indicated — and I will keep saying this. We did take action as soon as the information came to our attention. It went back into the department, as the members opposite well know. The information comes, it arises, you create a case management file, you put it back into the system and the staff are absolutely competent and confident to ensure that, first and foremost, we protect the children.

The second thing I did, on February 15 — I received an e-mail, a notice, and I set up a meeting and met with the

young man. We had lunch. We spoke about the concerns, validating and verifying that: (1) he was safe and has all of the supports that he requires from the department; and (2) he has a voice and he needs to be heard. I am absolutely confident that this government, my department and all the staff within the department took immediate action and appropriate action. I do want to say that we did send a notice out to the staff to inform them of what was transpiring and that our expectation is that they engage fully in the process.

Ms. McLeod: Let's talk a bit more about what the government is trying to spin as "immediate action". The minister found out about these allegations of abuse six weeks ago and, according to the document we obtained from a whistle-blower, the department didn't even meet with the youth until two weeks ago, after the government found out that the CBC was starting to ask questions.

I'm going to repeat that, Mr. Speaker, because it's a very important point. The minister found out about these allegations over six weeks ago, and it wasn't until this government found out about the CBC looking into the issue that they even decided to meet with the youth.

It's pretty clear to anyone watching that, instead of putting the children first, the government's primary concern has been to protect itself politically. All of the minister's actions to date have shown anything but urgency or concern for this situation.

Will the minister finally take action to address these specific allegations of abuse?

Hon. Ms. Frost: What do I say? I would say that the statement is inaccurate. It is so inaccurate. We are proceeding, and we have taken the allegations and considerations very seriously. I can assure the member opposite that the child in question is still getting the supports that this child needs to support the child to successfully transition through high school and back into our community and is supported fully. That has been for as long as that child has been in our care. We will ensure that it happens.

The bigger point is not about dealing with one individual child. It's about the whole of systemic concerns that have come to our attention that the member raises. When one whistle-blower comes forward and raises a concern, we want to hear that. We want to hear what has been going on, and we want to make significant changes. We are doing that, and we have committed to doing a five-year review of the *Child and Family Services Act*. I tabled the document today that specifies criteria and steps that the youth advocate office is proceeding with. I am quite confident that we will resolve the issue at hand and proceed with providing the best care possible as we advance other initiatives in our community — other care facilities where we provide services so that they are state-of-the-art and meet the needs of the children.

Question re: Children in care

Mr. Hassard: Yesterday, we asked the minister about a specific clause in the *Child and Family Services Act*. Unfortunately, we didn't get an answer beyond the minister's usual talking points, so we'll try again.

Section 22(1) of the act reads — and I quote: "A person who has reason to believe that a child is in need of protective intervention shall immediately report the information on which they base their belief to a director or peace officer."

That responsibility should also fall to the minister, so my question is simple: Does the Minister of Health and Social Services believe that her actions were in compliance with this section of that act?

Hon. Ms. Frost: To the point, yes.

Mr. Hassard: Yesterday, we also asked the minister about the Health and Social Services website. On that website, it states very clearly — and again I will quote: "All Yukoners are required by law to report suspected child abuse." That is an exact quote from the minister's own website. The minister learned of these serious allegations six weeks ago. What actions did she take to live up to this legal requirement for all Yukoners to report suspected child abuse?

Hon. Ms. Frost: As noted, I'm not always referring to my talking points. I do speak on the truth and I speak about what I know to be factual from my staff. I will continue to do that.

We are working together to resolve — dealing with the factual information before us. We have processes. I tabled today a process. Every child who comes into our care is given an opportunity to express their care management plan. There is a process in which they can voice their grievances.

I note that we are working with the individual who has come forward. He has been in custody, in care, for quite some time. We are working with him.

This didn't just come to light six weeks ago. That is the challenge. When it did come forward, we took immediate action at that point. Historical documentation and processes with respect to internal investigations — or whether there are legal investigations, as the member opposite noted a few days ago — we want to ensure that we cooperate fully and completely and that we ensure protection of all of our clients who are in our care.

Mr. Hassard: There again, we have plenty of words but no answers. It is becoming quite clear that this government doesn't take this issue seriously at all. There is a legal requirement for all Yukoners to report suspected child abuse.

Mr. Speaker, when the minister became aware of these allegations over six weeks ago now, why did she not report them to the RCMP?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Our minister has answered this question repeatedly. Again, if the opposition doesn't like the answers, they say that we're not answering these questions.

We are moving forward on this review. It's interesting to hear from the Yukon Party, which was legislated to do a five-year review in 2015. That was not done, so they are now interested in us making sure that we abide by the rules and ensure that our children in care are being taken care of with the utmost in concern and care. I believe that the minister is doing that, and I want to thank her and her team for acting on this file in the way that they have.

Again, policy, systems and procedures around government group homes are going to be part of a review. We are working on this going forward. Watching this moving forward, I believe that this minister has done everything in her power to make sure that this very important file is addressed.

Question re: Solid-waste management

Ms. White: It is embarrassing to think that the last big breakthrough that the territory had in waste management happened during the last decade when the Yukon stopped burning waste in its landfills. Best efforts by municipalities and NGOs have not been enough to overcome the territorial government's inertia on waste diversion.

The previous government had a 50-percent diversion target but no plan to reach it. This new government has embraced the status quo on waste management, working toward the implementation of a timid extended producer responsibility policy started years ago by its predecessor, while all the time watching several of Whitehorse's second-hand and free stores close their doors, one after the other.

This government published their self-congratulatory performance plan earlier this month, but it seems that on waste management, they have no performance indicator. Has this government set a waste diversion target? If so, how do they plan to reach it?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I know that waste is a challenging issue, and it's a very important issue for all of us here in the territory. I'm happy to say that we have been working with members of the Association of Yukon Communities to develop a new plan in concert with them so that it is territory-wide in considering all of our municipalities and our unincorporated areas. That plan is just reaching its conclusion at the end of this month, and it will be coming forward.

I would like to thank the members of the Association of Yukon Communities and the staff who have been working on that plan. I'm happy to try to get waste unstuck and to move it forward. I appreciate the debate that we've had here in the Legislature on this topic.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that answer. I have no doubt that talks about waste diversion have happened and will continue to happen, because they always do. What usually doesn't happen is any sort of action. I would love for the minister to prove me wrong on this one.

The fundamental issue is that recycling is not free and neither is burying waste in our landfill, but this cost is often passed on to future generations, either through increased environmental liability or cost of expanding landfills. This means that governments that are focused on the short term will often choose inaction when it comes to waste diversion. But we know it can be done. The Mount Lorne transfer station reached its 50-percent diversion target years ago. The territorial government has the ability to look at what they did and to replicate this success across the territory but it doesn't appear to be a priority. When will this government make waste diversion a priority and set an actual territory-wide target?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I thank the member opposite for her question because I completely agree with her that waste costs. I think the point that she makes is that if you don't deal with it up front, it costs more. Those liabilities build. It is incredibly important that we address this and deal with it up front. That is why we are developing a strategy that has been in the works since this past fall. It's in partnership, consultation or engagement with our municipalities. They are, in fact — from my perspective — the lead on bringing forward the ideas. I'm expecting to hear back from them very shortly, and I'll be happy to share it here in the Legislature once I have had a chance to review it with them.

I agree with the member opposite that we do need to take action, and I'm happy to take that responsibility on.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that answer and I look forward to a waste-diversion target. This morning on the radio, we heard municipal leaders talk about the consequences of the lack of leadership by this government on waste management. A few weeks ago, the mayor of Mayo spoke about how the village can't handle the cost associated with running its landfill where over half the waste is coming from outside Mayo.

The mayor said — and I quote: "The expense of the landfill takes away from other things in the community... It takes away from recreation, from roads, from parks. It takes away from everything."

This is a perfect example of why we need a territory-wide approach to waste diversion. Mayo is asking to have its landfill designated as a regional landfill so it can access resources from the territorial government. When will this government listen to the people of Mayo and designate the Mayo as a regional landfill as part of a territory-wide waste management plan?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I was just cheered on by the Member for Mayo-Tatchun. I can say that last week, I happened to have a direct conversation with His Worship Mayor Bolton. We had this very conversation.

So it is important to look at our municipalities and whether they act as regional landfills. I have spoken with the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources to talk about pressures from mines and other activity, especially in that riding and in that area. I think I just said that we will be bringing forward a territory-wide approach. It is coming very shortly. I thank all the members of that ministerial advisory committee — from Faro, from Whitehorse and from across the territory. They are helping to develop that strategy and I hope to bring it forward here very shortly.

Question re: Porter Creek group home consultation

Ms. Van Bibber: For a government that campaigned on being heard, we are quickly finding out that they only want to hear from people who agree with them. Several weeks ago, the Porter Creek Community Association expressed concern with this government's lack of consultation with neighbours on the new group home in Porter Creek.

Instead of listening to these concerns and simply sitting down with the residents to consult with them, the government instead chose to stomp out any disagreement. We have been told that the Liberal government sent a number of paid political staff from the Cabinet offices, along with the Member for Porter Creek Centre, to take over the community association's meeting and silence them with a gag order.

Will the Premier confirm whether this happened or not? If it did, will he ask the MLA for Porter Creek Centre to apologize to the Porter Creek Community Association?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I want to say that, as indicated previously, the project on Wann Road — the initiative there was really, I think, to look at an opportunity to transition our young people out of our group homes back into the community. So it was intended really for older children in our care. The objective is really about programs and ensuring that we transition them nicely into the community.

The members opposite know well that the initiatives that they undertook to review the residential group homes and the criteria established were not criteria I established. They were criteria they established to determine where a home like this could and should be situated. So we proceeded with those guidelines — the guidelines that they established — and we went ahead to follow through with the city's procedures. The procedures defined that it needed to be rezoned through the city process. Once that was conducted, we would then go out and engage through a good engagement process.

Historically, Mr. Speaker, the members of the opposition would know that they have not ever consulted on group homes like this in any nature, as far as I understand.

Ms. Van Bibber: The issue isn't whether we put a group home there or not. It is the issue of a clear lack of consultation that was bothering my constituents.

We heard that one of the paid political staff who the Liberals sent to silence the Porter Creek Community Association actually works in a senior role in the Premier's office.

When the government told Yukoners they would be heard, it turns out, they will be told. Instead of simply consulting the community association, which is all they were asking for, it appears the Premier sent political staff to go and silence the community association. Will this be regular occurrence under this government?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: What an interesting set of messages coming today from our friend from Porter Creek North.

Certainly, what I can tell you factually is that on at least three occasions I have had people from Porter Creek South reach out to me. They were very upset and dismayed that the Member for Porter Creek North took it upon herself to knock on their door to rile up people on this particular case, and here we are today. Last week, the members across the way were sitting here and waving a flag to ensure that there are safe places for individuals and youth who are in care — not three weeks ago, they were stirring things up. I am just dismayed.

The interesting thing is that was the catalyst for a series of people to come out publicly — it was actually the Member for Porter Creek North coming and trying to inform them —

though not really informing them, but trying to stir up some challenges here. That is the first thing.

Other than that, people in Porter Creek — whether I represent them or other members from Porter Creek — if you live in Porter Creek, I believe that you should be allowed to go to a Porter Creek Community Association meeting. What happens after work as a member of that association should be allowed. Unless the members opposite want to cheerlead against Yukoners and tell people from Porter Creek that they can't have their own personal life after 5:00 p.m. — and maybe that is what we are hearing today — maybe they can come on the record and tell the people of Porter Creek that they have no ability to take their own personal feelings to the Porter Creek Community Association, and then let's put that on the record.

Other than that, I am, once again, just really dismayed by the Member for Porter Creek North on where they have gone today.

Ms. Van Bibber: We are talking about a community association that was asking the government to consult with them on a public policy issue. The responsible thing for the government to do would have been to actually consult with them. Instead, some staff and the Member for Porter Creek Centre arrived and hijacked the meeting and issued a gag order. This government has developed a reputation of challenging anyone who challenges their narrative.

Mr. Speaker, if this government is going to be so petty as to attack community associations, then how can they expect public servants to speak up about wrongdoing when they see it?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I guess, to clear the air, I did not instruct anybody from my office to go to any public meeting, if that is what I am hearing from the members opposite. I agree with the Deputy Premier when it comes to the fact that people, after they finish work, can go to public meetings, unless I am hearing from the members opposite that they don't like to see that. Or I guess maybe they don't like to see Liberals going to these meetings — or paid staff for a Liberal caucus, for that matter.

I don't really know where the allegation is coming from, but here is the process: The city worked on their process first, and we are happy to see the open dialogue happening with the City of Whitehorse and how they went through that process. From there, we have community meetings in which people are heard, and we are happy to have representation, whether that is from a minister or caring individuals from all political perspectives to be at these meetings. I guess we are hearing from the members opposite that it is fine for them to take their petitions door to door to say that they don't want to see this in their backyard, but nobody from the Liberal caucus office is allowed to come to those meetings.

Question re: Children in care

Ms. McLeod: We have tried to get an answer out of the Minister of Health and Social Services on this topic for a few days and, unfortunately, she has been unable to provide any

specifics, but this is an important question that Yukoners want and need an answer to.

Has the minister made any changes to the way the government operates and manages group homes to ensure that all children currently in these homes are safe today?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The question with respect to our group homes — I am confident that our staff and the representatives of the public servants of this government are doing the job that they are required to do, and we will ensure that if there are any adjustments or changes that need to be made to ensure we protect children, we will do that. I am confident that the good employees of our government will do that, and my department is working with the staff. If there are adjustments and changes to be made, we will ensure that happens.

At the moment, we are conducting a *Child and Family Services Act* review that we triggered several months ago. That is following through — and yes, we are going to ensure that we make Yukon a better place and ensure that all our children are heard, listened to and validated and that they have a voice in their care.

Ms. McLeod: Last week when speaking to media, the Minister of Health and Social Services referenced internal reviews and assessments that were done regarding these allegations of abuse that she learned about over six weeks ago. I asked the minister about these internal reviews yesterday, and she acted like she had never said this.

I will quote from a CBC story on this topic to refresh the minister's memory. The story says — and I quote: "Speaking later with reporters she said, 'internal assessments' had been done and children and youth are safe in the group homes."

That was from March 22, so can the minister tell us: Have internal assessments taken place, or was she mistaken when she told the media that last week?

Hon. Mr. Silver: This question has been asked ad nauseam in the Legislative Assembly by now, and I will say that the minister and I have been very clear in our response. We very clearly explained what is going on, and there is a review. We are undertaking this review to better the outcomes for our children and for our families and for our communities, and we will accomplish this work by working cooperatively with communities with the joint goal of keeping as many children in their homes as possible and with their families as possible.

Conversations that are happening today — they do hinge upon this review — and that is the work that we are doing. The minister has been very clear on the work that they are doing to address the matters around children in care since she has taken office.

Again, this question has been asked over and over again, and we have been giving answers to this question.

Through efforts to return and to keep children in their homes and communities with family members, there has been a reduction of more than 50 children in government care. I want to thank the Minister of Health and Social Services for what they have been doing since she took office. When it comes to specific questions about group homes — again, the

minister has been very clear in her answers, and I want to say thank you again to her and her department for taking this on.

We were in a situation where a review should have been taken by the previous government. It was not taken by the previous government, and that is where we are, and we are moving forward on this file.

Ms. McLeod: My thanks to the Premier for that. The question remains as to whether or not an internal review was requested and performed by the Minister of Health and Social Services subsequent to the allegations of abuse of children in group homes. The minister has not answered that question. If the minister could answer that question — and I have no idea what her answer is going to be here, but maybe she could tell us what the result was of those internal investigations.

Hon. Ms. Frost: It is very interesting. I will keep coming back to the point. Just because the member doesn't like my answer, she is not listening to what I'm saying.

We cannot breach confidentiality. I am not going to stand up in the Legislative Assembly and say who, what, where, when, why and how. We allow the process to take effect. If a complaint comes forward, clearly you want to ensure that the staff within the department are given the freedom to do the review, and the results of that will be dealt with in due course and as required by policy. We have a Public Service Commission that protects employees; we spoke about the whistle-blower act; we talked about the *Child and Family Services Act* — and the member opposite seems to think it is very funny. It isn't.

We have structured a process. We will continue to follow through on the policies that they are very familiar with, because they ran the government for 14 years, Mr. Speaker. They know that there were concerns and that they were obligated to follow through with the process historically, in addressing that, and we will do that.

The children in our care will be listened to. They may not have been historically, but we will ensure that they are given a voice, and I will ensure that they have an opportunity to be heard.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice of opposition private members' business

Ms. White: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of the Third Party to be called on Wednesday, March 28, 2018. They are Motion No. 274, standing in the name of the Member for Whitehorse Centre, and Motion No. 270, standing in the name of the Member for Whitehorse Centre.

Mr. Kent: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the item standing in the name of Official Opposition to be called on Wednesday, March 28, 2018. It is Motion for the Production of Papers No. 8, standing in the name of the Member for Porter Creek North.

Speaker: We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I move that the Speaker do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve into Committee of the Whole.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the Speaker do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve into Committee of the Whole.

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Mr. Hutton): Order, please.

The matter before the Committee is Vote 27, French Language Services Directorate, in Bill No. 206, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2018-19*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Committee of the Whole will recess for 15 minutes.

Recess

Chair: Order, please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

Bill No. 206: *First Appropriation Act 2018-19* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Vote 27, French Language Services Directorate, in Bill No. 206, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2018-19*.

Is there any general debate?

French Language Services Directorate

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Chair, I would like to say welcome — bienvenue — to my colleague, Patrice Tremblay, who is the director of the French Language Services Directorate.

I am pleased to present the French Language Services Directorate budget for 2018-19.

J'ai le plaisir de vous présenter le budget de la Direction des services en français pour l'année 2018-19.

The French Language Services Directorate budget forecasts operation and maintenance spending of \$5,771,000 to support the directorate's operations, as well as French language service delivery across government. This represents a 14-percent increase from last year. The increase is driven by the *Canada-Yukon Agreement on French Language Services* signed in 2017.

This agreement marks a new era of cooperation between Ottawa and Yukon toward the sustainable implementation of the *Yukon Languages Act*.

Cette augmentation découle de la signature de l'Entente Canada-Yukon sur les services en français en 2017. L'Entente marque un tournant dans la collaboration entre le gouvernement fédéral et le Yukon en vue de mettre en œuvre la *Loi sur les langues* de façon durable.

We thank Canada for the 2018-19 funding envelope of \$4,756,000. This represents a \$760,000 increase that will help to grow and improve services in French and is fully aligned with our government's commitment to enhance French language services, with a strong focus on health and social services. I would just like to say thank you to the federal government and, in particular, Minister Joly, for working with us on this file.

Yukon government's contribution remains stable at about \$1 million. The increase in budget will be allocated mainly toward the ongoing implementation of active offer across all departments and corporations, including the designation of bilingual positions and strengthening the capacity of the French Language Services Directorate to provide support across government.

Personnel budgets total \$4,410,000. Over 45 percent of this salary budget will go to funding designated bilingual positions across departments and corporations.

Other costs account for \$1,332,000. This funding will be used to increase translations services, improve active offer material and training, enhance the French presence on the web and social media, support French language training and fund professional contracts and other program costs.

Les fonds serviront à augmenter les services de traduction, améliorer la formation et les outils d'offre active, renforcer la présence francophone sur le web et dans les médias sociaux, accroître la formation linguistique en français, couvrir les frais liés aux services professionnels et aux divers programmes.

Over 33 percent of the \$1,332,000 will be invested in departments and corporations for, but not limited to, \$250,000 on a new bilingual health clinic conditional to the results of a feasibility study, community outreach and enhanced communications, bilingual signage, forms, translation of publications, advertising, program materials and staff training. We will continue to support community projects through the agreement for cooperation and exchange between the Government of Yukon and the Government of Quebec. We will invest another \$25,000 in this program this year.

I'm pleased to announce that Yukon will be hosting the 23rd Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie in July. I look forward to co-chairing this important event with my federal colleague Minister Joly.

Je suis très heureux de vous annoncer que le Yukon sera l'hôte de la 23^e conférence ministérielle sur la francophonie canadienne en juillet de cette année. Je suis honoré de coprésider cette importante rencontre avec ma collègue du gouvernement fédéral, madame la ministre Joly.

I am proud to report that we achieved or surpassed several objectives in the first of our three-year *Canada/Yukon Agreement on French Language Services*. With respect to translation, we are expecting to break the 2-million-word mark. I just want to compare that to last year, which was 1.5 million words translated — so it is a massive amount of work.

Bon travail à l'équipe de la DSF.

I just want to say great work by the team at the French Language Services Directorate. It is an all-time record.

We're getting ready to launch our comprehensive active offer program across Yukon government to ensure our employees have the knowledge and resources to offer citizen-centred services in French. Over the coming year, we will continue to work toward bridging the gap between the level of French language services we currently provide and the level of services required, while taking the French-speaking community's priorities into account.

These brief comments highlight the key components of the directorate's expenditures and activity planned for the 2018-19 year. I look forward to answering any questions the members may have on the 2018-19 budget for the French Language Services Directorate.

Je répondrai avec plaisir à toutes vos questions sur le budget 2018-2019 de la Direction des services en français.

Chair: Mr. Hassard, en français.

Mr. Hassard: En anglais — I promised Patrice I would not butcher the French language, and I have to keep that promise to him.

I don't have any questions, actually, but I would like to thank Patrice and all 24 of the employees in the French Language Services Directorate for the work that they do every day in helping the government to move forward. I would also like to thank them for the very professional briefing that was provided to the opposition. At that briefing, actually, all of my questions were answered. With that, I will take my seat and let others ask questions.

Ms. White: Merci monsieur le Président. C'est toujours un plaisir d'avoir la possibilité de demander des questions à la Direction des services en français. Sûrement, une grande bienvenue à Monsieur Patrice Tremblay, le directeur de la DSF. Alors, toujours un plaisir.

I appreciate the comments from my colleague, the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin. There have been so many changes in the French language directorate. In conversations with staff, it's always like — I don't have criticisms any more. I have congratulations and celebrations — the big changes, of course, being since it used to be in Highways and Public Works, and there wasn't an individual minister who was responsible. The Minister responsible for the French Language Services Directorate now has a much easier time, and I have no grilling questions for him — just a lot of congratulations for the department.

There are very few questions, and I mostly just want the opportunity for the department and the minister to celebrate some of the achievements. During the briefing — and I appreciate that my colleague talked about how professional it was. He is new to it, so he doesn't know that this is what you get all the time when you go to the French Language Services Directorate.

There are a couple of things that I think we should really celebrate. One is that now there is a bilingual position within Victim Services, so if the minister could tell me a bit more about that — what it looks like and what that means — I'll go from there.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I should note that these positions are not positions within the French Language Services Directorate. They are positions within all of the line departments. We have identified this opportunity to have bilingual positions in those departments, and we did it by talking with the French community, l'AFY — the Association franco-yukonnaise — about where priorities might lie. One of the ones that they talked to us about as a critical priority was around health and wellness. Victim Services was one.

I should just say that one of the realities is that when we got the new agreement with Minister Joly, it was about improving supports for French language services across the territory.

By the way, I know as well that, each time I have spoken to her, I have emphasized the importance of our indigenous languages. The more that we focus on the languages that are not the majority language in the territory, the more we strengthen the territory overall.

What I can say for the member opposite is that the new employee has been hired and will be starting early in April. I'm afraid I can't give more information about Victim Services. I would turn to my colleague, the Minister of Health and Social Services, for that.

Ms. White: I think that one of the really important things is that, under Justice with Victim Services, it would be the ability of a victim of crime to actually be able to communicate in their preferred language. That is why it is so important.

I have talked about this throughout the years. As a bilingual person, I would be able to offer — as a matter of fact, my office does offer this. Someone can come in and choose to speak in French, and we can do that. When we initially started talking about this — I think it was back in 2012 — the point that one of my teachers made to me is that, because I had the ability to speak French, it didn't mean that I would be paid more for the position; it just would mean that I would be able to identify myself as a French speaker and then offer services. It is definitely the way that I have kept language. Any time I recognize a French accent, I divert and tell people that they can speak in English, but I'm going to practise, if that is okay.

One of the really interesting things this year within the French Language Services Directorate is that there has been the identification of bilingual members of the public service who have stepped forward to be able to do that active offer.

If the minister wants an opportunity to talk about that and the number of those positions — because I think it is something that we really should be celebrating — I will give the minister a chance for that.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I made a mistake, and I thank the member opposite for being kind about how she pointed that out. Victim Services is, of course, within the Department of Justice.

I still will emphasize that when we went out to try to identify these positions, it was based on hearing the priorities from the community and where they felt those issues were. What they talked to us about was when they are in stress and

when they are under pressure. Health, wellness, justice — those are areas where it would be great.

We have, over this past year, designated 35 bilingual positions, and that is up from six. Many of these positions were people who were already bilingual but, by actively identifying them as bilingual now, they have a role. When they hear someone with a French accent or introducing themselves in French, they actively work to engage in that language. It is that coming forward with what service we can — and we are also working to help achieve a culture within the public service so that, when they hear French, they are not frightened or embarrassed by their level of French; rather, they respond in ways that let them know that we can go try to find one of those 35 people, so we can really engage.

We also announced — it will now be last year, but it was in the current fiscal year — having Tel-Aide, which is a 24/7 telephone help line for anonymous and confidential telephone assistance for those in need of emotional support. There are examples that we have where we are trying to provide services for our French language community.

Ms. White: Last week, on Journée internationale de la Francophonie — I needed to renew my driver's licence, and I was greeted by a very nice woman who was a francophone. We spoke in French, and then I switched to English because we got past my vocabulary for my driver's permit, but it was lovely to see in action — a big congratulations to the people within the public service who stepped forward to offer that, because it makes a huge difference.

I am happy to hear about the teleservice for emotional support that is available 24 hours a day. I would love to see that available for anglophones, but this wouldn't be the department. The 24-hour access is important.

One of the questions I had during the briefing was about the metrics collection of ER access for francophones. In previous years, it wasn't necessarily that there had to be a body in the emergency room at 3:00 a.m. who could speak French, but there needed to be the ability for someone to have a crisis explained to them in the language they understood. As of yet, is metrics collection happening in the emergency room?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: My response is that, right now, we are not collecting those stats, but we have identified it. It is not just in the emergency room, but I think, as a department, we want to collect stats across government so that we understand our performance and how we can improve the system for Yukoners. I know that the department is working on a plan for collecting metrics across all of these positions. I don't have an answer right now about that timeline, but I will stay in touch with the department and, once we get some notion, I am happy to come back to the Legislature.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that answer. I actually knew that information wasn't being collected now. The reason why I asked is that I think it is really important, at one point in time, to show the rest of the community how critical it is. When I first became aware of some of the big wishes of the francophone community, the first one was access to health services. Part of the pitch about how we make

sure we had access to even teleservice in the emergency room was just the fact that it should be a basic right — that basic understanding.

I look forward to when we are collecting that data, and also looking forward to making sure that the francophone community understands that it is available and is a service offered to them.

I think that there is a really interesting relationship in French Language Services between Yukon and the federal government, and one of them would be the cost-sharing for bilingual positions. Can the minister talk about that?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: First of all, I completely agree with the member opposite that health was, from what I heard from the community, the number one priority. Even when I have gone to community meetings recently, I still hear about that issue. We have this initiative to pilot a bilingual clinic. That's a great opportunity.

The member asked about the federal government and this partnership. I should really acknowledge that this is a lot of direct support from the federal government. We were at \$3.9 million last year. This year we're at \$4.75 million. It's going up significantly. That represents a little over 80 percent of our budget. It is a significant portion, and it is going up again next year to \$5.25 million. Effectively, when we get there next year, that's a tripling of the budget over the last several years. It is a significant change, and it is really because of this agreement with the federal government — full stop.

I said it in my opening remarks — and I will say it again — that, as a territory, we really appreciate that support for French as an official language here. I think it's really going to assist our French citizens in accessing services.

Ms. White: That is a true support of the federal government, but not the one I was looking for. With the identification of new positions within the public service, my understanding was that there is a 30-percent contribution for bilingual positions that already existed and then 100 percent for those new positions. Maybe the minister would like to expand on that.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I want to characterize it slightly differently. It is sort of dependent on the dedication of that position to French language and its priority. I will just check with my colleague.

I believe I was correct. The notion is that we're trying to stretch those dollars as far as we can. Depending on the level of French that we're anticipating — if we have a position that is really dedicated to French language, then we can put 100-percent funding behind it. Now, whether or not that person was already in place or not, that may be the case. It isn't so much about us funding them a certain percentage because they are there or not; we fund them a certain percentage because of how much French they are anticipated to provide. We identified where they are across the public service by need, and then we identified where we already have positions that have French language. In that way it supports our public service generally.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for the correction. It turns out that my note taking is maybe not fantastic during

briefings, because that is not what I wrote down, but I appreciate the clarification.

One last question I want to ask is about French language training. That is put on by la Association franco-yukonnaise. They have been doing it for a number of years. I believe in this last intake session in the fall, we reached a new high — so if the minister wants to talk about the language training that is happening by l'AFY and anything that maybe the French Language Services Directorate has noticed through that.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I appreciate the work that l'AFY is doing. It is a joint initiative by the French Language Services Directorate and l'AFY. This year, we have a record number of registrations of students who are taking French. We also have a record number of public servants who are taking French — at range of levels, I should say as well — even those who we may think of as bilingual but who are wishing to get a higher proficiency.

The other thing that the directorate is doing is assessments of proficiency so that there is accreditation against those positions. For example, if we are putting someone in a position to be bilingual, we know that they have a type of proficiency. There is a whole range of levels. I won't get into it. I have had fascinating conversations nationally with other jurisdictions about how they classify these things. I was interviewed in French — if you can believe it — nationally, and we were talking about the shortage of French language teachers. My comment back — because from talking with other jurisdictions, we knew this problem existed everywhere. I said, "Well, what a great problem to have." If you think about it — I wish we didn't have the problem, but what it indicates is that there are a lot of young people who are trying to learn French.

We started working on solutions with the Province of Quebec. It ranges from intensive French to conversational French. Just because the member has given me sort of a window of opportunity, if I can just put a shout out there to all Yukoners and public servants that I think it's a great thing to do. I hope everyone avails themselves of this opportunity, including all of us here in the Legislature.

Ms. White: I echo the minister's congratulations. I would also put a plug in that it's not necessarily only children who want to speak French, but it's their parents — like mine, who made the decision when I was five that I was going to learn Canada's second official language. So a big thank you to the parents and the public servants within the French Language Services Directorate — those who are learning French, practising French and living in French in the community. It's really important.

So it's always a pleasure. C'est toujours un plaisir. Merci d'être ici, encore une fois. À la prochaine.

With that, Mr. Chair, I will leave it for the day.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Before we get to line-by-line debate, Mr. Chair — I note that it will be the first line-by-line debate that we get to, and I'm just very excited that — oh, Finance. Sorry, second — la deuxième. I'm happy to be second.

Before we get to that, I just would like to say that it is a privilege to be the Minister responsible for the French Language Services Directorate. It has been great to work with the community, including all of the parents who are encouraging their kids — including those anglophone parents who encourage their kids to study the French language. It's great, and I just will echo the member opposite's remarks in thanking that community.

Chair: Is there any further general debate on Vote 27, French Language Services Directorate?

Seeing none, we will proceed to line-by-line debate, starting at page 12-7.

Ms. White: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 27, French Language Services Directorate, cleared or carried, as required.

Unanimous consent re deeming all lines in Vote 27, French Language Services Directorate, cleared or carried

Chair: Ms. White has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 27, French Language Services Directorate, cleared or carried, as required.

Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

***On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures
Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$5,771,000 agreed to
On Capital Expenditures
Capital Expenditures in the amount of nil agreed to
Total Expenditures in the amount of \$5,771,000 agreed to
to
French Language Services Directorate agreed to***

Chair: We will proceed to Vote 3, Department of Education.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Committee of the Whole will recess for 10 minutes.

Recess

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 3, Department of Education, in Bill No. 206, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2018-19*.

Department of Education

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I would like to introduce Rob Wood, Deputy Minister of the Department of Education, and Cyndy Dekuysscher, Assistant Deputy Minister of the Department of Education who is in charge of operations, including Finance.

I welcome them both here today and thank them for being here to assist us with this debate. I do have some opening remarks, Mr. Chair, and I will go through those and look forward to answering questions from my colleagues.

Today, we are presenting the 2018-19 budget for the Department of Education. Lifelong learning for Yukoners of all ages is an important part of building healthy, vibrant and sustainable Yukon communities. Through education at all levels, from early childhood into adulthood, Yukoners can continuously develop themselves to achieve their goals. They can ensure that they have the skills to be a key part of local business. They might want to start a business of their own or follow their dreams, whatever they may be, and give back to their communities. By doing so, they are building capacity in the Yukon for thriving communities and economies.

With a good education and access to lifelong learning, all Yukoners can have the opportunity to continue to contribute to our beautiful territory and achieve their best lives. In the modern economy and society, lifelong learning is not just a principle, it is a necessity. The economy and the workforce are continually evolving. Learning does not just happen in kindergarten. It doesn't just begin there, either, and it is not over when we complete high school or post-secondary education. In fact, learning is a skill, not just an accomplishment. Yukoners need to be lifelong learners so they are ready to adapt and grow at any age. Through Public Schools, post-secondary education at Yukon College and training programs, we are supporting students in developing the skills and knowledge that they need to thrive in their careers, lives and communities.

One major initiative underway is the implementation of Yukon's redesigned curriculum for public schools, which puts greater emphasis on developing skills that are essential for learning and thriving in life. Kindergarten to grade 9 students started learning the redesigned curriculum this year. In grade 10, students will start in the 2018-19 school year, and grades 11 and 12 will follow in the 2019-20 school year. Students are going deeper with their learning and making local and global connections through hands-on projects and Yukon resources. They are learning more about Yukon First Nation ways of knowing and doing in every grade, and we embed Yukon First Nation knowledge and perspective into the curriculum. They are working through challenges and leveraging their strengths. They are learning how to be adaptable and are being positioned to succeed in their lives beyond school.

Post-secondary labour market and training programs similarly need to address the diverse range of learning needs and support lifelong learning. Yukon College will soon begin offering university degree programs, in addition to existing programming in which they are successful. Those include adult basic education, trades and vocational training and second-language support. We are working with the college to ensure Yukon students have access to the post-secondary programs that they need to achieve their educational goals closer to home. For Yukoners in the workforce and looking for work, we are introducing new labour market programs

with more funding and flexibility to help them prepare for career opportunities. We are ensuring that Yukoners at all stages of life have access to the education that they need and want to thrive in life.

We are helping build healthy, vibrant and sustainable communities in the territory by investing a total budget this year of \$192,786,000. Of this amount, \$182,864,000 is for operation and maintenance. This is an overall increase of \$6,838,000 over last year's main estimates.

Some of the factors for this increase include collective agreement increases for staff, growing enrolment in schools, support for Yukon College's new degree-granting status and recoverable increases related to the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon funding formula and labour market funding programs.

The remaining \$9,922,000 is for capital projects. This is an overall decrease of \$12,016,000 from last year. However, capital funding can vary substantially from year to year based on the requirements and the need. This decrease largely reflects a transfer of responsibility for capital maintenance repairs to the Department of Highways and Public Works and the timeline for constructing the French first language high school.

Let's take a closer look at what this funding will support. In Public Schools — Public Schools provide elementary and secondary education for more than 5,400 kindergarten to grade 12 students across 30 schools in the territory. To support this essential work with Yukon children and youth, a total of \$134,616,000 in the 2018-19 budget is requested for both O&M and capital. Of this total, \$125,223,000 is requested for the O&M, which is an increase of \$6,481,000 over last year's main estimates. This funding runs programs to support strong educational outcomes for Yukon students.

A major project in Public Schools right now is the implementation of the new curriculum, which is in year 1 of a multi-year rollout, and \$326,000 is requested to continue this work. Through this curriculum, students focus on developing key skills in all subjects: literacy, numeracy, critical and creative thinking and social responsibility. They are also learning more relevant knowledge with more use of local, Yukon and Yukon First Nations content and resources in class. This is a significant transformation, and we recognize it will take time to fully implement the changes. We will continue to work with the BC Ministry of Education and the students, families, educators, Yukon First Nations, school councils and associations and other partners as the project moves forward.

We continue to see growth in student enrolment in schools in the territory. Educators are essential resources for students. To maintain service levels for students, we need more school staff for consistent class sizes and school programming. In 2018-19 an additional \$3,693,000 is requested to provide an additional 7.76 teacher FTEs and 20.4 educational assistant FTEs, as well as funding for substitute teachers. We will continue to allocate FTEs to Yukon schools based on enrolment and student needs. With this staff, Yukon

schools will continue to have strong teams to support the success of the growing number of Yukon students.

With respect to the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon, an additional \$1,119,000 is requested for the funding formula for the Yukon's francophone school board. The department works with the commission, also known as the CSFY, and the francophone community to support francophone students. This funding is for the school board's annual operating costs and school programs. The funding formula is based on student enrolment. There were 13 more students enrolled in École Émilie Tremblay at the start of this school year, and enrollment in French first language school programs in Yukon is projected to continue to grow, as in other schools. This increase will ensure that the CSFY has the funding needed to maintain service levels for students.

We recognize the value and the benefits of students training in both official languages, as well as other languages, and the doors that these language skills will open in their futures. French second language programming, like core French and French immersion, is available in many schools in Whitehorse and in five rural communities. To help provide options to students in the eight communities where no French is currently available without those programs, we are requesting \$113,000. This funding will provide options for the interested rural grades 7 to 9 students to take independent French lessons and to help rural teachers to support French learning. Projects like this help us ensure that there are similar opportunities for all Yukon students, whether they are in Pelly Crossing, Watson Lake, Whitehorse, or — if I might say — Mayo.

With respect to Public Schools capital — Public Schools also need capital funding to provide facilities to safely and effectively run school programs. \$9,993,000 in capital funding for Public Schools is requested this year. This is an overall decrease of \$10,247,000 from last year. Capital budgets, as I have noted, can vary substantially from year to year, based on cash flow, requirements and needs. However, work continues on major projects to ensure that Yukon schools are safe places for learning.

\$3 million is requested for the French first language high school construction project. We continue to work with the CSFY and the francophone community on a new school for the territory's French first language secondary students. The project faced delays due to remediation at the site of the old F.H. Collins School building in Riverdale. Testing at that site is ongoing, and we anticipate being able to mitigate any concerns during construction. The school will be built for 150 students and will provide a modern, flexible learning environment for students and staff.

This year, the Government of Canada is providing \$1 million in the 2018-19 budget year to support the construction of community spaces in the school. The school and the community spaces will be part of a campus model in Riverdale, along with the F.H. Collins Secondary School and the Selkirk Elementary School. It will be a great place for student learning and local events and activities at that location. This summer, we will prepare the site for construction, and we

anticipate the school to be completed in the fall 2020, and we look forward to starting that construction.

Next door, we are working at completing site features at F.H. Collins Secondary School. Some of this work was not completed at the time that F.H. Collins school was built, and some of it was delayed last year from the remediation in the area. The area is now ready for development with respect to those projects, and we expect to begin the planned projects at the end of the current school year, including a basketball court, an outdoor learning classroom for experiential education activities, a new weight room, 20 to 30 new parking spots and a new shared bus loop with the Francophone high school. We expect these new features will be ready for the beginning of the 2018-19 school year. \$3,120,000 is requested for this work.

The Department of Community Services is also coordinating work on new track and field facilities at the school. Specifications and the location for the facilities are currently being assessed. Once the project is designed and tendered and a contract is awarded, the Government of Yukon can provide more details on a timeline for this project. We expect it to begin very soon. We look forward to completing these new features for the students in the area and for our greater community.

With respect to increased enrolment, Golden Horn Elementary School is requiring more space, so we have planned to install a new portable to provide additional classroom space at Golden Horn Elementary. The portable will be available for the school's use in the 2018-19 school year, and we are requesting \$400,000 for this project.

With respect to the capital plan involving schools, we are undertaking a capital planning process, including long-term planning. The commitment is for 10 years to complete major renovations or replacements of several Yukon schools. To improve the efficiency of the process and to ensure buildings meet varying school program needs, we will start developing a flexible school design template. This design would be scalable for the needs of specific school programs. Building new schools can be timely and costly; we plan that a scalable school design will provide a base model for elementary and secondary school designs. The design can be expanded or reduced with additional features, depending on the needs of the school.

Designs are very expensive, and a reusable scalable design would save significant costs over time — funding that could be used or redirected in other areas to benefit students. It would also allow us to build new schools more quickly, saving time in the design phase each time we build a school. This innovative plan would save money and time in completing these projects to meet the increased need for school space across Yukon and, in my view, Mr. Chair, start to address some of the aging school facilities that we have and improve them as best we can. \$20,000 is requested in 2018-19 to start this initiative. We look forward to further discussion about this approach.

In the case of Kluane Lake School, we are working with the Kluane First Nation on planning a school to be located in

Burwash Landing. The Kluane First Nation has requested that we relocate the school to Burwash Landing from Destruction Bay. We are in the planning stages of this project; in this budget, there is \$50,000 requested for design and planning for a new school to begin this process. We will provide an update on progress as this work continues.

It happens on an ongoing basis. There is \$270,000 requested for these capital maintenance repairs and minor renovations in schools. To be more efficient, the standardization of this work across government — the amount of the school's typical repair budget — is being transferred to the Department of Highways and Public Works. Our budget will show \$3,226,000 has been transferred to the Department of Highways and Public Works to allow for this work. This will streamline the important work of keeping our school facilities safe, healthy and available for student learning. The remaining funding with Education will allow for schools to initiate small repair and renovation projects with the department's operations team. Education will work closely with Highways and Public Works on ongoing maintenance of schools. There is \$125,000 requested for school-initiated renovations. This funding will allow for updates to school facilities to continue meeting the needs of students.

We are also making significant investments in school technology and equipment to ensure that students and staff have access to a world of digital learning and resources. Digital literacy is a critical skill for students in this day and age, and providing them with access to modern technology helps them to learn how to safely and effectively use technology in learning and in life. In 2018-19, \$1,903,000 is requested for school-based information technology. This funding will go toward computers and mobile devices for schools. It will support connectivity for schools to access global information and educational opportunities. There is \$125,000 in this request for the last phase of the Aspen Student Information System implementation. With Aspen, teachers and schools access student information that helps them be more responsive to students' needs. In 2018-19, the last phase involves creating a new teacher, student and parent portal for student information. This portal will connect families to their children's classroom learning.

I would like to take a moment to speak about Advanced Education. I would like to recognize the great work by Public Schools staff and all they do to support the success of Yukon students. I would also like to acknowledge the great work by the Advanced Education staff for all they do to support the success of learners who are beyond school — or the regular K to 12. They are in post-secondary training and they are in the labour market. Lifelong learners mean we are all learning, whether formally or informally, throughout our lives to be better workers and citizens or to just learn for our own interest. Advanced Education supports lifelong learning of all Yukoners through its programs and services. We include student financial assistance, Yukon College training programs and labour market programs.

In 2018-19, \$17,374,000 is requested for the operation and maintenance for Advanced Education. This is an increase

of \$892,000 from last year's main estimates. I also have with me information regarding our new labour market programs, which I am sure my friends will ask me about, as well as some additional information about Yukon College and other advanced education programs — capital and O&M. I look forward to being able to answer questions for the purposes of conveying that information as we discuss the Education budget.

Mr. Kent: I thank the minister for her opening remarks, and I welcome the officials Mr. Wood and Ms. Dekuysscher to the Assembly here today. Special congratulations to Cyndy. I understand from our briefing that she is retiring in May, and we wish her all the best in her retirement in Marsh Lake and wherever else her travels take her. Thank you very much for your years of service and we really appreciate it on behalf of Yukoners. Thank you very much to you and your team for the briefing that you provided to me and members of the Third Party.

I am just going to start and go back to a couple of points that we raised during the supplementary budget discussions. I just wanted to get some clarification and perhaps a couple more answers from the minister.

One of the questions we asked was about the EA or educational assistant or paraprofessional allocation. The minister started to go through a list of — I'll read right from Hansard: "For example, Christ the King initially was allocated 10.75, but ultimately has 14..." — and she started to go through the list, but we just asked — I mean, she offered, and we agreed, that perhaps she would just provide the list for us. I'm not sure if that's been provided. If it is in one of the legislative returns that the minister has tabled since we were up, I appreciate it. If not, just a reminder for the minister that we would be looking for that information.

In one of my final questions, when we were up discussing the supplementary budget, we were talking about the Native Language Centre. I did ask at the briefing about funding. Again, it is my understanding that funding isn't reflected in this budget, as there wasn't enough time between the decision-making to get it into this budget. I'm assuming it will be in a supplementary budget this fall, unless the minister would correct me on that, and it is in the current O&M mains here.

I guess the one thing — and I know we have to be careful with it because it's a personnel issue, but again, the decision was made that the existing staff from the Native Language Centre would be offered positions within Education. The minister did provide some information about retirements and reassignments. One of the questions that I did ask toward the end of the day when we were talking in the supplementary was about those individuals who didn't retire, who didn't move on to another department and are being placed in Education — were those individuals placed in vacant positions or were new positions created for them to better suit their skill set? Just going through the minister's response, I don't think she had a chance to address it when we were talking.

Those are a couple of the outstanding questions that I had from when we were in debate on the supplementary. The final

one is — we talked about the education advisory committee as well and I'm just — obviously, that was one of the opportunities, I think, for parents or others to provide feedback on the new curriculum or the new grading system. I'm just wondering if the minister has any updates. Has that committee been disbanded or replaced? How do parents provide their feedback as the minister begins to implement the new curriculum and implement the new grading system for some Yukon students?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Thank you to the member opposite for the questions. I recall making reference to a list that we have about EA allocations. It is part of a legislative return that has not yet been filed but will be coming forthwith.

With respect to the question about the Yukon Native Language Centre, let me speak first about the funding for the operations of that centre. Those were transferred at the time of the announcement with the Council of Yukon First Nations. The funding for operations was transferred to them at that time. We continue to work with CYFN on what funding they might need for salaries. Of course, at the time when the program was transferred, CYFN — I don't want to speak for them, but I understand that they were in the process of determining how they wanted to deliver programming, what they wanted to do and how much staff they would need for that. So it was not something that was done initially at that time, but the department is continuing to work with them so that, when their request comes forward, we can deal with it.

Being careful, as the member opposite has noted, about employees who were previously employed at the Yukon Native Language Centre as employees of the Government of Yukon — there were approximately five people — although 6.3 FTEs, I think, is what we had there at that centre, and I think 1.3 of it remained vacant at the time. What I can say is that no new positions were created at the Department of Education for those individuals. In fact, one or more individuals actually obtained employment in the Government of Yukon, but elsewhere than the Department of Education. We continue to work with the individuals.

I don't have the number right now. We can possibly get it — if there are any of those individuals who have not yet obtained employment. That process is ongoing, and we continue to work with them, not only for positions that they may be suited to in the Department of Education, but positions throughout government that may be of interest and meet their skill set. I won't say more about that, other than to say that no new positions — which, I understand, is at the crux of that question — were created for them.

The First Nation Education Advisory Committee — as I noted before when we spoke about this topic, those individuals have expressed to the department that the time for advisory activities was, in their view, done and that action needed to be taken. An action plan is being developed with all of the parties that were part of the education advisory committee being represented at other tables. They have not, as an advisory committee, met recently, but all have been engaged through other processes in the department.

I don't have the information that my colleague across the way has asked for about parents' feedback, because I don't understand necessarily that parents had feedback about their own students, for instance — certainly in a general way through the education advisory committee. But with respect to that, there are many opportunities for parents to provide feedback as the redesigned curriculum is rolled out. I know that principals are working extensively with parents — particularly now, of course, at the elementary-school levels — to develop individual learning plans for students and individual feedback plans for students. I know that the students are, in fact, participating extensively in some schools in that process. The feedback that we have from parents in relation to that is how positive it has been.

In particular, I can also indicate that we have one or two elementary schools — probably more, but I can think of two at the moment — where there has been excellent guidance on behalf of the administration — principals, vice-principals and the teachers taking on the development of the new curriculum and the relationship with parents and students. We have asked, and they have been more than gracious in providing that learning opportunity to other schools. They are helping other principals, administrations and teachers to determine how they can reach out to their families and make sure that this is a positive experience.

I can go back for a second. I have a note with respect to the Yukon Native Language Centre staff. We can confirm that at least three of the Yukon Native Language Centre staff have received temporary positions elsewhere. One has decided not to look for work, and we're following up on the last one. I hope that answers all of those questions.

I can, of course, take this opportunity to give — as my colleague from beautiful Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes would say — a shout-out to school councils and the extensive work that they do with parents. Their availability for parents to provide feedback, not only to the administration — at every school council meeting that I have been at, Mr. Chair, I have encouraged school council members, the parents and others who have been there to provide feedback to the department, to superintendents and straight through to my office with respect to concerns or issues that they have. As the member opposite knows — for instance, he wrote to me on behalf of some concerns that were brought up at a school council in which he was involved. Like the response that I sent to him, we respond to all of those and take those issues very seriously, and we take the opportunity to build a relationship with school councils so that they know their value, and they know that the department is supporting the information and the key role that they have in our school communities.

Mr. Kent: Just to circle back on some of the information that the minister just provided, I understood from the briefing we had that there will be a multi-year funding agreement worked on with CYFN to support their work with the Yukon Native Language Centre. The minister can correct me if I'm wrong, but the information I had is that one of the roles for the Yukon Native Language Centre was to train the First Nation language teachers who are active in our schools.

Can the minister confirm that it was one of the roles, and if it was, will CYFN be taking that responsibility on or will that be done through First Nation partnerships in the minister's department going forward?

I thank the minister for her comments on the education advisory committee. It sounds like they are working on an action plan now. I will double-back and check the website. Obviously, that is where a lot of parents do get their information, and that is where I got the information when we asked the question earlier about the curriculum and where parents can provide feedback. I will direct any concerns from parents through to their individual teachers and administrators — and ultimately their school council as well — as far as getting information up through the superintendents and into the senior levels of the department.

One thing that the minister mentioned in her previous remarks was individual learnings plans, or ILPs. I'm not sure if I heard it correctly. Are there ILPs for all students now? Is that what the new curriculum allows for? In prior years, I don't believe that each student had an individual learning plan, but are those individual learning plans going to be for all students? She did mention that they have received positive feedback from parents who are involved in developing these ILPs.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I will start with the last question first, if I may. I said individual learning plans, but that is not the actual title. I will explain what I am talking about and then I will get you the term that is the name for this concept. As part of the redesigned curriculum, it is a situation in which students work with their parents and their teachers to determine a list of goals — a project plan for the individual student. I know this to be the case, and the feedback that I am talking about has come from parents who have, with their elementary student, been very pleased to be part of that process to determine what strengths and skill sets an individual student is going to work on and what their goals will be. Then that is also the tool used for assessing their progress throughout the year, although it will be done on more than one occasion throughout the year, as I understand it.

I am looking for the title for that. I am sure that if someone is listening who knows, they will send that title to me. I don't mean to say that it is an individual learning plan. That is my mistake with respect to the words. What I was describing is the concept of assessing students and having the three parts — teachers, parents and students — all involved in that goal-setting process. I will get you the proper title for that. I apologize for not having it at the moment.

With respect to the Yukon Native Language Centre, there will be a multi-year funding program. Funding agreements are already coming forward at this point. First of all, yes, the Yukon Native Language Centre was responsible for training Yukon native language teachers. At this point, the YNLC, under the direction of the CYFN, is putting together a multi-year plan. Again, I don't want to speak for them, but I understand it to be at least a 10-year plan to determine their priorities with respect to language acquisition, how they want to advance the training of individuals and teachers of

languages and how they want to proceed with that. We will be supporting that as part of our arrangement to transfer the responsibilities for the Yukon Native Language Centre to CYFN. They are currently working on that plan, as I understand it.

Part of the planning will be them determining what types of educators — whether they want to train there, as well as have it available for the community. Individual First Nations have jurisdiction over languages, and we will be responsive to their goals and strategies as they move forward and develop their plan.

I have one last piece of information that I can share. What I have been describing for the member opposite with respect to student assessment is a student-centred assessment practice. When I was at Whitehorse Elementary, I think they made a reference to it being an educational plan or a goal plan for students. It does not, apparently, have a formal title, but I clearly am looking for one, so I might have to speak to them about searching for such a thing so that we know what we are describing. It is an educational practice as part of the new curriculum in the elementary schools.

Mr. Kent: I thank the minister for those responses, and I may have been wrong too with my acronyms. It has been a day or two since I've been the Education minister. I may have been referring to IEPs as well — the individualized education plans or learning plans — so I'll have to go back to acronym school as well. We will see if we can come up with one for the goal setting. I am personally familiar with it as well with my young guy in kindergarten, so that work is started as early as kindergarten.

I don't want to spend the whole afternoon on it, but one other comment — I know that the transfer of the Yukon Native Language Centre to the CYFN came together very quickly — I think those were the minister's words — when we talked about this previously. I was just wondering if any thought was given to having some sort of overlap with some of the staff so that they could continue to provide what was delivered by the Native Language Centre while the new plan was being developed, but again, I would leave that to the minister.

I wanted to move on to some other items. School busing is one of the things that we hear an awful lot about as MLAs, probably on both sides of the House. I have a couple of questions with respect to busing. My first one is the contract; I know that it is closed and there was one bidder. I am wondering — and I didn't get a chance to check the tender management system today before we started — if that contract has been awarded yet, and, if not, if the minister has any type of update on the awarding of that contract.

The other question I have is with respect to students who arrive on one bus to school and depart on another. As the MLA for Copperbelt South, I primarily deal with the Golden Horn Elementary School Council — that will expand now that I have taken on responsibility as opposition critic for Education — and one of the things that was a concern was how the kids, for instance, would arrive on one bus and then perhaps leave for either daycare or another family member's

place or downtown on another bus. My question for the minister on this is — and it is not meant to be a tongue-in-cheek question; it is serious: Particularly after school, when kids leave the schools, who in Education knows which kids are on which buses?

How do you track which kids are on what buses? If a bus were to break down — or worse, get into some sort of an accident — would you know what children are on that bus at a particular time? That is again something that was raised at a meeting that I was at. I just wanted to ask the minister if she can give us a bit of an update on that.

While we're on the topic of busing, I will quickly just bring up the question that my colleague from Lake Laberge raised with respect to the Grizzly Valley subdivision and the inability, I guess — whether due to the contractors or the department — of the buses to get into Grizzly Valley. Has that been rectified or are there plans in place to address that for the upcoming school year or the balance of this school year?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I appreciate the questions. If I forget the details of any, I hope I will answer them the next time I stand.

Firstly, we will address the issue of the school bus contract. My colleague across the way is correct that there was but one bidder with respect to the tender for this contract. It happens to be Standard Bus, which is the same company that currently has the contract. The department hasn't specifically signed the contract yet, but is working with Standard Bus to award — I'm not sure how we get past that gate, but certainly the bids were appropriate in the circumstance. Standard Bus has provided, by all accounts, excellent service over the past period of the contract. The contract will be for a period of two years, with the possibility of extending it for one, which is what I think we have been doing and is relatively standard. I think that's the entirety of that question.

With respect to bus transfers, certainly I appreciate the concerns of the member opposite, particularly because I know he has a young fellow who might be on a bus at some point. I too had a young son at one point who was taking buses to Golden Horn and back. With respect to his specific question, the school is aware of which children are to be on which buses. The bus driver is aware. It is, in our view, a key component of their employment. They must be, of course, a safe driver and a person who maintains the safety and security of our children, but he or she also must be able to account for the children who are there.

Ensuring that students have safe and effective transportation to and from school every day is a key priority. When busing concerns are raised, we expect and encourage people to bring them directly, not only to the bus company, but to the department so that we can affect any issues.

Again, I will take the opportunity to indicate that I have heard from several people about that practice of letting, not only the bus company know, but the department as well. They were wholly satisfied with the response that was given quickly, because, of course, a child on the wrong bus, or on a bus that turns at the wrong location, or when individual vehicles go to pass a bus — any of those kinds of things affect

the safety of our children. The drivers are aware, the school is aware, and I know that there is close monitoring, particularly of younger children, to make sure that they are on the right bus at their school — because they are getting on a bus that they did not arrive on — or at a transfer that is required.

With respect to the question about the Grizzly Valley subdivision and the bus service — the safety of our students is our first priority. Grizzly Valley — I guess it is called Grizzly Way road, to be specific — has been determined by the bus company to simply not be safe for school buses to travel on. It is something that I raised with my colleagues just a few short days ago, as well as with the department, and we are looking for a solution. At this point, the safety is the primary concern, so having a bus travel on that road is not appropriate. I have encouraged any parents — and the Member for Lake Laberge, who brought this to my attention — to contact us, and we will be happy to work with them to see if there is an agreeable solution, but it is my understanding that they are currently bringing kids to the bottom of the road where they can access bus service.

Mr. Kent: I appreciate those answers. There is a busing meeting at Golden Horn on Tuesday — maybe it is Wednesday. I better not say it until I can confirm it. I do not want to send people the wrong message. It is next week, though. It is at 7:00 p.m. I just don't know on what day. There will be some interesting conversations. I know that officials from the minister's department will be in attendance to answer parents' concerns.

I wanted to move on to some of the teacher staffing and paraprofessional staffing issues for the minister. I am going to put a number of questions out there. If she misses one or if her support team misses one, I am happy to repeat it.

The first thing that we would like to know is: What is the overall budget for teachers, paraprofessionals and substitutes? Can we get a breakdown? Maybe this is more appropriate in the line-by-line section, but if the minister could just provide that information to us, that would be great — either by way of legislative return or just correspondence. That would be very helpful.

On the paraprofessional side of things as well, can we get a breakdown between education assistants and learning assistants and that type of thing? Again, maybe that could be part of the EA document that she is still working on for opposition members.

I wanted to ask a question specific to substitute teachers. This is something that came up in an early December letter from the Watson Lake school council. My colleague, the Member for Watson Lake, provided me with a copy of this letter. It is addressed to the superintendent of schools at the Department of Education so I'm sure the minister would be able to get a copy. I would table it, but I don't have permission from the Watson Lake school council. I just wanted to read one quick thing from it. What the school council is asking is whether or not a full-time substitute teacher could be assigned to each school. They outline many of the concerns, I think, that we see with substitute teachers — perhaps depending on the behaviour of the kids. Often they

are not as focused when a substitute teacher is there as they are when their regular teacher is in there.

As the school council mentioned, placing them in the classroom is unfair to all parties involved, so they were wondering about a full-time substitute teacher in each school. Has that made it to the minister's desk for consideration? There hasn't been a response, I don't believe, and this was a December 1, 2017, letter that they sent. We would be looking for a response from the department to the chair of the Watson Lake school council on this particular issue. If the minister could give us an idea if she has considered this request by the Watson Lake school council, that would be very helpful. My colleague could pass it on to those parents.

Just quickly on a couple of other staffing issues — the EA allocation. Can the minister give us a sense for when that process will be underway? I think that traditionally it has been done in May for the following year, but if that has changed, we would appreciate that, as well as the staffing formula. I know that is a very controversial thing that the department has to undertake. Maybe some of the schools know now what next fall's staffing will look like — subject to change, obviously, with additional EAs added, if needed.

Finally, on hiring — and again, I apologize to the minister for getting all these questions out at once, but I just wanted to refer to the mandate letter that the Premier provided to her on her appointment to the position of Minister of Education. The second bullet in there is to review teacher hiring practices in conjunction with the Yukon Teachers' Association — if she could give us an update on what work has been done on that and, if there are changes in place now or contemplated, what those changes might be.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, for your indulgence, and thank you for the questions. With respect to the first question about the budget for teachers, EAs and substitute teachers, and a breakdown thereof, I have some round figures. We will confirm the actual figures and provide them to my friends across the way.

The approximate budget in 2018-19 for teachers is a little over \$67 million — again, I will correct these numbers if they are not correct — for 532 FTEs. There is almost \$14 million in the budget for education assistants, which is about 245 FTEs. We are waiting for the number, but I will confirm them. I won't give you that number today. We have approximately 61.8 FTEs for substitute teachers. We will find out the budget figure for that and provide the specific numbers that we have in relation to this question at a later date. I would prefer to do that by way of a legislative return so that the document is available, and I will do so.

With respect to the concept of a substitute teacher assigned to a specific school, I certainly see the value in that idea — particularly in rural schools, Mr. Chair.

I think it probably happens a little bit anyway, but probably in most small communities, a small number of teachers or individuals who are substitute teachers would come to the school. But I certainly take the point that is made by the member opposite and by the Member for Watson Lake, that having somebody who is familiar with the other teachers,

familiar with the school routine and familiar with the students would go a long way to alleviating the stress of a substitute teacher during the day.

We will examine the business case for that. Obviously, there are some issues with respect to labour relations and whether that person would be on call, but I think that we could probably address the same issues that are being presented by managing that system in a particular way by having an on-call list, assuming that we aren't breaching any of the labour relations terms. Without being more specific, I think it is an interesting idea. I have a note from the senior official who is involved with respect to that part of the department, and we will talk about it.

The third question involves the concept — I think two parts. One is when is the staffing allocation formula is being done — it has been completed. They have not yet sent them to individual schools, but it will be done in the very near future because, as of March 15 — which is the second part of that question — the requests were required to be back from schools for their educational assistant allocations. As the member opposite knows, schools ask for a particular number of EAs based on their assessment of what is happening in their individual school, and then an assessment process takes place with respect to that. Those requests had to be in by March 15. They will be dealt with, and then the full staffing allocation will be sent to each school in the near future for both teachers and educational assistants. I think that was what was being asked there.

With respect to the mandate letter and teacher hiring practices, some discussions have taken place with YTA about how teacher hiring practices could be done to the benefit of students — the priority of students in our schools — taking into account the issues and concerns of YTA and taking into account the professional teachers and how they should proceed through that process, making sure that it is fair, comprehensive and transparent. I can indicate that there have been some conversations with respect to that and some progress made, but as YTA is in the middle of an election at the moment, those conversations have been put on hold. We expect that it will be resolved once the election is complete and their leadership is confirmed, and we would be back at the table with them for the purposes of proceeding. I think those were positive conversations to date. I think the YTA — again, I don't want to speak for them, but certainly my impression is that the YTA is as eager as the Department of Education to make sure that we have the best possible teachers in classrooms supporting our students' learning.

I think I will stop there.

Mr. Kent: I thank the minister for that response. I think I heard her correctly that the staffing formula has been completed but hasn't been communicated yet to all of the schools. Once that work is done, could the minister commit to provide us with a list of the staffing allocation — I think she said there were 30 schools in the territory — for each school, and what it is for this upcoming year, what it would be for the 2018-19 year and also what it would be for the 2017-18 year, just for comparison's sake? If she could provide that, and

again, there is no panic for this. I recognize that you would want to communicate that to the schools and the school councils first, so any time after that would be great.

I'm going to ask a couple of quick questions with respect to the collective bargaining agreement between the YTA and the government. Can the minister just give us a sense of when the current CBA expires? Then I am just going to transition to another topic.

I know a number of years ago toward the tail end of my time as Minister of Education, there was some talk about transferring the early learning mandate from Health and Social Services to Education. I'm just wondering if that work is still underway or still being considered and if any of the funding dollars or program funding that the Minister of Health and Social Services announced with the federal government — if any of those dollars are available to assist with that. For instance, I believe the work of the Child Development Centre is fantastic, but I think Health and Social Services has a role there as well because it's pre-kindergarten. If the minister can give us an update as to if there is still a transfer being considered, and if not — if Education is playing a bigger role, especially when some of those youngsters come out of the CDC and into either K4 or kindergarten — what the transition looks like or if there are any plans to address any concerns with that transition.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I appreciate the question regarding the staffing allocation and what is communicated to schools. I won't make that commitment right now because I want to make sure I understand what we communicate to them, but I don't see any reason why that wouldn't be the case. I will look into it. I appreciate the question and the opportunity to get back to the member opposite.

I do understand the question to be what the school allocation was for teachers in 2017-18 and 2018-19. I am a little more hesitant about the educational assistants because in addition to the list of — let's say for 2018-19 — school requests and what was allocated, then there is an assessment done based on sometimes individual student needs. So that is a little bit of a more fluid process, but I understand the question and I will do my best to provide the information that has been asked for.

The Yukon Teachers' Association's current collective agreement expires on June 30, 2018. There has been a significant amount of work starting late last year — and there have been pre-bargaining tables as well — and then into the early part of 2018, where mandates have been determined and individuals who will be involved in that process have been chosen or indicated by the union and by the government. But again, there is currently an election for the Yukon Teachers' Association happening. I understand that the election will be April 20, so I don't think there has been an unnecessary delay or anything like that. There is much hope that as soon as that issue is resolved — the leadership of the YTA — that there are two full months in which, hopefully, we could come to an agreement with respect to the next collective agreement. Everyone seems poised and ready to go, and that will happen as soon as possible.

With respect to the early learning mandate, my colleague from across the way is correct that those conversations are ongoing. At this point, we are concentrating on service integration as a way of examining how the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Social Services can work together with respect to formulating the best possible services for early learners. The funding at this point that has been noted by the member across the way is all through Health and Social Services still. We will be continuing those conversations for the reasons that, no doubt, the former minister was aware of and was interested in, so there is some value to having education — lifelong learning, as I mentioned earlier — be coordinated in one place, but we are certainly not at the point yet where any decision has been made to do that.

Mr. Kent: Mr. Chair, thank you, and I think we will move on. I thank the minister for those responses, and we look forward to further updates on the information we have requested. Again, if it is just the teachers allocated for this year and what schools can expect next year, that certainly helps inform our discussions with our constituents, so I appreciate that.

I wanted to talk briefly about school calendars. I know we are currently in a situation, I think, where next year's school calendar has been set, but I think the department and the minister have indicated that they are going to work on either a three- or four-year calendar beyond that. I am wondering what that work will entail. Obviously, there was quite a bit of feedback sought from parents, teachers and other Yukoners with respect to the calendar development into what we see now for next year. Is the department planning on going out again for consultation on a three-year calendar, or are they just going to take what was learned during that initial consultation and use that to inform the development of a longer term calendar?

I know in conversations we had in here a number of years ago — with the now-Premier as the Leader of the Third Party at the time — we talked about some coordination of the entire territory's school calendar. I think he and I can both attest to the fact that this certainly isn't something that worked out at the time. Obviously, the needs in the communities — particularly his home community of Dawson City — are different from the feedback that we were hearing at the time for the Whitehorse area schools.

Can the minister answer whether or not there are any common calendar discussions still underway or if we are just going to stick to Whitehorse with a common calendar, and the communities can make their own choices?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: My colleague from across the way is correct. We have set the calendar for the 2018-19 school year with the primary dates, beginning and ending. The process that is currently ongoing is the drafting of three more years of calendars, as promised.

My understanding is that they had recently gone back out to school councils with respect to those three years for commentary. The three years have been developed with respect to the feedback that was already received from

Yukoners across the territory regarding what, in general, school calendars should look like and what priorities individual parents and school communities had. We asked questions, as the member opposite will know, about the length of March break, Christmas break, and start and end dates — those kinds of things. All of that information was gathered during the consultation that we did in the late summer and fall of 2017, if I am correct about the dates. It was plugged into developing 2018-19, and because they follow so closely — an end date for one year is important for the start date for the next — they have been developed as a group of three years. They will be released very soon.

The feedback has been received from the school councils, and through that process — through parents and the larger school communities — my commitment has been that we would release those very close to the end of March, because I am very keen for families to have that information. March break is currently happening here in the territory so I made the call, I think it was yesterday, that we would release them to the schools and publicly next week when people are back from March break.

With respect to coordinating territory-wide, I too was hopeful — like the former minister — that this would be something that could be done, but as he is aware, the feedback that we received from communities was that they need flexibility and they need the opportunity to design their school programming and their events around things that affect those individual communities. Whitehorse will be on the same calendar for elementary and high schools primarily because of busing — the issues that are around having buses run in the most efficient and effective way for students, and we have come to the conclusion, probably much like the member opposite, that flexibility in the communities is a good thing and it will continue in the upcoming school calendars.

Mr. Kent: I apologize to the minister — I didn't hear her when she responded. Can she confirm when she's up on her feet next time — is it next week for the three-year calendars that you're announcing? Sorry if I misheard — I was just reviewing my notes — so just to get a sense of when that three-year calendar would be announced and when parents, teachers and others in the school community can expect that.

Obviously, as we mentioned, there will be different calendars for rural schools versus the Whitehorse schools. I kind of know the answer to this question, but what kind of challenges does that pose to the minister for those students outside of Whitehorse who may want to take some distance learning opportunities — whether or not they want to take — I'm not sure if these are offered in distance learning, but it will be my example — advanced math or advanced sciences courses or something available in Whitehorse but are not necessarily available in the communities, are there ways for students outside of Whitehorse who are interested in that stuff to find workarounds, especially with the different calendars? I would appreciate that.

So when will the three-year calendar be announced? How can students outside of Whitehorse, if they are interested in

distance learning opportunities, adjust to a different calendar for Whitehorse rather than perhaps what they may be working on in Dawson or Watson Lake or any of our other communities?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I can be, I hope, a little more accurate with respect to my hesitation about the dates.

Let me start here: Key dates from the 2018-19 calendar were shared in December of 2017, with both the schools and school communities and school councils. We will be sharing the four-year Whitehorse school calendar and the 2018-19 rural school calendars on Tuesday, April 3. The decision has been made to wait until after the communities are back from spring break. Whitehorse will resume school on April 3.

Rural schools have asked for some more time to confirm the following three years of calendars, and so that has been granted; it is not a problem, of course. There were no feedback objections on the proposed key dates for the next three years out of the Whitehorse calendar, so we will proceed with those. The feedback has been absolutely critical from parents, from school communities, from school councils and from the administration at the individual schools. We do plan to continue a common Whitehorse calendar, as I have said, and flexibility for the rural calendars. I meant to mention earlier that Watson Lake also has a common calendar, because there are two schools there and school buses affecting that community. Next week, we plan to post the three-year calendars, as I've said, with respect to the flexibility noted for the rural schools.

That sort of feeds into the second part of this question, which is — absolutely, there are workarounds for individual students, but they tend not to be as necessary as might first be thought, because, while there is flexibility in the school calendars, they generally only deviate by a week or two with respect to either the opening or — for instance, as an example, I believe March break for Dawson City started this week and will continue into next week, but everybody else has been the week before. So there doesn't tend to be a big issue with respect to those kinds of things because they are generally around holidays and start and end dates.

Of course, individual schools set up when they are going to have professional development days and those kinds of things. So that is a possibility, but as far as any individual student who is trying to do a course — either distance learning, or coming in to Whitehorse in order to have opportunities that might be available to them here, particularly at secondary schools — we work very hard to make sure that no student is prohibited from participating in some program or other because their school calendars are not lined up directly with Whitehorse.

Mr. Kent: I appreciate those answers.

I wanted to talk briefly about the French immersion programs and the popularity that those are experiencing. It is my understanding that Whitehorse Elementary School — which is a single-track French immersion elementary school — is at or near capacity. A couple of years ago, French immersion was introduced into Selkirk Elementary School in Riverdale, and I think it has been very popular over there.

Does the minister have any other plans to expand French immersion to some of the other elementary schools in the city? As I mentioned, Selkirk is dual track; it is a French immersion and English stream school. Are there any other dual-track opportunities that the minister sees?

Just trying to get a sense for the long-term projections — F.H. Collins is a dual-track high school but, with students coming from Whitehorse Elementary and Whitehorse Elementary French immersion, French immersion at Selkirk, as well as the English stream students from the various schools within that catchment area, what are some of the future enrolment projections for F.H. Collins? Are there plans to expand the French immersion program to other Whitehorse area high schools, moving forward?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: There are no plans at this point to expand French immersion beyond what my colleague has mentioned — a single track at Whitehorse Elementary School. I understand that at Selkirk — obviously there is a dual track — there are now two classes. I think they are kindergarten, grade 1 and grade 2 by now. I think it started two years ago, so the kindergarten kids are now in grade 2. I understand there is still possibly some room there for additional students if they wanted to do French immersion.

I appreciate the question about Whitehorse Elementary and Selkirk both feeding into F.H. Collins. There are a couple of things. With respect to the French first language high school, we are not sure what effect that might have. There certainly might be some effect on the enrolment in F.H. Collins when students choose to go to a French first language high school. In doing the best we can with respect to long-term projections, I don't have any of those numbers here, but I guess the point I would like to take the opportunity to make is that at the high school level, we hope that an expansion of the programming that is available to high school students in their second language or in a French immersion situation would be where we would concentrate. There is not the variety of programming available for students who have gone through their entire school career in French immersion. There are not as many programming opportunities in high school as we would like to have, so I can see that might be where we would concentrate.

Mr. Kent: I appreciate the response from the minister. Hopefully, the opening of the French first language school will have some downward pressures on the numbers at F.H. Collins. She and I have talked about it outside of this Chamber — about Golden Horn, in particular, with two kindergarten classes coming in to replace one smaller grade 7 class going out. If you take those numbers forward, what are the population numbers and enrolment numbers going to look like at F.H. Collins in five, six or seven years? It would be helpful to know if there are some plans in that longer time frame to look at perhaps introducing dual-track French immersion at Porter Creek, for instance, if there is sufficient room up there.

I have a quick question for the minister. I know that the Minister of Health and Social Services has announced a review of the *Child and Family Services Act*. Obviously,

educators are often on the front lines when it comes to dealing with children in care or children in group homes. I think there is an important role for the Department of Education to play in that review. I am just wondering if the minister anticipates that Education will be involved in that review. If so, has she considered what role they would take in helping Health and Social Services with the review of that act?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I appreciate the comments with respect to the last question about the future, because it is key to our approach — to a one-government approach. Planning beyond year to year is very complex and very difficult, but it absolutely has to be done; otherwise, we are not looking far enough into the future to make good decisions about where we are in general and, in particular, with respect to schools in this context.

I also understand and appreciate the question with respect to the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Social Services. Other departments will feed into the process of reviewing the *Child and Family Services Act*, particularly because of the kinds of contact. We were asked today about a particular provision in the *Child and Family Services Act* on the obligations for individuals, including teachers and other professionals who spend a lot of time with children and who are often the point of first contact — and the place where a child might go to speak to an adult where they feel safe, and their obligations under that piece of legislation are to report those kinds of things and those kinds of harm to children.

In addition to that, there are other kinds of service integration. We are working closely with Health and Social Services — not only on that particular piece of legislation for review, but on broader things like mental wellness, mental health services for children and counselling. Alcohol and drug counselling services provided in schools are provided through Health and Social Services. There is a lot of opportunity in current practice where the departments do cooperate with one another.

I don't have any details with respect to the current role or how I see that happening, but I can emphasize that, with a one-government approach, there are other pieces of legislation being reviewed that either this department or the Department of Justice, which come under my responsibility, is participating in. You can imagine things like access-to-information issues and those kinds of things that come to the forefront when we are talking about that. It is making plans to go forward; it is not something that is done in isolation. I appreciate the recognition that Education has a key role with respect to that. Our one-government approach means that we will be involved and that the departments are working together. I don't have any comments specifically about the review of certain sections or something like that today.

Chair: Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Committee of the Whole will recess for 15 minutes.

Recess

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter before the Committee is Vote 3, Department of Education in Bill No. 206, *First Appropriation Act 2018-19*.

Mr. Kent: I have a couple more questions sort of related to public schools before I move on to a couple of questions on Advanced Education. I have more than that, but I will maybe try to cut down on those ones so my colleague from Takhini-Kopper King has a chance to get to her feet here today. Then I have some capital questions for the minister as well.

Quickly on home-schooling: How much in this current budget is provided to each — I guess it would be a per-student allocation — for those who are home-schooled? Is that same amount of funding — and I know it's not a home-schooling situation, but the Montessori school, which is a private school — provided to each parent of a child in the Montessori school system?

I guess, just while we're on the topic of Montessori, I know there was some discussion, I believe, last spring about integrating a Montessori model into the public school system. I know that the minister at the time indicated that there were no plans, but if she could let us know if that's something that's being considered. I think, at the time, it was Hidden Valley School that was the topic of potential Montessori public school opportunities, but are there any other schools in the Whitehorse area or otherwise that may be considered at this time for Montessori-style education?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: The home-schooling amount and the Montessori school amount is the same — it's up to \$1,200 per year per student. No further request has come from the Montessori school.

Last year, when we were discussing this, there were a number of meetings and conversations with the folks in charge of the Montessori school. We had a number of conversations and the decision was made to not proceed at that time with a Montessori-type curriculum, almost primarily because the redesigned curriculum is developing and we certainly hope will be developing into far more experiential learning opportunities for students in K to 9 at this point.

That was a chance for us to proceed with the integration of the new, redesigned curriculum to expand the experiential learning for individual students to focus on literacy and numeracy — some of the same foundational pieces that are in the Montessori plan as well. I can indicate that we haven't had further discussion about that because the request had not come. Presumably, based on the conversations we had last year, that decision had been accepted as final.

I can go back to indicate that, in addition to the figure I gave of up to \$1,200 per student per year, the total Aurora Virtual School budget is \$365,000, which includes home-schoolers. The \$365,000 deals with the operational budget — certainly not the staffing.

Mr. Kent: The Destination Imagination program has grown significantly in popularity over the past number of

years. Aside from in-kind support — I think the Yukon championships were recently held at F.H. Collins school — and obviously the support of teachers and others to that organization, does the department provide any direct funding to Destination Imagination? If not, would they consider providing some direct funding to this organization so they can continue to do the good work that they do in Yukon schools?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: The Destination Imagination programming at schools here in the territory is extremely successful. It is a great program. We have, in the past, supported in-kind, as the Member for Copperbelt South noted — not only in-kind from the department specifically, but staff time of individuals who volunteered and have been more than supportive all through their in-class time as well as out-of-class time for preparation for kids to do that.

Destination Imagination is something that I find to be a significantly positive program for kids in schools. It is something that I believe the Department of Education should support. I have asked the department to develop, in conjunction with Destination Imagination, a plan for funding going forward and how we might be able to contribute, in addition to the in-kind time — which is significant — and energy, and how we might otherwise be able to provide support so that some of the expenses of Destination Imagination could be settled on an ongoing basis, and they could have some security in that process.

I have yet to hear back from them, but I take it from the question that the Member for Copperbelt South also finds this to be a significantly positive program for students, and as such, would support that going forward. I am looking forward to hearing back from the department and from the Destination Imagination folks, who are very dedicated individuals to this program and to this opportunity for students, and I am very much looking forward to how we can work together to make that more secure for them.

Mr. Kent: I appreciate that commitment from the minister. She is correct; I am a big supporter of the program and, of course, all the work of the volunteers that make it happen, as well as the various school communities that participate.

I am just looking for some direction from the minister on where we can find some applicable statistics. Just looking for attendance numbers — rural versus Whitehorse, or even school to school — if she could direct to me where we could find those numbers if they are available, as well as the graduation statistics. Again, rural versus Whitehorse, indigenous versus non-indigenous students — the kind of tracking progress over the past three to five years as far as what those numbers look like.

If the minister can either commit to providing those statistics for us or direct me to where I could find them on the website, I would appreciate that.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: The annual report for the Department of Education includes those kinds of statistics. They are online for the last number of years. I am hesitating because I looked down to see my note, which came from the

question, which was three to five years. My understanding is that they would be online in the annual reports for those years.

As the Member for Copperbelt South may well know, there is a statutory requirement that the annual report for the Department of Education be filed prior to the end of the Spring Sitting, after which the school year or the calendar year has been completed, so that is something I have recently reviewed. The statistics will be part of that for the 2017 year. It will be published and tabled by the end of the Sitting that we are currently involved in, and it will appear online at the time that it is published or tabled or both.

Mr. Kent: That was one of the questions I was going to ask earlier on the timing of tabling of the report. The minister has a better sense, obviously, that it has to be tabled this spring, so I will look to that annual report to get a sense of it then.

There are a number of questions that I had on Advanced Education, but I will put those into written form or address them when Education comes back — save for a couple. In the budget highlights — and we talked a little bit at the briefing about this — under “growing and diversifying our economy”, there is \$7.6 million identified for training to meet the needs of Yukon’s labour force. Is that multiple lines in her budget? Is that multiple lines in various budgets? Can the minister give us a sense of where we can track down that number or what fed into that number being put together?

The final question on Advanced Education — many of my broader questions for the minister are related to Yukon College and Yukon university. I don’t know if it has ever happened here before, but I am wondering if the minister would entertain having the college president and the chair of the college board appear as witnesses at some point to answer questions specific to Yukon College and Yukon university, or if it is just her preference to continue to maintain the status quo where she represents those interests here in the Legislature.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I am aware that the labour force training question is a question that was asked by the Member for Copperbelt South during the briefing with respect to the budget. I am also aware that some written responses have been provided, although I think it might have been today. We may have been here when that occurred, but I am happy to present the answer and confirm that this is also being presented in writing to the member opposite.

In the Budget Address, the \$7.6 million for training is comprised of funding that reflects the workforce development agreement of \$3.14 million and labour market development agreements of \$4.43 million. I can take a step back to note that the workforce development agreement and the labour market development agreement are two agreements that will combine the funding that was in four previous agreements with the federal government with respect to labour market issues. They provide a significant amount of flexibility that was not available in the others and an increase in the funding that was available in what was four agreements with the federal government, now being combined into two — to an almost \$1-million increase. These two agreements with the federal

government provide employment services and focus on employment services for job seekers, formal training, on-the-job work experience, training support for employers for prospective and current staff, apprenticeship training support, and the development of labour market research and information.

The flexibility in them allows for programs that target older workers, younger workers and students who are not in high school proper, but are not yet ready for advanced or post-secondary education, and it allows us to focus on programs for all of those groups of Yukoners.

I appreciate the question with respect to the having the college president and the chair or some combination thereof as witnesses, and I certainly will take that into consideration.

Mr. Kent: I am going to move on to some capital projects here. If we had a little bit more time, I would have liked to explore the e-mail sent to former Minister Graham from the current minister when she was one of the co-chairs of the F.H. Collins school council, but maybe we’ll save that for Question Period or another time or maybe when this comes back. I do have a number of questions surrounding those concerns that were raised by the school council and if they have been addressed.

Just a couple of quick concerns with the capital side of things — again, in the budget highlights that were presented, just on the same page as the \$7.6 million for training under the subtitle “Building vibrant, sustainable communities”, it says \$6.8 million for a new track and field facility at the F.H. Collins Secondary School in Whitehorse, but the news release that was put out by the minister and our Member of Parliament suggests it was \$8.1 million. I’m just kind of wondering if the minister would be able to explain that discrepancy to us. How much of that \$8.1 million will be spent in this fiscal year coming up?

I’m just going to get a couple of other capital questions on the record for the minister here as well before she answers, and then I will cede the floor to the Member for Takhini-Kopper King.

Again, with respect to the F.H. Collins field going on the tender forecast — if I read it correctly, and the minister can let me know about this — April 9, 2018 is the expected tender date. It would close on May 15, and completion of that project is October 31, 2018. This is information that is available to contractors. I just want the minister to confirm if that’s the case.

Further on the tender forecast with respect to the portable at Golden Horn Elementary School — and, again, thank you to the minister for that allotment in this budget. I know it’s much needed out at the school, but when you look at the dates, it says April 2 for the tender, which would close on May 21, and completion October 1, which is about six weeks after the start of the school calendar this fall. I’m just looking for a little bit of an explanation around that discrepancy as well.

We have talked in Question Period and other places about the long-term capital plan and the revitalization list. I did mention to the minister outside of this Chamber that, since the school revitalization list isn’t finalized, some schools are

looking for an opportunity to see if they can be added to that list, whether it is enrolment pressures or other pressures that are identified in the criteria. I had a positive conversation with the minister about, again, Golden Horn school and what the school council talked to me about, so I'm hoping to get a little bit more information from her now, or in the coming weeks before we adjourn for the spring, on who they would reach out to — which officials they would reach out to. I sent the letter over as well, so maybe we can wait and get an answer to that letter.

My final question is with respect to the generic design. I know the minister referenced it in her opening remarks — \$20,000 this year. Again, in the five-year capital plan, it is shown as a two-year project. So can the minister give us a sense of what next year would look like as far as an estimated expenditure on that project? I brought this idea up during Question Period earlier this Sitting and asked the minister how the conversation on this went with the local architect and consulting community. It didn't sound to me at the time — and, I don't think, since — that there was any engagement with those consultants. I know the minister mentioned that it would save millions of dollars in the long run, as far as design goes, but again, that is millions of dollars out of those businesses' pockets as far as what they would be able to provide for design work going forward.

I sent our exchange in Question Period to a number of the local consultants, and one of them got back to me with a question, and I will read it into the record here. Obviously, I will keep his name out of it. He said: "Thanks for keeping me in the loop. Since \$20,000 won't be able to advance this idea very far, you may wish to ask: 'Does the current government intend to engage the local consulting community in evaluating the pros and cons of a scalable design and if so, how and when do they intend to solicit those services?'"

I will end on that note. Again, as I mentioned, thank you to the officials for providing support here today to the minister, and a big thank you as well to all the teachers, students, parents and everyone who is active in lifelong learning — particularly, the public schools that help out on a day-in and day-out basis. I know it is an extremely important job that they do, and I just want to thank them for all of their work. I thank the minister for her time today. After her answer, I will turn it over to the Member for Takhini-Kopper King. Hopefully, we'll get Education up here again before the Sitting ends later on in April.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: There are a few questions there, Mr. Chair. I think I have them.

With respect to the project for the track, the total budget for that project is \$8.1 million; \$6.1 million has been granted through the small communities fund, which is the announcement that was made with Mr. Bagnell; \$2 million will come through the Yukon territorial government for 2018-19 — and it is important to note that this project will be funded over two years. I do appreciate the figure of \$6.7 million, and I have a question about that myself that I have not yet had the opportunity to ask, but those are the figures with respect to the project going forward and what we

expect to spend in 2018-19. I will endeavour to get back to you about the figure of \$6.7 million.

With respect to the questions about the tender forecast, I have no issue with the dates presented by the Member for Copperbelt South. The tender forecasts, including an October 1 completion date, would include substantial completion, Mr. Chair, which would include deficiencies or an opportunity for those to all be addressed and for that project to be absolutely 100-percent complete, and then have time for the contractor to address any deficiencies that are identified. With respect to both of those programs — and my colleague will have heard me say that as part of my opening remarks — we are striving for those to be completed and available to be used at the beginning of the school year for 2018-19, particularly the portable. I appreciate the comment that it won't be much good if it is the middle of October, and we have got too many kids at Golden Horn.

With respect to the projects at F.H. Collins — an outdoor classroom, a basketball court, et cetera — we would expect and are striving for those to also be ready at the beginning of the school year for the students to use, with the tender forecast date being October 1. I suppose those are a little less timely or time dependent than the portable at Golden Horn, but certainly that is the way those dates are indicated.

I don't disagree that my colleague and I have had an interesting conversation about how schools could get questions about their facilities dealt with. I am going to indicate that we certainly hope school councils and school administrators are having those conversations together and having those conversations with a focus on imaginative results or imaginative solutions, and we always want to hear what those are.

If they are having those conversations at school councils, the superintendent would be present, but the superintendent should be made aware of those. We are more than happy to receive written requests.

As my colleague and I have spoken about, it is not a matter of getting on a list or off a list, but certainly enrolment pressure is an important piece. I spoke to him as well about having creative solutions for those, whether it is a renovation of a particular space in a school that could be used as a classroom and that is not being used as a classroom right now — and I am not talking about any particular school — or something where the people who spend time in those buildings, work in those buildings and deliver services to our students in those buildings know more than we do about how we could resolve some issues for them. We always want to hear what those are.

We hope that administrators, school councils and superintendents are working together to get that information to us and, in particular, to the deputy minister. We will go there and encourage them to please tell us those kinds of ideas, because we can integrate them into a school revitalization program going forward. It won't surprise anyone that my colleague and I spoke briefly about the idea of how we can make small changes that impact the school community or the school space. We want to do that. If that doesn't mean a full

renovation or a retrofit — it could be a retrofit or a smaller renovation — then we certainly want to make sure that we are trying to keep those in the front of our minds for future planning.

With respect to the scalable school design — potentially, it will cost up to \$2 million or \$3 million and will save approximately \$7 million, by our calculations, in the total school design costs over the next 10 years. The plan is to finish the scalable design in 2019-20, to be used for upcoming school replacement planning as we go forward. Engagement with school communities will be part of the process to assist us in the planning.

I have no issue at all with seeking input from the general architecture and design community here in the territory, but we have a focus on wanting that work to be done here in the territory — local vendors when at all possible. While engaging with them on the process of consultation doesn't necessarily prohibit them from later being part of that work, we want to make sure that it is a careful decision.

With respect to how we might go forward, \$20,000, I agree, is not very much in this year's budget to get that project started, but we certainly wanted to indicate that this is the route we are taking. I have now given the figures of how much we think we might spend over the next couple of years to get that completed. I think those are the questions that were asked.

Ms. White: I thank my colleague. I am hopeful that we will get back up so that I have longer than 25 minutes.

My colleague asked for the graduation rates, but I think it is important that we don't talk about graduations from when someone entered grade 12. It is not just tracking grade 12. One has to start in grade 9 or grade 10. If you move away, then, of course, you are not going to be part of our final numbers. It is important to track from grades 9 to 12. It is not about completion certificates, because a completion certificate won't allow someone to access college or university. It is about graduation and it's about further tracking — from grade 9 or grade 10 through to grade 12.

I would like to know the differences between Whitehorse and the communities and also indigenous and non-indigenous students. Part of that is that I worry that, at one point in time, we lose some of that. It's not that I need those numbers now — if they are right there, that would be fantastic, but I can get them returned in a document. So I'll start with that one, as a comment.

There was also conversation earlier about the school calendar and how it is going to be set for three years, but my understanding — in looking at the survey results — is that there was not an overwhelming number of people in favour of the two-week spring break and the longer summer.

One of the concerns talked about earlier was low-income families, single-parent families. What happens if you have a single parent who works but can't afford the \$200, on average, per week in day camps? I have a group of friends, and their whole conversation was, "How many camps did you get into this summer? You tried to get into six, but how many did you get?" My friends are not in the income that I am concerned

about. One of the things that I'll highlight there is that the kids recreation fund is \$495 a year per child, so that covers two weeks of camps. That means two weeks of camps and nothing else for the rest of the year. I just wanted to highlight that.

Maybe I'll leave it there, so the minister can talk about the number and see if the Department of Education has any ideas on how they are going to facilitate — well, the 10 weeks off in the summer, to be perfectly honest, is a long time. How does that look? Is there going to be help for parents?

Can she confirm the survey results for me? I didn't think they were overwhelmingly in favour, as opposed to being opposed.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Like with many of the sound, common-sense-based comments that come from the Member for Takhini-Kopper King, I don't disagree with her. In relation to the tracking in high schools for graduation rates, we currently look at a six-year completion rate, but it doesn't start sooner than the entry into grade 12. While I think that's an interesting statistic in one way, it's not what we need to be looking at.

We have an opportunity to really turn our minds to how we keep track of stats, what they tell us and, ultimately, what we're going to do as a result of what they tell us. This is something that this deputy minister and I have been working on in conjunction with First Nation governments and other partners in education so that we can gather the information that we need to know in order to make the system better.

On the school calendar, while we had a significant amount of information come back to us, there was — like with all complex issues — a variety of answers from individuals, and they are clearly based on their focus, if I can say that — from where they start. I have been very concerned about a two-week spring break, but that is the feedback from school communities of varying types and from various people, whether they were involved in the work of the school or whether they were parents. There was additional anecdotal information provided to us that several families don't even abide by a two-week spring break; they often take their kids out for longer periods of time — up against a rural situation where some rural schools were keen to have that as well. There is a balance. There is no question that there is a balance between what suits individuals.

I have been very concerned about that, particularly in relation to low-income families, because I know of what the member speaks with respect to the availability of camps and the availability of funding for them. Those are great programs for kids. They are great opportunities for kids to learn a new skill, to go to art school or art camp if they have never been, to do a science camp if they have never been — but they cost money and they cost energy. I think we need to also be looking at addressing that.

I will take a moment to say that the 10-week summer was a bit of an anomaly as we were shifting the calendar. School ended slightly sooner than it did in the past and began slightly later than it did in the past, but what we hope to do with a three-year — and ultimately a four-year — calendar is to have that spread out to the point of having an average of a nine-

week summer. That is where we have been over the last number of years, and that is our goal at this point. I don't see that it won't be the case.

It is difficult for most of us who are of a certain age in this particular House in trying to wrestle with these issues. Ultimately, Yukoners have spoken, saying that generally ending earlier in June but beginning earlier in August is where the summer is shifting. Many of us will have grown up with school starting after Labour Day, or before that, but that is simply not what the Yukon community has asked us for.

I know my colleague, the Minister of Community Services, and I have spoken about this before. I know my colleagues — including the Premier, in charge of our Youth Directorate — have spoken about these things before. We need to turn our minds to how we can address issues about opportunities for Yukon families, whether we look at it through the Youth Directorate, through sport, through Lotteries Yukon, through the kids recreation fund and those kinds of things, and determine if there is a way to address some of these issues. Are there passes for the Canada Games Centre? Could we have programming or funding subsidies for the great programs that are put on by community groups across this territory for kids to have new experiences?

That is not the government running those; that is not us being involved. Yukon College has one; the city has great programs. But is there a role that we could have with respect to providing help to families so that those opportunities can be accessed — not just to fill time because school is off, but to really provide meaningful opportunities for them. It is something that we will explore, and it is something we will continue to talk about. I am happy to have the input from the Member for Takhini-Kopper King, because I know that this is something near and dear to her as well.

The six-year graduation rate, I'm told, does track students from grade 8, but that doesn't change my concern that we need to be tracking and recording and collecting stats that really give us meaningful direction.

Ms. White: It was a recommendation of the Auditor General's report — I think in 2009 — about how it was important to really make sure that we understand the numbers.

Summer camps — it is not just childcare for me. It is about educational opportunities, and I don't feel like it is any different from early childhood opportunities. If we talked about my ideal, it would be universal, and everyone would have access, Mr. Chair, but that is not where we are at today.

One of the concerns I have under the Yukon Native Language Centre actually has to do with section 18 of the self-government agreement. Part of it is that Yukon government recognizes First Nation jurisdiction over a range of matters, including education, and that the self-government agreements say that when Yukon has been providing a service that a First Nation assumes responsibility for, Yukon government will transfer — so they will pay — only the net savings. That is important — net savings.

Basically, Yukon government still has to ensure that the services are available to others — in this case, the First Nations and their citizens who are not members of the CYFN.

So one of the questions I wanted to know: Are there going to be additional costs to support what the Yukon Native Language Centre used to do, or is it going to be cost neutral?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I think it is important to note, in relation to this question about the Yukon Native Language Centre, that it was always the responsibility of the Council of Yukon First Nations. They came to our government and said: We think this is something that we need to do. We think it is something that we should do without the influence of the Department of Education, the government, with respect to that and we think we should determine the priorities for our programming, the priorities for our centre, and we think you should continue to pay for that.

That was something that we came to agreement about relatively quickly. That seemed to make sense.

I don't think I had the chance earlier to go back to the concept of — I think it was a question about whether or not there was overlap between the employees that are soon going to be there or are being hired there and the employees that were of the Department of Education.

One person was kept, and there was some overlap, but this decision was made by the CYFN when they took that over. We completely respected that the folks who were currently employed there were not necessarily the people who they wanted to hire and that they should be able to do that, so that was the case.

I think I'm answering your question with respect to the revenue-neutral piece when I say we expect it to be somewhat revenue neutral in that we will continue to provide the funding that was there for the operations before, but if the CYFN comes to us and says that this is where they think their programming is going, and they think it looks different from how it did before, and that they need additional funding for this or for that, we are having those conversations with them, and we will continue to have those conversations with them.

I think the reference to section 18 — I'm afraid I don't have it in front of me — is about drawing down educational authority. If it's with respect to the Government of Yukon's financial responsibilities, we expect that is the case, and we know that it was part of our arrangement to do that. This is really not about the Yukon government not spending the money anymore, it's about the priority setting being outside of the government and being where it belongs, with the First Nations, because they have always had the responsibility for that program but not really the decision-making authority — the power to make those kinds of decisions and set priorities. I don't expect that there will be much issue with respect to the CYFN versus other First Nations that may not be members of CYFN. I know they're pulling together again — I'm not speaking for them, but I know they are pulling together to set language priorities with all the First Nations in the territory, and, frankly, I think the Yukon Forum gives us an opportunity for those conversations to happen more than they have maybe in the past.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for the answer. It is just to be sure that the understanding is that the CYFN represents

eight out of 14 First Nations and that the other six are also equally represented when it comes to language.

Time is so short. I just want to know when the last time was that the department consulted with the Yukon Teachers' Association regarding staffing protocol.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I am advised that the last conversation meeting with respect to where staffing protocols was a topic was probably four to six weeks ago. I am not going to speak on behalf of the Yukon Teachers' Association, other than to say that the department is open to the conversations that they want to have about changes to the staffing protocol.

Again, I said earlier today that we expect that the Yukon Teachers' Association is having an election, so the issue of their leadership will be settled within a number of weeks. We hope to proceed to the bargaining process where staffing protocol will still be a topic of conversation through that and beyond, because we want to get the staffing protocol right.

The hiring process is beginning already in the territory with respect to teachers for the 2018-19 school year, and that will be carried out at this point in time, unless there is a change through that process I just described. The staffing protocol that is currently in place will be used for the process of hiring in 2018-19, but again, those conversations are ongoing.

Ms. White: The concern is that the YTA election is April 20, and the newly elected don't take over until July 1, so that is very close to when bargaining starts to happen. It's fairly close, I would think.

One of the conversations that I have had with the minister is the fact that, with the two years and then being granted permanent positions, the department is offering teachers permanent positions and then requiring them to find their own positions within the Department of Education. When did this change happen? Prior, it was my understanding that you would be offered a full-time position, and along with that would come the school that you would work in. When did it change, and what effect is it having within the department?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I'm very keen to have that conversation, but I'm concerned that we might not have enough time for it today. I will begin by saying that I think the Member for Takhini-Kopper King is asking about individuals who have been granted permanent status because of the adjudications and the interpretation of the *Education Labour Relations Act* — also known as ELRA. We will have to go to acronym school, as my friend mentioned earlier.

I think the question is about individuals who have been granted permanent status through that process by virtue of having been a temporary teacher or in a temporary position for more than two years, but that status of being a permanent employee doesn't come necessarily with a permanent position. That is one of the downsides of this interpretation, Mr. Chair.

What I want to say — and I will definitely come back to this question in the future — is that the two major adjudications — one decision made in July 2013 and one made in July 2017, with a follow-up decision about damages made in February 2018 — both dealt with the issue of

temporary teachers and individuals getting permanent status as a result of them having taught for a certain period of time in a temporary position. The question that came earlier was about whether or not the department had complied with the adjudication. There is much more to come on this, but let me just speak about the decision that was made in July 2017 and the damages in 2018.

There were eight individuals involved in that grievance. All of those eight individuals were granted a \$5,000 damage award. All of them have become permanent employees. All of them have passed probation as a result of that decision being given appropriate life. All have received their \$5,000 for damages as a result of that case being adjudicated and the decision that came from that. In addition, the Yukon Teachers' Association was granted damages in the amount of \$25,000, and that has also been paid.

My submission to this House and to all of you is that we're absolutely complying with the adjudications. That most recent one has been complied with in that way. There is more to come in this discussion about the fact that those permanent individuals don't have permanent jobs, because the status comes without necessarily the award of a permanent position.

That said, they are on a priority list. We expect that each of those individuals, going forward, will become permanent employees with a position at a school as a result of the fact that they are on a priority list for staffing as we go forward. As my colleague knows, the staffing begins in the spring, now, for the fall.

Mr. Chair, seeing the time, I move that you report progress.

Chair: It has been moved by Ms. McPhee that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Chair: It has been moved by Ms. McPhee that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

May the House have a report from the Chair of Committee of the Whole?

Chair's report

Mr. Hutton: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 206, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2018-19*, and directed me to report progress.

Speaker: You have heard the report from the Chair of Committee of the Whole.

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

The time being 5:30 p.m., this House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 5:31 p.m.

The following legislative return was tabled March 27, 2018:

34-2-118

Response to matter outstanding from discussion related to the agreement between the Salvation Army and the Government of Yukon (Frost)

The following document was filed March 27, 2018:

34-2-44

Notification of Independent Systemic Review, letter re (dated March 26, 2018) from Annette King, Child and Youth Advocate to Hon. Pauline Frost, Minister of Health and Social Services (Frost)