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The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Tuesday, May 29, 2012****Members Present**

Hon. Glen Abernethy, Hon. Tom Beaulieu, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Blake, Mr. Bouchard, Mr. Bromley, Mr. Dolynny, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Hawkins, Hon. Jackie Jacobson, Hon. Jackson Lafferty, Hon. Robert McLeod, Mr. Menicoche, Hon. Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Moses, Mr. Nadli, Hon. David Ramsay, Mr. Yakeleya

The House met at 1:29 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackie Jacobson): Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to quickly rise today and make note regarding yesterday's debate. When you interjected yesterday, I should have sat down and not commented further, a rule I know, and know well.

I wanted to take this chance because I'd reflected upon it yesterday afternoon, approached you last night to talk you about my error and I wanted to make note on the official record. I want to thank you for your guidance and your ear last night on this particular issue and I appreciate your leadership in the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Ramsay.

Ministers' Statements

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 8-17(3):
SUPPORT FOR ARTS AND FINE CRAFTS**

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. NWT artisans and filmmakers make a positive economic and cultural impact on our territory and today I would like to highlight some initiatives to support and grow the arts, crafts and film sectors.

Through the office of the film commissioner, the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment has been working closely with the NWT film industry over the past year. Last year the GNWT met with film and media arts representatives for a review of the territorial film industry. They identified the need for a fully interactive and information rich website to promote filming and film industry services here in the NWT.

ITI has now developed this website in collaboration with the newly formed NWT Professional Media Association. I am pleased to say the finishing touches are being put on the site, so to speak, and we are planning its launch in the next few weeks. This site will be a go-to resource for the film

industry, both inside and outside of the Northwest Territories.

Not only will it promote the NWT as a filming destination and provide production companies with information on filming here, it will also promote the local film and media arts industries by showcasing their credentials through a film suppliers guide. This guide also contains listings of local businesses that provide specific areas of expertise, products and services to assist film productions on location here in the NWT.

Local filmmakers can also check the site for information or other resources such as funding programs.

We know better than anyone that there are talented filmmakers at work throughout the Northwest Territories. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize and congratulate Mr. Andrew Silke, who's short film, "Amelia," was selected to screen at the prestigious Cannes Film Festival in France. Everyone in the cast and crew was from the Northwest Territories and production was filmed here.

---Applause

Providing support to the arts and the film industry is a joint effort between ITI and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. ITI provides support for NWT businesses, including those involved in film production through its Support to Entrepreneurs and Economic Development Policy. I'm pleased to say that the department funded a significant portion of Mr. Silke's travel costs to attend the Cannes Film Festival where he is today. ECE provides support to the film industry through the NWT Arts Council and northern film and media arts contributions programs and also made a funding contribution to support this project.

The last time this Assembly met in February, I committed to reviewing the idea of developing a diamond jewellery skills program for local artists. ITI is looking into options for developing a jewellery workshop or something very similar to that. The workshop would be built upon local artistic talents and provide a new skill set for NWT artists who are interested in using raw and processed materials in the NWT.

It could also help to raise the profile of locally made jewellery products. Focusing on small-scale opportunities to support the local arts sector is an important element to support this sector.

ITI invests nearly \$1 million annually into the arts and crafts sector. Of this amount, approximately \$600,000 is under the Support for Entrepreneurs and Economic Development Policy. Through the policy, funds are distributed to over 150 artists and community groups hosting art festivals throughout the NWT. The remaining funds are geared towards promoting and supporting NWT artists in various ways through the NWT artists database, the Arts Branding Logo Program, community workshops and other arts promotions.

Mr. Speaker, we all want an economy that is diversified and provides all communities and regions with opportunities and choices. Supporting programming for the NWT film industry and the arts and crafts sector is one way to maximize opportunities and support economic diversification of the NWT, a key goal of this Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 9-17(3):
EDUCATION HALL OF FAME – MAY 29, 2012

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to advise this House that a ceremony was held today to celebrate the tremendous contributions that people across the territory have made to education.

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment allows the Education Hall of Fame to recognize that we all play an important role supporting the education of our children. It reflects the valuable contributions that educators, volunteers, board members, administrators and other community members make.

Mr. Speaker, for this year's celebration, nominations poured in from every region and seven people were chosen from across the territory. The 2012 inductees embody the commitment, diligence, creativity and passion that we want education to inspire in us all.

The first inductee is Helen Kitekudlak from Ulukhaktok. She began teaching over 40 years ago as a teenager. She believes in making a positive and lasting impression on her students and in working with each student's strength to help them learn.

Ms. Betty Barnaby from Fort Good Hope recently received her Bachelor of Education degree from Aurora College. Throughout her 20-year career, she has always believed in the power of education and instills that belief in her community.

Ms. Margaret Thom of Fort Providence has spent more than 20 years as a school community counsellor, teaching students and staff traditional values at Deh Gah School.

Mr. Kevin Atoniak of Fort Smith spent 30 years as an instructor for Aurora College's Environment and Natural Resources Technology Program. His efforts have seen approximately 200 graduates and have provided the Department of Environment and Natural Resources with 20 percent of its entire workforce.

Ms. Chris Baron from Behchoko has spent 25 years teaching kindergarten to Grade 5 in the Tlicho region. A strong advocate for literacy, she strives to teach every child to be the best that they can be and to appreciate their own cultural identity.

Mrs. Angela James of Yellowknife began her teaching career more than 20 years ago, holding positions as teacher, principal and now director of early childhood and school services and has been a driving force for Dene culture in education throughout her career.

Throughout his 24-year career, Dr. Curtis Brown has been a strong advocate for alternative programming and expanded opportunities for students. His efforts while serving as principal at Chief Jimmy Bruneau School received national attention and the school was heralded as "the school where students are dropping back in."

Of these distinguished people, some are with us today in the gallery.

Mr. Speaker, this is our third group of inductees into the Education Hall of Fame. They are truly passionate people who inspire us to do more, be better and believe in ourselves.

Building on the strengths of Northerners is one of the goals of this Assembly and I hope all Members of this Assembly will join me in honouring the inductees into the Education Hall of Fame and thank them for dedicating their life's work to the students of the Northwest Territories. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Deputy Premier, Mr. Lafferty.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 10-17(3):
MINISTER ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Robert C. McLeod will be absent from the House for a portion of today's proceedings to participate in a multilateral conference call regarding the long-term plan for public infrastructure. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON BUSINESS INCENTIVE POLICY

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I got elected into the House here and during my campaign I told everybody that I would bring each and every issue to this table, whether it was personal, whether it was government, to get the right and appropriate answers that needed to be addressed.

For the last two months I've been dealing with a certain individual in Inuvik who has been having problems with this government, who was actually employed by this government at one time as a contractor. Last week we heard a lot of questions and concerns in regard to contracting and this one takes the cake.

We had a local contractor in Inuvik who just recently lost a contract to a southern company through the BIP process, the Business Incentive Policy. He is now unemployed. All his staff are unemployed.

Now he's looking to find answers. He's not looking for retribution. He wants answers. He wants answers on how he as a local contractor can lose the contract to a southern company when in fact this government had called him during the process and told him that he had won the contract, only to find out a few days later that he had in fact lost it. It was confusing to him. He didn't know what was going on. He found out that he lost it during the BIP process and the awarding of that.

This government needs to be more transparent, something that it preaches a lot, and it needs to be fairer, something that it preaches on a daily basis. I'm not seeing this happen.

Over the last two months I've been really working to try to find answers for this contractor in Inuvik who is also a very good volunteer not only for Inuvik but for the Northwest Territories. While I was asking questions, I got moved from one department to another department, only to go to a third department who told me to go back to the first department, second. It was a very long process and was very confusing for myself, which made it more confusing for this individual.

Myself and this individual are going to work really hard to make sure that we do find the answers to this situation and how a local contractor, a person who's going to get an award from this government for the good work that he does throughout the Northwest Territories. This is not over. We'll take this as far as we need to take it to find the answers that we need so that other small contractors throughout the North don't go through the same process.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON AUTHENTIC NORTHERN SOUVENIRS

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're all very proud of our NWT artisans; artists of many different mediums, designers, craftspersons. Certainly the Minister of ITI uses any opportunity he can to promote our arts and crafts industry to the world. We had a lovely example of that earlier today.

As the agent of the GNWT who promotes tourism for us, the organization NWT Tourism should also be promoting and supporting NWT artists and craftspersons. It would seem logical that they would use their website to do that promotion.

After I was contacted by a constituent on this issue, I took a look at the NWT Tourism website and perused the "authentic NWT souvenir items" on display there. The items are few but what is most disconcerting is that none of them seem to be from or made in the NWT. One can buy licence plates, luggage tags, pins and maps. They look great. Wonderful northern scenes, but they can hardly be called authentic northern souvenirs. Where are the products made by NWT residents? Where are the products from NWT shops and NWT businesses? None to be found on that website.

Why are we not promoting products from community craft stores, from our resident photographers, from our musicians, from our painters, from our carvers, from our arts and craftspeople, from our authors? We've talked often enough about the need to boost our economy to diversify our economy. This would seem to me to be a great way to do it but we are not.

NWT Tourism should be acting as a broker or promoter for any NWT resident or business making products which could be considered northern souvenirs. There should be links from the NWT Tourism website to all NWT craft stores which have their wares on-line; links to all NWT artists or craftspersons who have an on-line display of their products made in the North: photos, moccasins, mitts, carvings, paintings and prints, books, Ragged Ass Road signs, I Break for Ptarmigan stickers; the list could be very long.

I appreciate there may be some wrangling required to set things up. Contracts would need to be put in place to protect both artists and broker, but surely we have the skill and the capacity to do that. If there's another reason why NWT Tourism is not promoting NWT products on their website, I'm all ears to hear it. At the moment we're failing our creative people and missing out on a wonderful opportunity to grow our territory.

I will have questions for the Minister of ITI at the appropriate time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Blake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
NEED FOR FULL-TIME NURSE
IN TSIIGEHTCHIC

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For many years the community of Tsiigehtchic has been asking for a full-time nurse to be permanently stationed there. It is not just the community's leadership asking for a nurse. Three years ago satisfaction surveys of the regional health services identified the people's desire for a local nurse. Freeze-up and breakup of the Mackenzie River always disrupts some services, but health care is actually better in Tsiigehtchic at this time. That is because it is the only time there is a full-time nurse in the community. If it can be done during freeze-up and breakup, surely it can be done for the rest of the year.

Returning a nurse to Tsiigehtchic was even mentioned in the Department of Health and Social Services business plan in 2010-2011. The idea was that it would enhance primary care in the community. It was the right thing to do then, Mr. Speaker, and it is the right thing to do now.

Community wellness is a priority of this government, so I am at a loss to explain why no nurse has been stationed in Tsiigehtchic for all these years. The lack of housing is sometimes mentioned as a barrier, but it is not the problem now. The community has set aside housing, should a full-time nurse be able to come to the community.

The community has done its part. People have been very patient. If we are very serious about improving health services in our small communities, there will be a nurse for Tsiigehtchic. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Blake. The Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolynny.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
BISON AND HIGHWAY SAFETY ISSUES

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the warmer weather and our ferry back in the water, our NWT roads will once again be bustling with more traffic and tourists. As one of many people who have had near white-knuckle misses with bison on the highway, it's not if you will have an encounter with bison, it's more likely when.

I have some residents of Range Lake wanting me to mention and seek a long-term solution to prevent bison/human conflict in the NWT. As the number of collisions and probability of human fatality is increasing with increasing traffic, the expansion of herd areas due to flooding in the Mackenzie bison

sanctuary is very evident, and improved road conditions over the last 20 years is making the encounters that much more problematic.

Ultimately, the GNWT has undertaken the following actions under the Wood Bison Management Strategy for 2010-2020 to address this concern. Some of the action items have been the expanded harvest in the Tlicho and Nahanni regions, allowing harvests in the area along Highway No. 3, increased public education, improved road signage and the use of campaigns such as Drive Alive. Good as these initiatives are, there is still the physical issue of North America's largest land mammal competing in the same arena of chance as motorists. Harvest strategies, deterrence measures and more signage, albeit great tools, are no match when the probability of chance occurs.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we as the government need to look outside the box for a long-term, viable solution to protect animals and motorists. We need to create and manage the proper mitigation strategies that would include in-vehicle warning systems like on-board animal detectors, or better yet, the use of reflective ear tags so that visibility becomes the driving force of safety. We understand that ear tagging and collaring could be done in a way to minimize the stress or injury of the animal. This is a given. The true hurdle would be those groups who could possibly object to such intrusive intervention, and it is with these groups we need to collaborate fully.

In the end, with the proper safety program of electronic reflective tagging, we, for the first time, can solve the issue of safety and scientific herd monitoring all with the same keystroke.

I will look forward to asking the Minister of ENR later today to seek his support of the extension of the Bison Management Initiative with the use of reflective ear tagging for wood bison on our NWT highways. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. The Member for Hay River North, Mr. Bouchard.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
NWT FISHERMEN'S FEDERATION
AND NWT FISHING INDUSTRY

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to begin my Member's statement today giving best wishes to the NWT Fishermen's Federation who are hosting their annual general meeting today, and apologies that I cannot be there for them. However, I would like to discuss the fishing industry in my Member's statement today.

The NWT Fishermen's Federation has been a vital part of the Hay River industry and a traditional economy in the Hay River area. I am concerned with the future of the industry. Some of the issues that are faced by the industry right now are the high

costs of gasoline, training and getting people to join the industry, opening up new markets, and supporting through all of our commercial organizations and government facilities.

I would like to know today, with my questions to the Minister of ITI, how the department has been involved in this NWT Fishermen's Federation. My questions today will be for the Minister on how the department is working on new programs to develop the NWT fishers in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
NEED FOR NEW SCHOOLS IN
TROUT LAKE AND NAHANNI BUTTE

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Teachers and schools was an important focus today with the Education Hall of Fame ceremonies. I want to continue that theme today by raising, once again, the need for new schools in Trout Lake and Nahanni Butte. I hope that they can begin their school year with some news of progress towards the creation of new schools in those communities.

I know you remember that the Nahanni Butte school is an old log building and the people of Trout Lake technically don't have a school. They are still using the recreation centre there. This has been going on for years now and it's very frustrating for the parents, teachers and students in both communities.

Earlier this year the Education Minister informed me that work on replacing the Charles Yohin School in Nahanni Butte will not begin until 2016, four or five years from now. It is an even longer wait in Trout Lake. Work on the new Charles Tetcho School is not scheduled to begin until 2018-19.

The whole generation of students will be stuck in the current inadequate facilities. It pains me to hear all this talk about our priorities for healthy, educated people and our strategy for Aboriginal student achievement even as the basic learning environments are neglected in Nahanni Butte and Trout Lake.

Students in our small communities deserve the same opportunities as in the larger centres. If this government is actually going to deliver on its stated priorities, we will finally see some action on putting schools in Trout Lake and Nahanni Butte. I will be pushing for that as we move into planning for the next capital budget.

Later today I will ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment if he is making any real progress for these communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
FUTURE OF NWT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government says it will seek input this summer on the vision, principles and objectives that should frame the management of our lands and resources in the future. I have called upon the government for some years to seek this input from the public. When devolution does occur, we must be ready to put in place a new management regime that reflects our values, priorities and environmental needs. I congratulate the government on beginning this work and look forward to hearing the details.

Meanwhile, the federal government seems intent on disassembling environmental protections and collapsing the regional land and water boards into a single NWT board. The loss of habitat protection from the Fisheries Act and the imposition of artificial deadlines for the completion of environmental reviews are especially disturbing. This government has said it will work to ensure federal changes maintain proper environmental impact assessment in the NWT. I look forward to details on this as well.

The proposal to eliminate regional land and water boards will seriously reduce local control over the pace and scope of development provided in the MVRMA in May. It could result in the elimination of 14 regional and six Yellowknife positions. In addition, 20 board positions offering honoraria to regional board members will be lost. Communities and regional residents will lose key local sources of information and the knowledge, experience and capacity regional staff provide.

Will we also lose resources at the time of devolution as the federal government pares down programs? If these changes are inevitable, there are some basics that we should insist upon to retain local insights and participation. The first is preservation of current board budgets reassigned to resident regional technical experts and analysis that provides expert advice to remaining board members. Regional board offices must remain active to ensure community presence and points of contact for concerned input, completion of the development of land use plans and common standards and guidelines for development proposal review and provisions for special regional concerns must be established. Future board meetings must be held rotationally in communities, not just Yellowknife, and GNWT and Aboriginal governments need the mandate for appointing board members.

Public oversight and environmental protection are at a crucial crossroads. As we prepare to assume the stewardship of our shared resource birthright,

we'll need to be ready to ensure citizens' aspirations and environmental safety are protected.

I will be asking questions of the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources and Finance. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
MUNICIPAL TAX EXEMPTION FOR
SENIOR CITIZENS AND DISABLED PERSONS

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Northwest Territories has a unique program to help senior citizens and disabled persons in our communities. The Senior Citizens and Disabled Persons Property Tax Relief Act provides for tax exemption for eligible individuals to assist with their needs and help them remain in their own homes as long as possible. This well-intentioned law came into force in 1988 and the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs has been reviewing it throughout the better part of my political career. A review and amendments to this act are long overdue.

Currently the act discriminates between eligible persons living in general taxation area communities and municipal taxation area communities. In the municipal taxation area you can only receive an exemption if the co-owners of the property are also eligible applicants or dependents. So if you are 67 but your spouse is 63, you are not eligible for tax relief until both of you have reached the age of 65. Likewise, if you are disabled and a co-owner of your home is not, you do not qualify for a property tax exemption. In the general taxation area there is no such condition.

This policy is extremely unfair. This benefit should assist the elderly and disabled members of our society regardless of their living arrangements. Just how many senior citizens and disabled persons are the sole owners of their homes? How many people give up the opportunity to work full time so that they can care for a member of their household who is disabled and requires extra help in their older years? We have a small population and we should be able to provide assistance to those who are less able to provide for themselves.

Time and energy went into proposing changes to this act in the last Assembly, but we need to do more than just talk about the issue. Amendments to this regulation/legislation are long overdue. These changes may require more public consultation and lead to debate, but that is what we do here. We work to make legislation in the best interests of the people of the Northwest Territories. Changes to this act must come forward so that we can provide reasonable, equitable benefits to residents who are among the most vulnerable in our society.

Mr. Speaker, we should adopt some of the slogans of some corporate entities, like "Get 'er Done," the Royal Bank "Can Do," the Athletic Shirt "Just Do It." Mr. Speaker, let's get 'er done. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO THE
COSMETIC TANNING INDUSTRY

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to talk about tanning equipment because it's time that we have some type of discussion on tanning beds, booths, lamps and their use for cosmetic purposes. The public discussion and information is really required.

It's an issue brought forward to me by a number of constituents who have had grave cause in some of the recent findings, because tanning devices, as we know them, do cause cancer. The World Health Organization officially classified them as a carcinogenic item back in 2009.

The average person doesn't know that some tanning beds emit ultraviolet radiation five times more intense than the midday summer light. Research has also told us that they've found that a person's risk of getting skin cancer increases by 75 percent if they use these tanning beds before the age of 35. Naturally, Canada has guidelines for tanning gear, but not much in the way of regulation, so responsibility is really left up to the customers and some of the organizations that run these things. Studies, of course, show that tanning beds are particularly – and I stress particularly – risky for children who use them, but again, we don't have any laws to prohibit that.

So many jurisdictions have banned or even restricted the use of tanning beds for young people and I'll point out a few. Around the world we have places like Nova Scotia, Australia, and even France who have thought about this and taken serious steps to provide measures to protect our young people. It's time maybe that the Government of the Northwest Territories finally consider some type of regulation on this type of industry to protect our folks who are young.

This gives us a chance to come up with some guidelines and public discussion on ensuring that our people under the age of 18 are protected. Adults can obviously make their own minds up and use the equipment as they feel they can, and certainly most of our adults are in a position to understand the risks, but I would say that it's time that the Health Minister come forward with some type of discussion to make sure our youth are protected.

Justifiably, there are many laws on our books that are there to protect our young people until they are

reaching an age where they can make smart and responsible choices on their own. I think the tanning bed equipment should be one more of those issues added to the list that puts our young people ahead of personal vanity.

Later today I will have questions for the Health Minister to see what he will be willing to do on this particular subject.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Nadli.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MANAGING THE SPORT FISHING INDUSTRY

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With rivers breaking up and lakes melting across the NWT comes a time that many people look forward to: the summer sport fishing season. Sport fishing has a great sustainable tourism potential for our communities that we perhaps do not make as much as we could. There should be business opportunities for local guides, hotels, bed and breakfasts, restaurants, stores, boat and equipment rentals, and arts and crafts. However, the large number of RVs and trucks gathered by the winter road crossing and campgrounds near Fort Providence especially can be overwhelming at times. Unfortunately, we do not always see these people coming into the community and spending their money locally.

At the same time we need to be careful that the fish stocks stay healthy and that we are not overfishing or damaging their environment. There are special restrictions in place for particularly sensitive areas. For example, the Providence Creek is closed to sport fishing from April 15th to May 30th and there are special limits on jackfish and pickerel for the Horn River and Mills Lake as well as the Mackenzie River Management Area which includes the Kakisa and Fort Providence regions to just west of Hay River. There are also special limits on grayling in that area.

The federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans is responsible for the regulations, and both the DFO officers and our local ENR officers enforce them. DFO does some monitoring of the fish in the area; however, overall there have been very few studies on fish, fish habitat and harvest numbers in the Northwest Territories.

Fish are a very important resource for all the Deh Cho communities as food, as part of our culture, and now economically as well. The communities know this best and I think we need to be looking at ways for them to get more directly involved in protecting the management of sport fishing in the area. We should not be relying entirely on the federal government to do this. The GNWT also needs to be working with the communities more closely to figure out how to benefit from the tourism

traffic that is already on our doorsteps and how to ensure that it remains sustainable.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to recognize 2012 Education Hall of Fame inductees here with us in the gallery. First is Helen Kitekudlak from Ulukhaktok, Betty Barnaby from Fort Good Hope, Chris Baron from Behchoko, Angela James from Yellowknife, Margaret Thom from Fort Providence, Kevin Antoniak from Fort Smith, and Dr. Curtis Brown from Fort Smith. Congratulations. Thanks for joining us here in the gallery.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've got a few people to recognize. First up I'd like to recognize Margaret Marshall. She's a constituent.

As well as Liz Wyman, a constituent who is also the chair of the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority, and of course Liz Wyman is no stranger in the business community. She's a very successful lady.

As well, the next two people I would like to recognize are Michele Letourneau and Annemieke Mulders. I believe they're sitting up front here. For many of you, you may recognize their names. They've been rightly fighting for fair and safe access to their dwelling through the rental office process, a saga continuing on today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also would like to recognize all the people who have been inducted into the Education Hall of Fame and thank them for amazing work that they've done through their careers to date.

I especially want to mention Angela James, who has been the principal down at K'alemi Dene School, as well as, of course, the K'alemi Dene School Choir which performed during the ceremonies earlier this morning.

In relation to that, I'm also very pleased to recognize two of our Pages also from K'alemi Dene School who are well represented today in many ways: Brent Betsina, to your right, Mr. Speaker, and Johnny Ray Johnson-Black, to your left. I'm very pleased to have them in the House. I'm not sure if this may be the first time K'alemi Dene School has been in the House, but I'm very happy to see them.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's not very often that I get an opportunity to recognize people in the gallery but I have two special people from my home community and constituency of the Deh Cho. I hope they're still here. Mr. Jim and Mrs. Margaret Thom.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nadli. I, too, would like to welcome, it's not too often that I get to have constituents here from Ulukhaktok. It's Helen and Joseph Kitekudlak from Ulukhaktok.

While I've got a moment, I'd like to... The 40 years, Helen, that you've given to all the students in the home school of Helen Kalvak Elihakvik School in Ulukhaktok and we're really thankful for all the work you've done, both you and Joseph. Thank you very much. It's good to have constituents here. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly.

Again to all the Education Hall of Fame inductees, welcome to the Legislative Assembly. I'd like to welcome all our visitors in the public gallery here today for taking an interest in our proceedings here today. Thank you very much.

Item 6, acknowledgements. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Nadli.

Acknowledgements

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 3-17(3): MARGARET THOM – EDUCATION HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would just like to acknowledge Mrs. Margaret Thom, who was the recipient of the Education Hall of Fame. Also with Margaret is her husband, Jim.

Margaret has contributed to the education of her people through her work as community counsellor at the Deh Gah Elementary and Secondary School for 20 years. She has taken a lead role in supporting graduates by travelling with them to post-secondary institutions. Many students have been successful as they continued their education, thanks to her continued support even after they're finished in school.

Margaret recognizes the importance of traditional teachings and education. She has made sure that the cultural value and beliefs of the people of the Deh Cho are present in all the school and what the school does from counselling to parental involvement to classroom work. In 2009 Margaret became the first elder representative on the Aurora College Board of Governors.

Margaret, it gives me great pleasure to recognize your contributions to the community.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 47-17(3): EVALUATING CONTRACTS AND BUSINESS INCENTIVE POLICY

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In follow up to my Member's statement, I would like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services a few questions on a process that brought this situation down to the floor. I'd like to ask the Minister what the steps and processes that the Department of Health and Social Services takes in awarding service contracts and is it a common practice between all contracts throughout the regions.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The standard process is that if it's a tender, then it's evaluated using the Business Incentive Policy for just the tendered cash value. If it's an RFP, it's evaluated as an RFP by the Business Incentive Policy.

MR. MOSES: My second question is: How does a local contractor lose a contract that he previously had for four or five years to a southern company, and most likely through the BIP process? Can I ask the Minister to explain that one to me? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: In this particular case it was an RFP, which evaluates the certain categories of the RFP through experience, methodology, cost, northern content and so on. It was determined that the southern bid had higher points in certain areas of the RFP including areas in the fees and costs. And because the southern bidder had all local employees at the particular location of the job, they were, after the BIP evaluation was done, the southern contractor had more points. Based on that, the award was given to the southern contractor.

MR. MOSES: When the contract was awarded out to the southern company, our local contractor in Inuvik was already told that he had got the contract after the BIP was awarded to the southern company. It's pretty mindboggling. Anyhow, how can the department justify signing off on a contract when the initial contractor, the one who had it before, is appealing the process? During the appeal process, how can this government sign off on a contract, especially when it's going to a southern company and our northern dollars are going south? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The contract, there was a bit of a timeline between when the bid was out and

when it closed. The evaluation process is that the Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority did the BIP evaluation. It was initially determined that the northern contractor had a better score, but after consultation with ITI, who are the keepers of the Business Incentive Policy, they determined that, no, in fact the southern contractor had the higher bid, so they allowed the appeal to the Public Works, which is our quality control for the Business Incentive Policy. After that appeal, Public Works supported the original decision of the Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services and ITI that definitely, in fact, the points issued on the second evaluation was correct. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Your final, short supplementary, Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After the initial awards were brought forth, it had come to the headquarters here and it was headquarters that had made the recommendations that they review the BIP policy. I believe that's the process, according to my sources dealing with this guy. What it comes down to is we want answers. I'd like to ask the Minister if he's willing to make public the original proposals with the date received stamp on them as well as the contract scores in detail. Not the final scores. The scores in detail of the contracts made public to this contractor and to everybody so that contractors out there know how this government is awarding contracts and why some of our small local contractors are losing out. Thank you. I'd like that commitment.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: I don't think it's an issue with the department to review with the losing contractor in this case. No problem. We can provide the information. I think the information actually was provided on the BIP evaluation by Public Works after the original BIP evaluation was done and also provided to the contractor. But making these forms public, I don't have the information to make that decision at this time to make this public information. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

QUESTION 48-17(3):
PROMOTION OF AUTHENTIC
NORTHERN TOURISM PRODUCTS

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are addressed to the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. I have to say I was really glad to hear the Minister's remarks earlier today when he made his statement. He talked about wanting an economy that's diversified. Absolutely I agree. He wants to raise the profile of locally made, in this case, jewellery products. Absolutely I agree. He wants to support the local arts sector and he feels it's an important element to grow this sector to do that promotion. It flies in the face of what I spoke

about in my statement where we have an NWT Tourism website which does none of that in terms of local, northern-made products.

I'd like to ask the Minister, first off, where each of the items that are displayed on that website are made, the licence plates, the pins, the maps and the luggage tags. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll get that information for the Member but I think most importantly is what we're doing going forward. I spoke earlier today about our support for diversifying the economy here in the Northwest Territories, and there are three major initiatives that we hope to carry out in 2012-13. That's an NWT artist database and website, NWT Arts Branding Logo Program and Arts Marketing Tactical Plan. These will be conducted here in the next year and, certainly, I will look into whether we can link sites from around the Northwest Territories to the NWT Tourism site. That is an idea that I think is a good one. I will be in touch with NWT Tourism to see if we can make that happen. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. I'm glad to hear that we are going to do something, but I am a little concerned that we're not doing anything at this point. I guess I would like to know from the Minister, at this point, what we do right now to promote our northern products, whether they be books, whether they be music, whether they be paintings and carvings. All of the products which are produced by our northern residents, what do we do right now to promote them? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Earlier I spoke of the close to \$1 million that goes out between ITI and ECE in support of artists around the Northwest Territories. We do support festivals. We support our artists. I also should mention BDIC and Northern Canada Trading. I think that's a component of the BDIC that I believe currently is underutilized and something I'd like to see have more far-reaching impact. I think we as a government should take more of an active role in promoting our own artists and getting goods produced locally here in the Northwest Territories, into a storefront somewhere to be sold to the travelling public. Where that is going to take place, that remains to be seen, but I certainly think we have a long way to go. But I think with a concerted effort we can get there and I'm interested in seeing us make some progress in this area. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: I didn't hear much there about promotion. I mean, it's a wonderful idea to have a storefront, but there are an awful lot of people who look for stuff from the North and they look for it from afar. They're not here and they'd be quite happy to buy stuff on-line. I would like to ask the Minister,

and I appreciate that he's committed to look into possibly linking artists, all our artisans to the NWT Tourism website, but he's talking many months down the road. I would like to suggest this is not an expensive proposition. If people are on-line already, it's a simple matter to link them to our NWT Tourism website. I'd like to ask the Minister if he can make it a reality as soon as possible, and when I say as soon as possible, I'm asking the Minister for a date when I could expect to see northern products linked through the NWT Tourism website. Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: As I outlined to the Member earlier, the development of the three initiatives is going to be carried out in this fiscal year 2012-13. It includes an NWT artist database and website. Certainly, when that is wrapped up, we can look at linking it to NWT Tourism site.

In response to the Member's earlier questions, what we're doing today, we have NWT community workshops where we've delivered programming information sessions in 27 communities around the Northwest Territories. We've also provided training to our regional staff. We have arts promotion, a brochure of a series that was developed to provide art enthusiasts with information about traditional NWT arts and crafts. It's distributed at airports, visitor centres, galleries, regional ITI offices and on-line in both English and in French. We have an NWT artist newsletter. That content focuses on arts-related events and activities across the Northwest Territories. It has a quarterly distribution of over 750 recipients. We also have a toll-free line, a 1-800 toll-free number for a direct link to artists to access regional staff and program assistance. We also promote NWT artists. This is an initiative designed to increase economic impact and production of arts products in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Final, short supplementary, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister for that comprehensive list. I didn't hear much in there about how we promote our artists' sales, how we get their products out there and they get the money. I appreciate that there is a database coming, but I don't think we need a database to link those artists who already have an on-line presence to the NWT Tourism website. I think it is a matter of e-mailing them and asking them for their connection and then we get TSC to do it. Will the Minister commit to do that in the very near future as opposed to waiting for the plans that he has? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

QUESTION 49-17(3):
NEW SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION
IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will look forward to build on those yeses here with my questions today. I would like to ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, I spoke once again about the need for new schools in Nahanni Butte and Trout Lake. We have super schools and mega renovations in Inuvik and Yellowknife. That is where our education money is being spent. When will the Minister and this government start turning their attention to our small communities and regions? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we do focus on the communities, the 33 communities that we service, small communities, larger communities. It all depends on the infrastructures that are in most critical need. Depending on the Trout Lake and also other communities such as Nahanni Butte and other Deh Cho communities, throughout the Northwest Territories it all depends on the infrastructure itself where some of the schools are compatible for students as some of these highlighted, the Member is highlighting from his district riding. We must keep in mind that we have to work with the Dehcho Divisional Board of Education, as well, to identify these as critical need. I will continue to work with them and work with the Member as well. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, I have been making the case for many years now that the needs are critical. I don't know what the standards are according to ECE standards for school buildings, because we have an old log building in Nahanni Butte. Technically we don't have a school in Trout Lake. The old Charles Tetcho School had burned down. They had moved the school into the recreation centre. At that time the government promised that they will be there until the new school is built, so they still don't have a school. I would like to ask the Minister what exact guidelines and standards do we have for our school of communities in terms of school buildings? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, there are capital standards and criteria that we do follow with all of the schools in the Northwest Territories. With respect to the Charles Tetcho School, there is currently a capacity of an identified 33 students. That is 61 percent for 2011-12. Those are numbers that we are currently working with.

With regard to Nahanni Butte, we have contributed \$380,000 in 2011-12 for technical upgrades and also minor renovations for that school. Those are

the areas that we continue to upgrade. I have already made a commitment to Members that I will be going to the Deh Cho riding in August to review more in detail. Mahsi.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, certainly the communities and I look forward to the Minister visiting the communities and show him exactly their needs.

Since February, after speaking with the Minister, I would like to know what the Minister has done to date to review the long-term capital plan and look at moving up these capital needs for these two communities. Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, since the beginning of the year, every time we go through the capital planning process, we have identified various capital needs in the communities. When it comes to discussion at the regional level and also within the department there are some areas that don't make it through the system within the process itself, but we will continue to push these further into the capital planning process, pending the criteria that has been outlined by part of the criteria for the schools as planning process.

This is an area that we continuously work with the superintendents and also the board chairs in the region. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Menicoché.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is the exact area that I would like to explore further. We have to commit at least some planning dollars to look at these two schools in these two communities so that we can make a good case at the capital planning fall time budget session. I would like to ask the Minister if he can at least do that and have a good assessment of those schools in the capital planning process this fall. Mahsi.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, Nahanni and Trout Lake have been an earmark of our discussion here in the House and my department is fully aware. They are doing a review of those two schools and generate it for this capital planning process. If it makes it this time around or next year – we have to start planning for next year as well – we will see what we can do with that and the review process. I will take that Member's notice into consideration as well. We will definitely be in discussion with that. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Bouchard.

QUESTION 50-17(3):
COMMERCIAL FISHING INDUSTRY

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement I indicated my concern with

the future of the commercial fishing industry in Hay River. My question today will be for the Minister of ITI. What is the department doing to innovate and to assist commercial industry in the Northwest Territories?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We currently have a funding program to assist commercial fishermen in the Northwest Territories at \$225,000 a year. Thank you.

MR. BOUCHARD: My next question is concerning the government facilities. Does the Minister have information on how much fish is bought in the Northwest Territories through our government facilities such as correctional facilities and schools and stuff like that?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, I don't have that level of detail with me today, but I believe that was an issue that came up during the last sitting. I believe it was Mr. Bromley that brought that up as a performance indicator, how much local fish and meat products we are using in the Northwest Territories. If the Member likes, I can provide him with that information. Thank you.

MR. BOUCHARD: Mr. Speaker, yes, I would like that information. I would like to know what the department is doing to encourage purchasing through the different departments and facilities.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, the NWT Fishermen's Federation is still involved with the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. They voted back in December of 2010 to remain a part of that organization. That organization is in fact going through a bit of turmoil. Just recently both Saskatchewan and northern Ontario have pulled out of FFMC and 90 percent of the total fish being run through FFMC now comes from Manitoba. There have also been some issues with the governance of the FFMC. So that's where currently the NWT Fishermen's Federation is marketing their fish.

As to the future here in the Northwest Territories, we do want to work with the NWT Fishermen's Federation. We want to ensure a viable commercial fishery here in the Northwest Territories and we will continue to support commercial fishing in the NWT. Should the NWT Fishermen's Federation decide at some point not to continue with FFMC, then we will have to reconsider our support and see where else we can help the fishermen in the NWT. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Bouchard.

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My next question is concerning one of the issues that face the commercial fishermen right now and that's

the high cost of fuel. One of the things that they pay is they pay the full taxes on the road tax. I know the department has looked in the past at this and they recently reviewed this policy. Is there somehow they can support the commercial fishing industry, because the gas is not used on a road system?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you. The \$225,000 that I spoke of earlier, that is money that goes to commercial fishers here in the NWT to help offset the high cost of fuel to help get them out on the lake harvesting fish. That's something that we will continue to support. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Blake.

QUESTION 51-17(3):
NEED FOR FULL-TIME NURSE
IN TSIIGHTCHIC

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In follow up to my Member's statement, I have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Why is there still no nurse in Tsiighehtchic? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Blake. The Minister of Health, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Currently the system that we're employing and working with is the health and social services integrated service delivery model, which uses a combination of nurses, physicians and other community primary care workers to cover the nursing needs in all communities that have under 250 people. Thank you.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you. What are Health and Social Services and the regional health authority doing to remedy this situation?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The first thing we're doing is we're reviewing the integrated service delivery model and working with the health and social services authorities across the territory so that they have an opportunity to re-evaluate the nursing needs in each community, including communities that have under 250 people, for a possible placement of nurses in those communities. Thank you.

MR. BLAKE: As I mentioned earlier, the community has set aside housing for a nurse. Will the Minister work with the community leaders to find a way to put a nurse in that house? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Yes, the department and the health and social services authority is willing to work with the community to try to get a nurse into Tsiighehtchic on a full-time basis. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No further questions.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Blake. The Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

QUESTION 52-17(3):
CONTRACT EVALUATION AND
BUSINESS INCENTIVE POLICY

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have so many questions today I don't know which ones to ask, but let me follow up on my colleague Mr. Moses' questions.

Now, I'm not familiar with his constituent and I'm not familiar with the contract, but I just want to tell you what I heard through objective ears here in this exchange on the floor of the House. I heard that the health authority assessed an RFP and the local contractor was the appropriate contractor or proposal to win the contract. It got put through the BIP process and they, as a northern BIP company, then, after you've applied the BIP process, lost the contract to a southern contractor. Is that what I'm hearing? Because if that's the case, BIP backfired on us this time.

I've listened to the exchange and I'm extremely curious about it, because RFPs are purposefully set up to allocate a score for experience, management, and you'd think if the person had the contract already that they would score very high in that area. So I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services is that where this contract was lost with the application of the BIP on a northern company. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The original evaluation of BIP and how an individual from the authority advised a northern contractor that looked like they had the best bid was based on the fact that the evaluation was done without evaluating the northern content of the southern bidder, the original. Thank you.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you. Okay, so I understand that. So they didn't look at the northern content piece of the southern bidder's proposal, but then the northern proponent appealed the evaluation and there is an opportunity, there is a vehicle to do that. Why was the contract awarded while the appeal process was still in play? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The contract was awarded after the appeal process was denied by quality assurance, Public Works and Services. Thank you.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you. The details of this are starting to sound more and more like, as my colleague Mr. Moses suggested, that we need a little disclosure on this, because we as MLAs, and residents of the NWT who are bidding on contracts,

need to have confidence that their proposals are being treated in a fair manner and this seems to have a few anomalies which would indicate to the contrary.

So along with my colleague Mr. Moses, I would like to ask the Minister if he will provide a full briefing for us on this side of the House on how this went wrong. Obviously something went wrong. The proponent from the North thought they had the contract, then found that they didn't have the contract and there was a mistake made, perhaps that things should have been recalled and they should have started over again. Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Yes, we can do that. I will discuss with the two other departments that are involved in this evaluation, those being ITI for BIP and then the appeal process through Public Works and Services. The three departments will get together and develop a presentation specific to this review and provide that to P and P. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Final, short supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So this in fact is three departments. ITI, Public Works and Health and Social Services will do a post-mortem on a process after the fact. What opportunity or vehicle or tool does the Minister have to correct this problem should it be determined from this evaluation of this process that this was in fact awarded to the wrong company? What will the Minister do about it?

MR. SPEAKER: That's a hypothetical question, but I'll give it if the Minister wants to respond.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, I would have to do the evaluation with the departments, like I indicated. Then there are tools that will allow us to make a decision that if we felt that the wrong decision was made at the end of the day, then we would have to consider doing something. I don't know the process, I don't know if that technically has been reversed in the past, but at this time the decision was based on an evaluation of the authority, ourselves, ITI and Public Works. So the decision was made based on that. If this re-evaluation going through another appeal process determines a different outcome, then we'll have to cross that bridge when we get there.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolyunny.

QUESTION 53-17(3):

BISON AND HIGHWAY SAFETY ISSUES

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today in my Member's statement I mentioned the increased need for physical intervention to provide safety to both motorists and bison on our NWT highways. Admittedly the Department of ENR in conjunction with the Department of Transportation have done a

relatively good job under the Wood Bison Management Strategy, with harvest strategies, deterrence measures, communication and improved signage. However, it is very clear that it is not enough, given the unique circumstances and increased migration of bison onto our highway corridor. Can the Minister of ENR indicate what's been taking place behind the scenes with his department that would address a more forward thinking of bison and motorist safety on our NWT roads?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. The honourable Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The list that the Member outlined I think is fairly progressive and it's reflected in the number of collisions that ENR has in their database. There's been a steady decline since 2009. There's 17 collisions in 2009, six in 2010, five in 2011, none so far in 2012. I think the work is paying off and the ultimate responsibility, of course, for the control and care of the vehicle is that of the driver and making sure they drive appropriately given the conditions on the road, be it the condition of the road itself and if there are animals in the vicinity. Not just bison, there could be moose as well. I would point out that there's a far greater chance of suffering any kind of injury or fatality by hitting a moose than there is a bison.

MR. DOLYNNY: It was impressive today to hear some statistics. Unfortunately, if one is looking under the website under the Drive Alive program and bison awareness, the most recent statistics posted are somewhat dated. In fact, the last entries indicate only 2007 numbers in which 18 wood bison were killed by vehicle collisions. Given this information here, can the Minister indicate as to when the proper information that we just heard in the House will be posted on the website for update?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: The officials are listening as we speak and we'll make sure that this information that I have before me is there for the public as well.

MR. DOLYNNY: I guess the question today is not so much the probability of hitting a moose; the hot topic today is bison. I believe there is obviously a need for it. Anyone who is driving these roads, as I said earlier, it's not a when, the imminence is there. There is no doubt. Given the need for a physical intervention, as I mentioned earlier, potential electronic tagging or reflective tagging to alert motorists of imminent bison danger, would this Minister and his department consider working with Regular Members, with industry leaders of reflective technology, the scientific community, and of course Aboriginal leaders to draft a business case that would allow real employment in the

region, real-time herd management, and of course motorist safety in the region.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: The accidents involving bison are on a fairly significant decline, it would appear, because of the concerns that have been voiced over the years and the efforts that have been made to inform the public, to educate them, to do some of the signage issues, the increased hunting, the tags, which I think has been a great deterrent to bison hanging around the roads. The worst time of the year is October as things get dark and people still drive at speeds that they do in the summer and often get surprised. I also understand, as well, that bison don't, unlike other animals, turn into the approaching lights but tend to keep sideways, minimizing whatever benefit would be there from reflective tags. The other big issue is, especially with bulls, during rutting season tags tend to get torn off and all that work is in vain, as it were, so that the cost is great and the benefit seems to be minimal for that particular type of approach.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd have to disagree with the Minister on this one here. Studies in Colorado and BC are actually telling quite the opposite story with reflective technology and I would encourage the Minister and his department to do some research in that area. I hope that at the end of the day we're talking about public safety and it only requires one incident here, and we're trying to prevent that one incident.

Again, my last and final question to the Minister is: How and when would the Minister consider such a strategy to be implemented within the life of the 17th Assembly?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I'll ask the officials in ENR to take a look to see what other studies have said. Clearly the numbers don't bear out the type of investment the Member would seem to want and the risk to public safety, I would once again submit, is greater if you're driving the highways in the North, especially towards the southern part where there's moose, of hitting a moose where there has clearly been fatalities that I'm aware of both in the North and in the South. Once again, the ultimate responsibility of the vehicle is under the control of the driver and the driver has every responsibility to exercise due care and caution.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Nadli.

QUESTION 54-17(3):
SPORT FISHING AND LAND USE PLAN
IN FORT PROVIDENCE AREA

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. My statement today was about sport fishing. Sport fishing, of course, is a very leisurely activity that all Northerners undertake. If done right, more likely it could draw in tourists that more likely could spend dollars in the communities. It could also boost, ideally, business ensuring there's a service delivered for tourists to travel up here for fishing. In Fort Providence this is kind of a classic example of where perhaps we need to balance efforts to create economic opportunities plus conservation, so my question is: Can the Department of ENR assist in helping the communities seek a long-term sport fishing management plan for the area of Fort Providence?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nadli. The honourable Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Member raising this concern and I would be happy to share with him the information that I do have on the work that's been done over the last number of years on this issue that's come up. The very specific question that he asked, I will have discussions with the officials of ENR and the deputy, keeping in mind that fisheries is a federal obligation and as of late they've been under some pressure due to deficit reductions and layoffs and such. We'll see what is possible. I appreciate the Member's concern and I'll once again share the information that I do have about the work that has been done over the last number of years trying to deal with this issue.

MR. NADLI: I'd like to thank the Minister for responding and ensuring that there is an information flow to this side of the House. My immediate concern is this has been ongoing for some time, especially with the increased traffic as the potential for the bridge completion more likely we'll have more people coming in by vehicles and also by boats. Just namely because of not just for the scenery but the fish that exist in that area. My question is: Is there anything immediate that the department could do to help the community monitor at least if the fish stocks in Fort Providence are at a sustainable level?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: There have been discussions with DFO with the community. There have been quotas put on. Especially during this time of year when the fish are running. There have been the renewable resources officers on the water more often and if they're taken away by other fire duties, for example, we've in the past as well had local fish monitors making sure to check the fishing that's going on. We've been making sure

that all the folks that are fishing have the proper licences and making sure that the catches are within the established limits. Once again, I'll look forward to having a more detailed discussion with the Member.

MR. NADLI: Would the Minister agree as one possible option in consultation with the local community that the Minister could in fact perhaps consider designating the Fort Providence area as a conservation zone in land use planning?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: The Member is very well aware, I think, of the complexity of the Dehcho Land Use Plan and Protected Areas Strategy listing sites as conservation areas. There's a process that's been underway for many, many years now. If there was any wish to change that, it would be done through the table that currently is trying to resolve that issue.

I know as a government we're committed to trying to get the Dehcho Land Use Plan agreed to and approved. It's been a long time in the works. That issue would flow through that process and would require, I think, a significant amount of discussion if there's going to be any significant change to what's currently on the table.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final question is just on the fish studies, whether there is perhaps within the department's plan to evaluate the fish stocks on the Mackenzie River, ensuring that levels do indeed maintain at a sustainable rate.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I'll commit to have the ENR officials contact the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to get a full update on that particular issue which I will share with the Member.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

QUESTION 55-17(3):
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT NEGOTIATIONS
WITH FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to follow up on my Member's statement and ask questions of the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. Since devolution seems to be the lynchpin of this government's thinking, I'll start by asking about the process and effects of federal environmental actions on our future ability to manage our resources.

While critical final negotiations are underway, the federal government is changing the apparatus used to evaluate and regulate development. The one-board proposal, imposition of unsubstantiated deadlines and so on. How are we being treated by the federal government? Are they working with us on this or are they treating us as regular

stakeholders? Or are they recognizing that we are governments with pending authority for responsibility on land and resource management?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are at the table with the federal government negotiating devolution. This issue has been on the table, the regulatory reform issue has been on the table for some time. The federal government has made it clear they intend to make some dramatic changes. They've laid those out, as the Member has indicated. We have our own position that we have laid out that was public, it was on the website, that was dissimilar to the one put forward by the federal government. However, the federal government has indicated their intention to proceed.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks for the Minister's remarks there. I guess, how about the money as well? There are now dedicated budgets for a regional board structure. They may be minimal but they are still providing support for limited regional board operations. Devolution negotiations started on the basis of those amounts. Will that money remain in place? The amount? Is this government insisting that the budgets in place before the AIP or at the time of the AIP being signed will be protected for full transfer under the Devolution Agreement?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: The numbers agreed to for the A-based funding, which the Member is referring to, which is to compensate and offset the cost of taking over all the positions and programs, is in the neighbourhood of I think \$63 million. That is the figure that is enshrined in the agreement-in-principle and that is the figure that we are negotiating for that is part of that, as is the other part of that financial equation, which is the resource royalty sharing, which will be about \$60,000 this year, which was up to 5 percent of our gross expenditure base, up to 5 percent of their gross expenditure base. Those figures are set and, as far as I'm aware, there is no change to that. What's being negotiated is all the other detail related to devolution. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I think the Minister meant to say \$60 million rather than \$60,000 there, but I appreciate those comments. At the time of the AIP we apparently accepted to take over mirror legislation, federal legislation. Obviously, this government has had a lot of problems with the federal legislation or we wouldn't be after it to change it; we'd be happily going along our way. We do want to make changes that recognize the unique northern perspective. We have been told at the Premier level many times that we can and will be able to modify the mirrored legislation once it's adopted and the final agreement is complete. But

others in authority at the federal level have indicated that we will not have that option and we will be stuck with that mirror legislation. I wonder if the Minister can assure me and bring some clarity to this that we will indeed be able to modify this legislation. Mahsi.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: My understanding is if there's an agreement for mirror legislation, that once we take it over it becomes territorial legislation. If we, in fact, end up with a process where the federal legislation stays in place and we accept the role of delegated authority from the federal legislation, then clearly the federal government would have the final say since it's their legislation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Your final, short supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if I could just get the Minister to repeat the last part of that. It sounded like the federal government retains the ability to require that that legislation be unchanged. Maybe I could get some clarity on that one.

My last and final question would be: Given the announcement that we're going to do a public consultation on a land use and sustainability framework, what funds are available to carry out that consultation and how will it be done? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: In regard to the initial question that the Member asked me to repeat, there are basically two tracks when it comes to the regulatory reform. What's happened in the Yukon is they just accepted delegated authority from the federal government, keeping the federal legislation in place and they just administer that legislation which, of course, makes any type of amendments very difficult.

The other track is one where there's mirrored legislation where there's an agreement to develop northern legislation that would mirror the current federal legislation, a similar process that was used when division between Nunavut and the Northwest Territories happened, and then it becomes territorial legislation but mirroring the federal legislation. That way there would be, over time, if there was a decision in the North by Northerners that amendments were needed to that mirror legislation or other mirror legislation, it would be a process that Northerners would engage in.

In terms of the money that's available for the consultation, I don't have that information. I haven't yet even seen the consultation schedule, but I will commit that that information will be provided to Members when we have it available. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The Member for the Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

QUESTION 56-17(3):
REINTEGRATION PROGRAM FOR INMATES
RETURNING TO SMALL COMMUNITIES

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Justice. I want to ask the Minister of Justice, when we had our meeting in Colville Lake, the people in Colville Lake wanted to ask the Minister how can his department, where can his department find some creativity to work with the people in Colville Lake on the reintegration program. They have young inmates that are incarcerated, that come back to the community, and they want to do more than just ship them back to the community after they've done their time at the correctional facility. When or how or where, what can the Minister do to talk to the people or meet with the people to introduce a new or some exciting reintegration program with the community of Colville Lake or any other community, as a matter of fact?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I visited Colville Lake with the Member, the community members did indicate that they'd like to work on some sort of reintegration plan to have inmates from Colville Lake transition back into the community. There wasn't a lot of talk about the detail, but since then I have received a letter from the chief and council of Colville Lake and we are in the process of drafting a response to that letter saying that we're very interested in actually finding some way to work together, or actually just working together to develop some sort of reintegration plan in cooperation completely with the chief and council of Colville Lake. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Could I ask the Minister when can the community of Colville Lake and the Department of Justice sit down together and look at a community reintegration program and have them come forward possibly for the business plans to look at where there's going to be some dedicated resources and dollars put to work. Maybe this could be a pilot project for the other communities in bringing back the communities to a more responsible role other than just being a disturbance to the community.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I believe the draft response to the community's letter is actually in my signing book up in my office. We, obviously, would like to have some representatives of the department meet with the representatives in Colville Lake to start discussing exactly what they mean by reintegration program, finding out what the community can contribute or offer as far as resources or what their ultimate plan would be. We have to make sure that all safety and security issues are dealt with. But I'd like to get the department working with Colville Lake sooner

rather than later, so I'll talk to the department and get some specific dates and share those dates with the Member.

MR. YAKELEYA: I look forward to the day where the community and the Department of Justice can sign a joint letter saying this is what we want to do and this is where we could help our people.

In the letter it talks about the inmates coming back from the institution and coming back to the communities and ending up doing nothing. They want to do a program on the land, because they believe that there they'll learn about responsibility and respect through the community. I want to ask the Minister when, between now and the business plans, that the community of Colville Lake can see his officials going to Colville Lake and start hammering out together a joint process where they could both say yes, this is what we want to do and bring it towards the government here for approval of the business plans.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: What's in the letter is exactly what I heard when I was in Colville Lake, that they want to have some sort of reintegration plan that maybe starts with a bit of an on-the-land program and then bringing them back into the communities. I want my department to meet with representatives of Colville Lake, the individuals who sent the letter, sooner rather than later, but I think we need to have a conversation with them as to when would be the best time for us to go and meet them. I think some of the initial discussions can start by distance, but there's definitely going to be a need for them to get together and sit face to face. I'd like to see that done this summer or in the fall, for sure. I can't confirm a date because we need to have that conversation with the chief and council in Colville first.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

QUESTION 57-17(3):

RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH INDOOR TANNING

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement today I talked about the need for some type of regulation over tanning equipment, whether it's beds, booths or even lamps that people use for cosmetic purposes. The risk out there is not only well known but it's certainly proven. My question for the Minister of Health and Social Services today is: Is his department aware of the types of risks associated with indoor tanning and if they are, what are they doing out there to protect our youth? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the department is aware of the dangers of sun tanning on a tanning bed, and the department is

currently developing regulations under the Public Health Act. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: When is it anticipated that the regulations will be coming forward for some type of dialogue, whether it is through MLAs or certainly out to the public? There is public out there who do want these types of things. They would certainly find that this is good news that this is something being worked on by the government. Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, the regulations will include banning the use of tanning beds by minors and also requiring an establishment to have health warnings posted, and those regulations are expected to be done early this summer and enforced within six months. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, that is certainly good news by all accounts. When can we expect some type of public dialogue on this change of thinking? I don't believe that tanning is a good thing, but many people will want some type of public discussion on this, at least information on the issues and changes coming forward. Quite simply put, is there a public component to the shifts in policy thinking? How does the public get more information? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure we are going to do public consultation on the changes to the public act concerning sun tanning, but we can provide other methods of communications to the public on these changes. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wouldn't want the Minister to mix this point up, which is I am certainly in favour of the regulation change. But wouldn't legislation be more of a smarter approach, as well, as it almost seems as if the public is going to be told this is not allowed anymore as opposed to be informed or given a little bit of information in advance? It seems counterproductive for the style of government we would normally have. It seems as if the public component is being left out. I am happy with the direction but my point has been made. Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: I think that it's going to be like banning minors from using the beds and there will be warnings posted for others who continue to use it. Individuals for that will be advised that they are not allowed to use the beds or just warn that using the beds could be an issue. We will be communicating that through a press release or something of that nature as opposed to taking this legislation on the road. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

QUESTION 58-17(3):
IMPLEMENTATION OF
BUSINESS INCENTIVE POLICY

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As much as I would like to continue questioning the Minister of Health on some of these questions, this is a bigger issue. It comes down to the Business Incentive Policy. My question today is for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. I just want to know, when RFPs come through to the government, who scores the BIP process of that RFP. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Member for that question. I'm glad to have an opportunity to talk about the Business Incentive Policy. That is a policy of the GNWT. We certainly have that under our mandate of ITI, but when it comes to evaluating RFPs, it is left up to each department to oversee the implementation of the Business Incentive Policy. Thank you.

MR. MOSES: Mr. Speaker, so I guess it is kind of safe to say that when the BIP process is being scored, they are not scored the same from department to department or person to person or committee to committee, so there are some discrepancies on how this BIP policy actually works in all the departments within this government.

How can the Minister justify that a local company loses a contract to a southern company when the whole objective of the BIP process is to allow our local contractors a greater chance of securing these contracts and keeping the money in the North as well as creating jobs for our northern people? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the Member. I think that is first and foremost with the Business Incentive Policy, is to keep money in the North, to keep jobs in the North.

Back in 2010 there was extensive consultation with the business community in the Northwest Territories on some revisions to the Business Incentive Policy. One of those revisions back in 2010 was the definition of NWT content which allows bid adjustments. In the case of services, one of those changes was NWT resident labour. In this case, that was applied to the RFP but we have to remember that was only 20 percent of the overall RFP. There was methodology, past relevant experience, contract schedule fees and expenses. It is certainly something we have to pay attention to, but that change was brought into effect to help protect jobs in the Northwest Territories.

In this instance, it would appear that, yes, it is protecting jobs because the contractor is going to employ local people, but if you follow the dollars,

that contractor is located in Red Deer, Alberta, and the contract money would be going south. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MOSES: Mr. Speaker, I spoke earlier about being transparent and this government preaches transparency. Would the Minister be willing to look at making all contracts that come through this government and through the departments and the process of the BIP, when those scores come out, if he is willing to make those public so that all contractors and the public know where their tax dollars are being spent, and how this government reviews the BIP policy, and whether or not they are being effective and efficient in awarding the contracts to the right people? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, the Business Incentive Policy is a policy of the Government of the Northwest Territories. If Members of this House want to revisit the Business Incentive Policy, is there a loophole here that allowed a southern company to get a contract in Inuvik? If that is the case, then if Members of this House want to have another look at the Business Incentive Policy, it is under the purview of this Assembly to do that.

I understand the Member's concerns. I want to let him know and other Members know that we are willing to work with Members to try to shore up the policy so that situations like this don't arise again. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad that the Minister had mentioned that. In speaking with my constituent, all he wanted was fairness. He wanted fairness for all northern contractors and he wanted to be a voice to say look, there is something wrong with this process. He wants any northern contractors who lose a contract within this government to seek answers and not just accept it for what it is. That is a message to all northern contractors to look for answers and know why they didn't win the contracts.

With that said, I would like to ask the Minister if he is willing to do an overall training within departments on how this Business Incentive Policy is scored. Is he willing to do that training so that all departments know how to score a Business Incentive Policy and we don't go through this again in the future? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, that level of training already happens across government, but certainly in questioning my colleague Minister Beaulieu earlier, Minister Beaulieu had committed to a post-mortem on this situation.

Certainly from ITI's perspective, the department responsible for the Business Incentive Policy, we

will be taking an active role in that post-mortem and sitting down with the Members to examine this situation and going forward to ensure that this doesn't happen again. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Item 8, written questions. Mr. Hawkins.

Written Questions

WRITTEN QUESTION 2-17(3): NEGOTIATED, SOLE-SOURCE OR SIMILAR CONTRACTS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've got one written question today.

Would the Minister of Transportation please provide details for all negotiated, sole-source or similar types of contracts which are being arranged or have been entered into since he became Minister of Transportation? Please include specific details such as prices, location, scope of work and successful contractors for the past three years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, replies to budget address. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of standing and special committees. Item 14, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 15, tabling of documents. Mr. Abernethy.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 9-17(3): TECHNICAL REPORT – ANALYSIS OF FEDERAL BILL C-10, SAFE STREETS AND COMMUNITIES ACT: IMPACTS ON THE NWT DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document, entitled "Technical Report – Analysis of Federal Bill C-10, Safe Streets and Communities Act: Impacts on the NWT Department of Justice." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Mr. Ramsay.

TABLED DOCUMENT 10-17(3): AGRICULTURE PRODUCTS MARKETING COUNCIL 2011-12 ANNUAL REPORT

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document, entitled "Agriculture Products Marketing Council 2011-12 Annual Report." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Item 16, notices of motion. Mr. Yakeleya.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 4-17(3): EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE TO JUNE 4, 2012

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Thursday, May 31, 2012, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that notwithstanding Rule 4, when this House adjourns on May 31, 2012, it shall be adjourned until Monday, June 4, 2012;

And further, at any time prior to June 4, 2012, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at a time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 17, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 18, motions. Item 19, first reading of bills. Item 20, second reading of bills. Item 21, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 2-17(3), Commissioner's Opening Address: Creating the Conditions for Success; Tabled Document 3-17(3), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2012-2013; Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

By the authority give to me as your Speaker by Motion 2-17(3), I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the daily hour of adjournment to consider business before the House. Thank you.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order. Yesterday we were considering the main estimates of the 2012-2013 budget. We left off on the Department of Public Works and Services on page 7-17. What is the wish of committee today? Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. The committee wishes to continue deliberations of the Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2012-2013 with continuation of Public Works and Services and then moving into Education, Culture and Employment.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. We'll have a brief break and we'll commence with that. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Alright, committee, we will come back to order. Minister Abernethy, do you have some witnesses you'd like to bring into the House?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Yes, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort in the witnesses. Does committee agree we bring the witnesses in?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, committee. Mr. Abernethy, could you introduce your witnesses for the record, please?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Yes, Madam Chair. On my left is Steve Lewis, the director of Corporate Services; on my immediate right is Paul Guy, the deputy minister; and on my far right is Laurie Gault, who is the director of the Technology Service Centre.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you. Committee, we are on page 7-17, Public Works and Services, activity summary, asset management, operations expenditure summary, \$82.229 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Page 7-18, Public Works and Services, activity summary, information item, asset management, active positions. Seeing no questions we will move on. Page 7-21, Public Works and Services, activity summary, Technology Service Centre, operations expenditure summary, \$1.361 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Page 7-23, Public Works and Services, activity summary, petroleum products, operations expenditure summary, \$2.134 million. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to follow up from my earlier alerts. I know the department had said earlier this year that they were working on incorporating other fuels like wood pellets into their programs and I'm wondering if I can get an update. I don't see it referred to here specifically, but perhaps I missed it. Something committee has been asking for for years. If I can get an update on that and if it appears in the budget identified.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Guy.

MR. GUY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, we've been working on a report using an outside consultant to review the petroleum products model to see if it could be applied to other types of

products, and we've completed that review and the report is now available. We can provide that to committee if the Minister is in agreement.

MR. BROMLEY: That's great. I guess I would like to ask the Minister if he does agree that that report is available and we can expect that in the immediate future.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Abernethy, to the report.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. The report is completed and it is ready to be forwarded to committee for review and discussion and I will forward it on to committee right away.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Anything further, Mr. Bromley?

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. As the Minister knows, we've been pushing for a full-cost accounting approach on this and I assume that the report does look at the cost of the bulk storage facilities for fossil fuels and clean-up costs and so on, and addresses the net costs and benefits, environmental impacts and so on. Is there any conclusions that the Minister can mention and subsequent action to start putting this in place that the Minister is prepared to share at this time?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I've only had a really brief look at the report, not much detail for myself. So for more detail I'd be happy to pass it over to Mr. Guy or we can wait until it's distributed and have an opportunity to have a more in-depth discussion in committee.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Mr. Guy.

MR. GUY: Thank you, Madam Chair. The report looks at the PPD model, the Petroleum Products Act, and looks at the challenges, the opportunities, and also looks at the markets that are out there. There's a significant amount of detail in there and there are some observations and conclusions that are contained in the report.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Guy. Anything further, Mr. Bromley?

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess I'm sort of concluding from this that there are no actions planned at this moment in time and the next step will be to review that report and make some recommendations status quo or move forward. Is it likely that we will be seeing that this year and are there dollars available for that sort of activity or where are we with respect to that?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. There are no plans in the main estimates to change to a different source in the petroleum products division. We as a department are

continuing to look at our own infrastructure and where appropriate upgrading them to have pellet capacity. We discussed that a little bit yesterday and we're still interested in doing that and moving forward there. That will create more demand. As far as changes to petroleum products division, this main estimates, nothing. Once we have an opportunity to discuss this with committee, we'll figure out where we're going to go from here.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Mr. Bromley is done. Are there any other questions on page 7-23? Are we agreed that we are concluded page 7-23? Okay. I'll read it. Page 7-23, Public Works and Services, activity summary, petroleum products, operations expenditure summary, \$2.134 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Page 7-24, Public Works and Services, information item, lease commitments, infrastructure. Any questions? Seeing none, we will move on to page 7-26, Public Works and Services, information item, Technology Service Centre (Chargeback). Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Although I know it isn't specifically placed on this particular page it does relate to the subject very well, which is the chargebacks. I'm wondering where the chargebacks actually show up in someone's revenue file within the budget. This is the consolidated amount of what the chargebacks look like on every single line and all the budgets the department sections pay. Where does this consolidated \$18 million show up under revenue in this particular budget? This obviously is the launching pad of it to go somewhere.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. It is not revenue. It is not new money to the Government of the Northwest Territories. It's identified in every department's budget. The TSC charges a fee for the services it provides. It will send an invoice to the department. For instance, Public Works and Services is \$984,000. They send up an invoice and then there's a journal voucher, an accounting exercise to transfer the money from that department into the TSC so that they can cover their costs. So it's not revenue to the government. It's an internal reallocation of money within the government.

MR. HAWKINS: I would find it odd. In this particular case I'm not an accountant and I don't try to represent one, but I would say that your full-cost accounting it makes sense to recognize that cost. That said, we get budgeted and that gets taken out of our budget so it's got to show up somewhere on our revenue side of stream. So why wouldn't we show that somewhere, because it looks like it's

been taken out but it mysteriously just vanishes. From an accounting point of view, it almost seems like there's no close to the file.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: It's not, like I said, revenue. It's an internal reallocation. It is tracked. Every department identifies what they're paying for those services. The money is transferred to the Department of Public Works and Services and in particular ITI. Maybe for a more accounting response, I'll go to Mr. Lewis.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Mr. Lewis.

MR. LEWIS: Thank you, Madam Chair. As the Minister stated, it is not revenue. It is basically each department it's an appropriated expenditure. As the Minister alluded to, the TSC will charge each department, they'll process it against their Fund 1, those expenditures show up as Fund 13 in the financial information system known as SAM.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Lewis. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Well, I'm going to have to take a stab because my earpiece doesn't work and I can't hear anybody over there. All I heard was something about it showing up and not said. That's not the people providing the rebut, but I mean, quite frankly I keep thinking I'm hearing that it just shows up as income on page 7-26 but it's just treated as money that disappears.

I would say from a good accounting practice I think my point still should stand and I think any accountant would be quite concerned that it sort of disappears into general revenue if it's just clawed back. This is more than an administrative exercise. This is a financial exercise taken out of people's budgets. Whether you're MLAs buying computers or getting support, it comes off your budget. If your department of whatever, whether you're Health or Education or MACA or ITI, whatever the case may be, your money is being taken out of the global budget and it should show up as revenue somewhere because it's treated as income on this page and I would say, but it doesn't look like it shows up as income. I'm just not sure what to say other than that. The income should show up as a line item clearly somewhere else. People need to know where the money is going. It just seems odd that...They didn't say the words "trust me," but if you read between the lines it's like, don't worry, we've taken care of it. What are they going to do to articulate it somewhere on a budget line item that shows that they've captured \$18 million-plus?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Maybe you should advise... Oh, the clerk is looking after your earpiece item. Mr. Abernethy, I think the question is where do these numbers show up elsewhere in the budget. Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. As the Government of the Northwest Territories it shows up in every department under the TSC chargeback line that we talked about previously. The Member is correct; there might be some errors in wording on this page. This isn't really income. This is a chargeback or – what was the other word we used – a cost recovery within the Government of the Northwest Territories. Revenue is usually money coming into the government that would go to general revenues. There's no money going to general revenues here. It's a reallocation of funds. It's a chargeback. It's a cost recovery within the government itself. So every department shows what their cost is and that money comes out of their budget and goes into TSC where they provide the services, and we provide a comprehensive list of the actuals and main estimates in every budget so people know what the costs of services are within the government to the government.

MR. HAWKINS: I thank you to the staff for somehow miraculously getting this thing working. The fact is, the money is taken out of my budget, by way of example, and so it's aggregated out through the normal process but it shows up here as income. I'm not going to argue semantics here, but the fact its income should show up somewhere other than on one particular page such as 7-26. It should show up as a revenue line within the department's revenue and it doesn't show up there. I did look for it. Unless, of course, I missed it. But I see great money rolled in under electrical permits, boiler, gas, but I'm not here to discuss page 7-9. The fact is it doesn't even show up under the general revenue through that. It's got to show up somewhere.

Any accountant will tell you that you can't just keep taking money, show your consolidated amount. I'm not talking about the individual department lines. All I was trying to point out is all department lines have a TSC chargeback in one form or another. So here it shows the consolidated amount of all of those chargebacks, so where does the money go? That question then leads into why doesn't it show up under revenue stream?

Do we not have someone with accounting experience or an expert willing to make the commitment and explain why it can just be deducted but not show up as being inputted under the revenue? Because it would go back into revenues.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I'm not sure how to answer the question. It's not revenue. It's never been revenue. It's a chargeback. It's a reallocation of funds. It's all internal to government. It's not new money coming into the government, which is what revenue technically is. We provide service within government to government and there's a cost to that from each department. Computers that the

Legislative Assembly buys and has serviced through TSC is covered under the \$324,000 budget that's identified here on this page as well as on their individual line item. It's not revenue. I don't know what else to say.

MR. HAWKINS: If the Minister wants to be evasive on the fact or use semantics, call it whatever he feels like that makes him happy. This number of \$18-plus million has to show up somewhere. It doesn't just show up as a mysterious number, because it's allocated out to the departments through normal budgeting. Then it's being clawed back for reasons we all know why, because of services. It's being brought into the Department of Public Works through the TSE. Now it just looks like it sits in the Department TSE as a chargeback and it doesn't show it goes anywhere. I'm asking where does it go after it's being highlighted as it returns to...

Now, we all know this is a virtual world but, I mean, for sake of simplicity, is money is being taken out of the Legislative Assembly account, moves over to the Public Works account, but, I mean, it doesn't reflect that under any type of revenue side under Public Works and it should. Because, I mean, it should go somewhere. Because otherwise it looks like they're building up a huge slush fund. If we add up all these years, someone's going to ask where's that money going. That's the question. Where's the money going?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Abernethy, maybe we could commit to provide a better explanation. I'm not sure if you have something else that will help us get to the bottom of this. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm happy to have somebody from Finance help explain this to the Member and anybody else who's interested. The bottom line is it's not revenue. If you look on the page 7-26, it shows how the dollars are spent: \$7.008 million are for salaries of TSE staff, and the other \$11 million is for things like the DCN contracts and services and other contracts and contracts we have to provide services within the Government of the Northwest Territories in all communities, all regions. It's outlined there how the money is spent, but I'm happy to have somebody from Finance provide maybe a plain language explanation of how this is not revenue.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: That's the kind of answer I'm looking for. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you. Anything further on page 7-26? Information item, Technology Service Centre (Chargeback). We will move on. Page 7-27, information item, Technology Service Centre (Chargeback), active positions.

Seeing no questions, page 7-28, information item, Public Stores Revolving Fund. Seeing no questions, we will move on to page 7-30, information item, Petroleum Products Revolving Fund. Seeing no questions, I will move on to page 7-31, information item, Petroleum Products Revolving Fund, active positions. Page 7-32, information item, work performed on behalf of others. Page 7-33, information item, work performed on behalf of others, continued.

We will return now to page 7-7, department summary, operations expenditure summary, \$93.682 million. Is committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Does committee agree we have concluded the Department of Public Works and Services?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, committee. Thank you, Minister. Thank you to your officials. Sergeant-at-Arms, would you please escort the witnesses from the Chamber?

Alright, committee. We will move on. The next department is Education, section 10. I would like to ask the Minister for Education, Culture and Employment, Minister Lafferty, do you have any opening remarks?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Yes, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I am pleased to present the 2012-13 main estimates for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

The work of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is guided by the department's strategic plan and the priorities of the 17th Assembly. Our vision is one of northern people leading fulfilled lives and contributing to a strong and prosperous society.

The proposed 2012-13 main estimates for Education, Culture and Employment total \$289.107 million. This is an increase of 1 percent over the previous year's main estimates.

Education and Culture

Culture and Heritage

Arts and culture provide Northerners with a foundation for learning and growth and provide us with a strong base on which to build our future. Culture and heritage activities also serve to strengthen and diversify the economy.

In 2012-13 we plan to spend over \$6.5 million on culture and heritage programs and services. The budget includes a one-time \$520,000 increase to complete repairs to fire damaged sections of the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre.

Official Languages

To speak one's own language provides a sense of identity and belonging. Language activities assist communities to promote and revitalize their culture and language, and in doing so contribute to the community's economy and well-being.

The department continues to implement the NWT Aboriginal Languages Plan. In 2011-12 the department organized a successful Aboriginal languages symposium which resulted in the development of the plan, and offered two language institute sessions. The department also worked with language communities on a wide variety of activities. The first phase of our consultation on a French Language Strategic Plan is now complete, and in 2012-13 an additional \$150,000 is budgeted to provide for the full year cost of the new administrative structure established in 2011-12 for the delivery of French language services.

In 2012-13 the department plans to spend close to \$7.5 million on official language programs and services. The government will be considering options for the establishment of an Aboriginal languages secretariat to deliver a broad range of Aboriginal language and cultural activities in the near future.

Amendments to the Official Languages Act to eliminate the Official Languages Board will be proposed. As well, the South Slavey language will be renamed in accordance with the wishes of the Dehcho First Nation. The department will also work with the Executive to review demands on community-based government service centres in order to match service with demand and will continue to work closely with language communities towards their goals and priorities.

Early Childhood Development

Early childhood development programs help children to grow up healthy and ready to learn, reducing the burden on the health, education and justice systems, and help parents to become or stay employed, increasing economic opportunities for many northern families.

In May 2012, ECE, along with the Department of Health and Social Services, met with early childhood providers and stakeholders to obtain their views on the development of child and family resource centres. The results of this consultation and other research are being used to develop an action plan to support pilot programs in two communities in 2012-13, and to use this experience to expand support for centres in other NWT communities. Data from the recently introduced Early Development Instrument will be available to inform the work as the plan is implemented.

In 2012-13 child care benefits under income assistance will be increased and an Early Childhood Action Plan will be finalized. Planned changes to improve the monitoring and inspection

of child daycare facilities will be completed. In addition, ECE and the Department of Health and Social Services will renew the Early Childhood Development Framework for Action, a directional GNWT document on early childhood development.

In 2012-13 the department plans to spend \$7.3 million on early childhood development programs.

School and Library System

Ensuring the success of all students of our kindergarten to Grade 12 education system is the cornerstone of building a strong and sustainable future for our territory.

Education, Culture and Employment, in partnership with education authorities, is taking action to improve student achievement, performance and graduation rates under the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative. Current actions include a new mandatory cultural orientation for teachers, the operation of new community libraries, the hiring of regional literacy coordinators to work with classroom teachers, and the consultations and partnership with Aboriginal leaders under the ASA Education Partnership Declaration signed in 2011 and endorsed by AFN National Grand Chief Mr. Shawn Atleo in 2012.

Madam Chair, in 2012-2013 the department will launch a new kindergarten curriculum, work with education authorities on school plans to improve and report on student achievement, and complete a review of the Aboriginal Language and Culture-based Education Directive. PowerSchool, a new K-12 student information system, will be introduced to schools and parents in the fall of 2012.

In addition, work is underway to develop an Aboriginal Student Achievement implementation and communication plan based on the ASA education plan compiled after extensive community consultation. Plans will examine existing programs and outline further actions to address the four ASA priorities, with a focus on early childhood development. Regular communication will continue with Aboriginal and education leadership in the regions.

In 2012-13 this government will spend over \$171 million on school and library programs. Close to \$153 million of this amount will be contributed to education authorities for the delivery of K to 12 education.

Advanced Education and Careers

Post-secondary training and employment programs help adults in the NWT acquire skills, knowledge and abilities necessary to access social and economic opportunities and to contribute to build a strong future for our territory.

The NWT Labour Force Development Framework: People, Partnerships and Possibilities, will guide the work of the department and its training partners

in 2012-13. The department will partner with stakeholders to assist Aurora College with aspects of the Adult and Basic Education, or ALBE, Strategy funded by the federal government. Recommendations from the ALBE review will be incorporated into this and other work to improve ALBE programs.

In addition, the department will work with regional training committees to improve supports for those in small communities through the Small Communities Employment Support and other government programs and will work on an accountability framework for the education and training for adults. As well, a new web-based apprenticeship system will be completed.

In 2012-13 the department plans to spend over \$46 million on the Advanced Education and Employment Program.

Income Security

Income security programs exist to assist people to meet basic needs and achieve greater self-reliance at a time when they are most vulnerable.

In 2012-13 the department will continue to promote client participation in productive choices and to refer clients to regional ECE careers services, with a view to investing in client's independent futures. The department is also participating in developing the GNWT Anti-Poverty Strategy and working on an action plan in response to the recommendations from the Student Financial Assistance Program review.

In 2012-13 the department plans to spend close to \$40 million on income security programs. This includes an \$817,000 increase for income assistance payments and a \$160,000 increase for the administration of social assistance appeal committees.

Concluding Comments

The job of the department is to support residents in reaching their education, training and employment goals and in making positive choices for themselves and their family. In this way, residents are encouraged to be as self-reliant as possible and to develop a strong identity based on their culture and heritage. Determining the levels of support that help Northerners meet their needs is a challenge that requires constant review.

Based on this Assembly's vision and goals, we believe we are making the best investments, for the most people, within our fiscal reality.

I would be pleased to answer any questions that Members may have at this time. Mahsi, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Do you have any witnesses you wish to bring into the Chamber? Minister Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Yes, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you. Is committee agreed to witnesses coming into the House?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, would you please escort the witnesses in?

Minister Lafferty, would you please introduce your witnesses for the record?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Chair. To my left is Gloria Iatridis, acting deputy minister of Education, Culture and Employment; and Mr. Paul Devitt, director of strategic business services. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you. Committee, I will open the floor to general comments on the Department of Education. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Minister and staff for coming before us.

Madam Chair, the points that I want to make are the pace at which we're educating our children in our small communities. Our communities have a high number of young people and I was in somewhat of shock and dismay when the Alberta test results came out and they showed the education. It gave me a snapshot picture of the education in our smaller communities and in our education system, the department. We are funding our schools, yet we are not as up to par as we think we are.

In our schools I think there's got to be a definite move from how we do business. We have talked about this issue of social passing for a long, long time. This indicates that it's definitely not our way of doing business. We've got to have something more that tells these students what grade they're in, that's the exact grade they're in. We have a student who's in Grade 4 or Grade 6 that testing tells us they are at least two grades behind. That, to me, is totally unacceptable within our education system. If something radically needs to happen, then we need to make it happen.

I hope the Minister with his new initiatives that he talked about, that we're going to see that change. I am not sure if it's going to take two years or three years. That's not going to do anything for our students who are graduating this year; they're in Grade 12. Everybody is planning a graduation ceremony. How many students are going to make it through a post-secondary entrance or how many are going to go back to Aurora College and say I have to upgrade? Is there any tracking within the high school system that says in the Sahtu of the last five years, for example, X-amount of students graduated? How many are in post-secondary

institutions? How many are living in communities? How many are working? There are a few exceptional students, despite termination of encouragement from families, who make it on their own. Some of these students even go into upgrading for a year. They go to Edmonton. My nephew went to Hay River to upgrade, working as a student, but upgrading in Hay River. There's a few of them that make it because they really want to.

We've been hearing this for the last four or five years. I'm looking forward to the Minister's initiatives that we all talked about in closing the gap between our small communities and the larger centres such as Yellowknife and Hay River. The gap is too wide and that's unacceptable. If you want to see the quality of education, look at our education system in Yellowknife, Hay River, Inuvik and our smaller communities. There is no equality. Look at the grades that they're testing at. There is no equality. So to say that all students are going to get equal programs, equality in our schools, it's not there and we're not doing any justice to the parents or the communities.

So that social program initiative has to go. We have to do something else to replace it. If it's going to cost money, then that's what we have to do. Why suffer because it's going to cost us X amount of millions? Our students are going to be suffering. So that's a big one on my plate for education.

I like what the Minister did. He went around the region, he talked to the people and he heard in the last Assembly on the initiative of the Aboriginal Achievement and he's moving that forward, and he started to do some work on the early childhood, and that's a good thing.

I wanted to talk about the Adult Education Program that we have with Aurora College. I know the federal government has given Aurora College a lot of money under the Literacy Program. I look forward to seeing some future plans as to how these dollars will be rolling out into the communities to improve the literacy of the parents, the people, the kids through Aurora College's plans.

Madam Chair, when we saw the impacts of development in our region, the Sahtu, the income support recipients going down because of the oil and gas company – Husky Energy came in and did some work in that area – and the level of income support recipients has gone down quite a lot in dollars. So it tells you that if you have income, income support from the oil companies and mining companies and people want to work. We need to help them get away from their dependency on government. Not only the short term and after awhile we need their work, because the season slows, they get back. I wouldn't mind seeing some results as to the Sahtu prior to the oil companies coming in and after the oil companies come in. I'd like to see that graphed. I'm going to ask for that.

I want to show that we want to work in the Sahtu, but it's very hard sometimes to break from that dependency. We've got them to a point where they expect that it's almost like their right. You're going to feed me; you're going to house me; you're going to clothe me. We've got them to a point where their thinking is very lazy. That's too bad. Even the little kids now in our schools go to government with their hand out. We've done some things that don't help our people. I want to ask this Minister some of these questions later on.

Overall, he's got a big department. I haven't even talked about culture. However, I just wanted to say that he's got a big budget and some big issues, but more importantly is education. I have a personal stake in this. My little boy is in Grade 5 in Tulita and it's not the same as a Grade 5 here in Yellowknife. That really ticks me off and I need to know that we need to make some changes. So I'm just showing a little bit of my frustration and my compassion for it. I'll have more questions later on.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. We have agreed earlier, committee, that we will do responses from the Minister after we're done with general comments. So I'll move on to the next person on the list, Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm happy to have this opportunity to offer some general comments in response to the Minister's opening remarks. I want to start by saying the budget is very tight here for this department and a 1 percent increase, this is a major priority for myself and my colleagues. That is a pretty modest increase compared to the demands that we have.

I also agree with the Minister's remarks on the arts and culture and heritage, and fully recognize the importance of those to both our identity and strengthening our people and also to diversifying and supporting our economy. Those need to be recognized when we're allocating funds.

I'm glad to see we're going to recover the fire damage on the culture and heritage centre, and I want to note that the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre is a top-class facility in any forum anywhere in the world and they just celebrated their one millionth visitor. I'd be very curious to know what proportion of visitors to the capital visit our heritage centre. Perhaps the Minister knows that, I don't know, but this is a major tourism draw and needs to be recognized on that front as well.

The official languages, again I see, you know, a massive review was done by committee and recommendations made. The budget has stayed the same and yet some of our languages are not doing well. So there's clearly some focus required there.

Probably my most important comment is in the area of early childhood development, which I've spoken

on before, but I take exception to the Minister's statement that ensuring the success of all students of our kindergarten to Grade 12 education system is a cornerstone of building a strong and sustainable future for our territory. I think that statement reflects a lack of realization and basically a struggle to retain control in the department, really, by the schools. The biggest cornerstone we have is early childhood development and the biggest part of that is the first three years of life and the gestation period during the prenatal stage. That is an area that is really the purview of Health and Social Services and needs to be recognized, and I think is being recognized by this department. They need to be the lead in that area, although ECE is the overall lead in developing early childhood development, but this needs to be sorted out and it needs to be clear.

I'm extremely disappointed that we're stuck at \$7.3 million, which is no change in funding for early childhood, and in fact it's a decrease if anything. So extremely disappointed and I think we're missing the boat here and I will be asking questions on that further.

I'm glad to see that an Early Childhood Action Plan will be finalized. I can only hope that Health and Social Services have had a strong input into that, especially for the zero to three where they would be the lead in designing programs.

We don't need a renewed Early Childhood Development Framework for Action; we need a revised Early Childhood Development Framework for Action. I'm hoping that is what the Minister means with that statement. As I say, those are the most critical parts that I see for this department.

I didn't hear the Minister talk about training. Again, especially for the early years, we know that our training is producing substandard early childhood workers. We know that Aurora College is producing graduates that don't meet the national standards. These are the people we're putting in charge of the most critical years of our children's and citizens' lives. I want to hear from this Minister that that program is being tuned up and improved to meet national standards, as committee has talked about for years now.

Again, what's contained in the Minister's remarks shows in this area again a school's perspective, the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative, with a focus on early childhood development. Those programs are already in place and ongoing. They can always benefit from extra support, but again it's a school's perspective and it fails to show the recognition of what is now widely understood, that we need a health and social services focus brought into the early years of early childhood development as the priority. That is where we have not been delivering.

I'll leave it at that. I'm glad to see the other remarks that the Minister made. He mentioned that actions or recommendations from the Student Financial Assistance Program review, I still haven't seen that. I have again been waiting for that. It seems strange to be talking about acting on that. If there is such a report I'll look forward to seeing it. Happy to see the Social Assistance Appeals Committee being put in place.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Are there any other Members wishing to make opening comments? Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. [English translation not provided.]

Madam Chair, I'm opening up my comments obviously in my maternal French language, which is a right that we have, as well as many other jurisdictions in Canada. I think that brings to my question that even in the Legislative Assembly we have opportunities to help promote our language. We do not have any translators behind me to do the proper translations in French. I guess that goes without saying that we have opportunities in general with all languages, all our languages that are recognized here in the Territories, and again we know the challenges.

With respect to the Minister's opening remarks or comments as we go into the budget, obviously this is the second largest budget of our government. I'm pleased to see some direction. I'm pleased to see some direct opportunities in terms of early childhood development, as I mentioned earlier, and also advances especially in the career area.

What I didn't see in here, and this is probably more a functionality of some of the work that we've been doing in the past number of months, work we've done with the Auditor General of Canada, work we've done in terms of opportunities not only for the Department of Education but for many other departments. The Auditor General of Canada was very specific in nature in providing this government with a lot of guidelines and recommendations in terms of where this department can move forward to better themselves and be a better department for not only themselves but for the people of the Northwest Territories. In the recommendations of the Auditor General is the deployment of measurables, key indicators, dashboard indicators, if you will, in terms of the performance of the department. Given the fact that this was a very extensive process that the Regular Members did do with the Minister, I was a bit, I guess, shocked that that wasn't part of the new mandate of the department. Trying to prove that the programs that are coming on board over the next couple of years during the life of this Assembly are going to be able to be broadcast in a way that are measured, that the Members here have an opportunity to comment, and at the end of the day that hopefully we have a

product, deliverable, for the people of the Northwest Territories.

One of the only things I can comment on, obviously, which is not in here in a general sense, is our achievement tests that our students do write annually, and of course the results that we got of those tests back on February 28th obviously raise a lot of concerns and questions. I'm not going to speak on behalf of the small communities, it was already brought up by Mr. Yakeleya, but other MLAs that wish to from the communities that are rural are more than happy to jump in. My comments will be more so around the issues of Yellowknife because this is where my constituents reside. Keeping that in mind, Mr. Minister, and I know he's aware that I have children in the system as well, so I'm speaking as a parent as well who's got two kids in the system. So this is also very close to my heart. As Mr. Yakeleya said, when you have kids in the system you're a lot more in tune with what's going on.

The results that we got back on February 28th regarding the Alberta Achievement Tests written by our Grade 3, Grade 6, and Grade 9 students are somewhat puzzling and somewhat troublesome. Albeit that the results from Yellowknife were somewhat higher than the rest of the region, there are still areas of concern. As Mr. Yakeleya has mentioned earlier, there is a gap. There's even a gap between Yellowknife and Alberta in general, and I think that gap needs to be a high target for this government and this department to find ways to rectify that. When your Grade 9 math results come in at 53 percent where Alberta averages at 73.9 percent, that's a gap. That means that our Grade 9 math are nowhere near capable of handling the rigours of what's before them in terms of opportunities and we are narrowing the scope of opportunity of these students as they progress in their final years of secondary and hopefully moving on to post-secondary.

Be that as it may, the other interesting statistic that jumped off is obviously a lot of the percentage of students that are excused is very troublesome. The whole aspect of social passing and promoting a functional grade level equivalent, in my mind, really is not serving the needs of our public. We're becoming complacent as a society, one in which I would like to see rectified as we move forward over the life of the 17th Assembly. When close to 20 percent of your students are not writing the exam and are being excused because of a social passing, that number is far too large considering the fact that Alberta is only at around 5 percent. We're four times higher than Alberta. These are alarming statistics that put us and our students really at a disadvantage if we really truly want to see them succeed in careers. Even if it's going to Aurora College, even if it's going to tech schools, we're not doing our students any justice.

My opening comments are more so not what we've seen today, which I think are some good stuff in terms of what's coming down the pipe for the department, but what's missing is those measureables and how we communicate those measureables not only to the people of the House but to the people of the Northwest Territories, so as parents, as teachers, as administration, we have indicators of how well our kids are doing and not waiting until the Grade 3, Grade 6, Grade 9, and using only our one tool, as far as I'm concerned, as our achievement tests. I'm hoping that the department and department officials are listening. I'm hoping that the Minister is paying attention. These are recommendations, not just a Member sitting here talking about what he thinks is important. These are instruments. These are tools. These are standards that the Auditor General of Canada has asked of this government not only in education but in other departments.

I'd like to thank you for your time, for the delegation. I'm looking forward to diving into the details of the budget. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Next on the list is Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just some comments that I want to address with this particular department. I appreciate all the engagement that we've had with this department and their staff over the last few months. I think we really noticed that we needed to put some strong effort into working together and moving forward for this government stemming back from where our Standing Committee on Social Programs strategic planning in Hay River where we really got to look through the department and go into detail and see how things are working over the past few years.

Speaking to some of my colleagues here, we did get some recommendations out of the program review office that at some time we'd like to see addressed within the business plans. If not this one, we do have one coming up in the fall that would make spending our dollars a little bit more efficient, a little bit wiser, and using those dollars into programs where we can see fit. We've discussed that at the table with P and P as well as looking at the recommendations from the Office of the Auditor General. I really believe that those recommendations should be addressed and looked at as we move through the business plans.

Like my colleague here Mr. Bromley when we looked at the opening remarks and saw that there was only a 1 percent increase over the previous year's main estimates, I took that as a concern because throughout this government I know the Minister has brought forth and done some Minister's statements and press releases on the Aboriginal Student Achievement, language revitalization, elders in the schools. With a 1

percent increase it's very hard for me to see that these new programs are going to have the support that they need to flourish while we're still continuing to work on the other areas of our education system that a lot of my colleagues have addressed today.

In particular, the Aboriginal Student Achievement, just to bring it to the attention of the Members here, we had some really good coordinators in Inuvik that were lacking some support in getting what they thought was going to be some good ideas and some good working groups and working with the community to develop this plan, but they didn't have the support and they both resigned their positions and all the hard work that they put into this so far has kind of gone to the wayside. Now we're hoping that somebody in the community picks that up. I know that's a big project that we've got going throughout the Northwest Territories. It concerns me that in Inuvik, where we have a lot of resources and a lot of community-based members, which these two members were community based, it makes me wonder how other communities are going to be impacted with the workload of creating this without any kind of financial support or other resources for them to work with.

The Minister did mention that there was, I think, \$46 million here for advanced education and employment program. I'd like more information on that to see how we can – that's a lot of money – better spend those dollars as we move forward in this business plan and it's not just throwing money at another program here.

Like all my other colleagues have stated, you know, a 52 percent graduation rate is not successful. The way I've been putting it when I talk to people back home, I said, you know, you go into Grade 1 and you look at the class and you say, you know, from this point on half this class is going to graduate and the other half, what happens to them? They fall through the cracks. That's where the emphasis is put on this early childhood development. We have to reach our youth at a very young age, right from birth to three where they're most critical at learning and taking in all these cognitive, intellectual skills that will prepare them for when they get into the school system.

That said, we also need more child care providers, more licensed establishments. It's very important. Right now in the Northwest Territories we are lacking those services. The more we lack those services the less opportunity that our youth get a chance to be part of such a growing aspect of our lives. That's just the importance of our early childhood development.

One thing I wanted to note was the ALCIP, the Aboriginal Language and Cultural Instructor Program. In correspondence previous, it had mentioned that there were no graduates out of that program for the previous two years, and I know we

just went through a graduation session in our communities. I think in Inuvik we actually had some graduates. I don't know the numbers, but that was very positive to see that that program was finally successful in graduating some of the students that took that program.

I'm also very happy to see that in the work business plans and as we go through them that some legislation on the anti-bullying is going to be brought forth. The sooner we can get acting on that, the safer it will be for our students who are going to school in the fall time.

One other concern was our income support and the Productive Choices Program that the department has addressed. We find that it would be nice to get stats and updates on the Productive Choices Program to see how efficiently it's working and the impact that it's having on students that are going to school or on our mental health system, our counselling services as well.

There are a lot of concerns here and I know that as we deliberate over the next couple of days, we'll work those out and that we can take lessons from this first business plan, as it's my first business plan session, and we can bring recommendations and look at all the stats and all the facts and all the information that we've had since the beginning of this government.

It is a big budget and I respect that and I respect a lot of the projects and the programs that the department has to do within that department. I know it's not easy, but you've got a lot of good, skilled, educated people here to help you out and assist you, as well, and we're willing to do that.

Those are just my opening comments, Mr. Chair, and I thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Moses. Moving on our list, we have Mr. Bouchard.

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll make my comments really brief here. I do believe this is one of the more important budgets. It's the second largest and it represents over 20 percent of our budget. Like my colleagues, I am concerned that we have only seen a 1 percent increase in this budget. The importance of it is also in the fact that I think education, being the larger component of it, is important in the territory. It's the investment in the future. And that's at several different levels, whether it's at early childhood, K to 12 and post-secondary and the apprenticeships. I think we should look at trying to commit more dollars to this department whenever possible, and I know there's always more things we could be doing, but also looking at some of the reviews and some of the suggestions we've done through business plans to do some things smarter.

I know on the regional level we've looked for the department to give us the ability for a little bit more

flexibility and how some of the budgets are handed out, where the money is set into columns and not flexible in certain areas, which our local education authorities have been trying to break down those columns so that they can use their monies more efficiently. That's more on the local level.

One of the other areas of concern that I have is positioning and, obviously, like most departments in the GNWT, there are a great deal of positions that are in headquarters. This department, 71 percent represents headquartered positions. Obviously, there are a lot of positions that are through the local authorities but in the regional authorities but, still, headquarters has the bulk of the money that's here. My concerns are the fact that those numbers should be... The money should be out in the regions where the kids and students are being educated.

I mentioned early childhood development. I think it's an area that we need to work more on. Some of the difficulties with the graduation levels are because we lose some of these children really early in the system and they fall behind, and by the time they get to the graduation point they're so far behind they've been discouraged and have dropped out. I think we need to commit more dollars to early childhood development.

As I mentioned, I'd like to see, along with that early childhood development, obviously, the graduation levels go up. Like my colleagues have indicated, these numbers are very low and they are a vital part of an indicator of how successful this department is doing.

Those are my opening comments. I'll have more questions and comments as we get into detail. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. We'll move on to the Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a number of comments as well. Some of them are going to be repetitive, but I think they bear repeating.

At the outset, I want to say that I'm dismayed about the lack of progress in the department on reducing our graduation rates. I feel that the department is doing a lot of really good things. We have a lot of projects on the go, but they don't seem to be all that coordinated, and in my estimation, we're not spending enough, we don't put enough emphasis on basic education. Whether it be preschool, whether it be K to 12, even, I think, advanced education. I think that we are doing too many sort of special projects, some of which are certainly required, but I think if we are going to provide the education that most of us seem to feel that our kids deserve, we need to be concentrating more on making sure that the kids get the basic education

that is required, making sure that the standards and the levels of education in every school and every community are the same across the territory. I hear pretty much on a regular basis that kids in schools outside of the regional centres are not achieving a standard or a level of education that is the same as in the regional centres and in the capital. That's a real concern for me. I don't see any reason why we should not be requiring the same of kids in a community school that we require of kids in a school in Yellowknife or Hay River or Inuvik.

I think that those results are evident in the Alberta Achievement Test results and the stats that the department produced awhile ago on functional grade levels and so on. It indicates that students in community schools are not achieving quite as well as I think they should and they're not achieving on an equal basis with students in other regional centres and here in the capital.

I think that maybe the department needs to rethink what it's doing, needs to coordinate what it's doing and put a focus on what I like to think of as the basics. You know, the three R's, reading, writing and arithmetic.

It's been mentioned already, but I wanted to just mention in terms of the recommendations from the Standing Committee on Government Operations, their review of the Official Languages Act and the fact that those recommendations have not yet been acted upon. I believe the Minister said that that's coming forward and I'm glad to hear that, but I am somewhat dismayed that we haven't seen a legislative proposal already. I would hope it's coming in the very near future.

In terms of early childhood development, I will have questions certainly when we get to that section. The Minister's heard me say before, I don't think we are doing enough. Interestingly, I heard Mr. Bromley say that he objected to the statement that K to 12 is a cornerstone of building a strong and sustainable future. I have to agree with him. It's part of it. Absolutely, a strong K to 12 system is required, but we have to change what we're doing. We have to change our mindset and we have to start thinking about kids from the moment that they're born. We talk about prenatal from a health perspective, but we have to talk about the education, so to speak, of our children from the moment they are born until pretty much from dust to dust, or birth to dust. We don't start from dust; we start at birth.

I wanted to comment. I have concerns about Aurora College. The Adult Literacy Basic Education program is run pretty much by the college and with the NWT Literacy Council, but I don't think that we are achieving what we should through the ALBE program. Certainly, the program review office of the government has done some evaluation of that program. There have been recommendations there that we are inefficient, that we are not really

achieving the best that we could, and I have yet to see any suggestion for changes in that program. I would certainly hope that in this Assembly there would be something from the department to revamp the ALBE program and make it more efficient and also make the people attending ALBE programs more successful. I don't think we're creating success in that program.

I am somewhat concerned to hear that income assistance requests are increasing, but we are not really increasing the money. That doesn't quite jibe with me and I will have some questions when we get to that section. I'm trying to think. What else have I got here? I guess just in general – and it has been pointed out already – the department budget is increasing about 1 percent but forced growth, for instance, is about 1.5 percent, if my math is correct. It leads me to believe that somewhere within the department there are cuts to programs and services or something that are being made in order to account for the forced growth which isn't being covered by the increase in the budget. I would like to get an explanation of that when we get further on.

I believe that's all I have, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): I would like to thank the Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro. We will move on to the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate this opportunity to say a few brief words. The subject will be no stranger to the Minister's ears as I bring it up, which is the independent campus of Aurora College, and spoken many times about how we should finally reach that particular point within our college development and long-term forecasting of our college programming where we should be able to say to ourselves that it is time to develop an independent campus here in Yellowknife.

Aurora College, for a number of years, has been an anchor tenant in the Northern United building, which I think the government has a moral responsibility to be part of, because if in the riding of Yellowknife Centre that building offers itself as a great opportunity for new Canadians, those who are at risk and certainly seniors, to have rent subsidized through the government being an anchor tenant, they are able to focus and keep those rents fair, but that moral obligation shouldn't hold the Aurora College from building its particular plans to look forward to the future and its potential growth. The college itself is such format that it needs its own residence and companion programming sites. We could probably do so much more, as folks will say.

While I am on this particular topic of Aurora College, I want to use the chance to highlight the leadership provided by Sarah Wright Cardinal, and that is her tenureship as president of the college. I

certainly hope that the department and certainly the Minister as well as the board of Aurora College keep her on and support some of the initiatives she has been bringing. I am very grateful for the work she does, the vision she has and certainly the passion and education and growth she has for the future of the North. The fact is she has such an ability to speak well and see the things and the potential in people that I think she has been a tremendous asset since she has come to the college. If anything, she has become one of the shining beacons of our bureaucracy, where it shows that this woman has risen through hard work and leadership skills and shining very brightly here.

One of the goals that I know she shares similar to mine is to see eventually that Yellowknife has an independent campus. I know it is the goal of the board of the Aurora College, which I welcome. I just wish the department itself would finally send somebody over there to be a decision-maker on this particular initiative, because everyone seems to recognize, but somebody – I don't know who this somebody is but I would like to meet this somebody – keeps saying it's a bad idea, or we should have more discussions, or we should talk to our partners more. All I hear is the same standard postage stamp replies to this problem, and the fact is that this college has matured to the point where it needs to be given that opportunity. It is time to unleash it in the sense of give it a chance to spread its wings onto the world.

An institution like our college is an amazing place because it allows the students to interact, not just in school but sort of in the dynamic thinking that you only get at college, and that said, it will be able to set its sights on the longer term goal of maybe bringing more university courses here and maybe eventually become a university through its accreditation. If we do these types of things, we will be bringing fresh university investment dollars of folks who want to do studies up here, who want to partner in the North, whether they want to do studies on First Nation culture, whether they want to do environmental studies. There are a lot of opportunities here for people to look at. The fact is these people are knocking on the doors here in the Northwest Territories but they have no one credited to partner with, so it's a real struggle going back to the fact that it really ties together with the fact that I think the college continues its growth. It continues to be stifled by the Department of Education. I'm not sure who it is. Again, I would like to meet this somebody, because I think they need to be re-orientated. Its campus is continually being brushed aside and said no, you're okay in the form you are.

At the same time, I would like to also emphasize that I don't think this comes at a cost to the other two campuses. I know we have learning windows in other communities, but the main campuses are, of course, being Fort Smith and Inuvik. I think this still

marries with the goals of the broader college mandate. It's just in this region. It's time to grow. I fear that is being held back, serious concerns that it may come at a cost to the other places. I don't believe that being the case. I think each college campus can become an expert in the centre of excellence, per se, in its own specific courses.

That is a big one, but the fact is that Aurora College doesn't have to be alone. There have been partners knocking on their door saying that they will be interested in dialogue. The Minister knows this. What holds them back? I'm not sure. Again, is it the bureaucracy? Is it one particular person?

To be frank, I get sick and tired of hearing we need to have more discussion. It's all we do is talk. Well, let's talk about when we are going to talk again. When we get there, we will talk some more because we have to plan ahead and we will talk more about that too. Let's not talk about it all at once. It just gets nothing but frustrating. That's some of the biggest ridicule you will hear from the public when they talk about politicians. They know how to talk themselves out of something. They talk themselves to avoid something. All they do is talk but never listen. Well, quite frankly, I wish the department would listen and hear the voices within the college, be it the system, be it the board of governors or even in the Territories saying that it is time for an independent campus. If we put the can-do hat on as opposed to the can't or won't hat on. It would be a weird fit, I'm sure, for awhile, but let's not be afraid of change. I think we can embrace it and we can do well.

The last part of this little story of Aurora College, I will call it the narrative of Aurora College, is the fact that there are willing partners out here to discuss. Some we don't even know about yet, and the fact is we should be shopping around and talking about this. We should be talking about this idea about expanding the college maybe with the City of Yellowknife. What better opportunity to be talking to the city about maybe a new library? We can marry these things into some of the city's goals. Bring this idealism to the city to say, look, what do you guys see as the future in Yellowknife? How could you and your partners work together to tie this down? Aurora College could be quite a hive of activity that brings such energy to the city, and not just to the city but to the Territories as a whole. I think we are really missing out on this great opportunity.

Again, I am sorry to harp on it but the reality is the reality, which is all we hear is we have to have discussions. I've been a Member and this is my ninth budget. Guess what we're going to hear. We better have more discussions. Nine years later it continues to be the same saga. Nothing has changed other than the fact that just the players change. The answers still remain the same, more discussions and more discussions. All I keep saying

is eventually someone is going to have to take a leadership role on this. It doesn't just frustrate me, it frustrates a lot of people out there, the fact that somebody has to be showing that they're in charge in this department.

No one believes that Aurora College, in an independent form, will happen overnight. I first and foremost do not believe that, but it starts with a commitment of saying we are going to do this and all of a sudden that has changed the paradigm of how we view the world. If we grabbed the excitement of that, all of a sudden synergy of the department would change, and the enthusiasm would happen and people would say how could we do more. Could we move our trades in there? We could all be part of this. Maybe we can join or partner with community school, community government. Maybe we could do more. People would be looking at it with pride and saying we could do more. The college itself would be so exciting. Just the enthusiasm, then someone would say if we're going to do it within a decade, maybe we're going to do it within eight years, maybe we're going to do it within five years. I mean, it's just that type of focus and commitment and we can get out there and pound the pavement. I know a lot of Yellowknife MLAs, as well as I hope our territorial MLAs, would get behind this and I bet we could find the partners. Whether it's speaking to a federal counterpart or even just local folks.

As I mentioned earlier about the City of Yellowknife, we have a strip downtown on 50th Street where the city has been trying to reinvest and rebuild. It's doing every effort they can to help redevelop the downtown. Is that the answer? I'm not an expert, I'm not going to say it is, but I certainly am not going to quickly say it isn't, either.

It's about long-term focus and what we can do for our students. It's so easy to relax and go back to our standard answer, which is well, let's have some discussions and we'll be safe. Well, unfortunately the safe answer makes us look bad and the safe answer never gets anything done, and the safe answer discourages people as they look towards their political leaders for leadership.

There is no bold thinking and that's the problem. We need someone finally with the courage to make this happen. I don't know how we're going to do it, but that's just being honest. But that type of honesty is welcome enthusiasm from our public. Just saying look, I don't know how we're going to get there, but I'll tell you what, I'll buy the gas, the car, we'll all pile in, we'll figure out how we're going to get there, we're going to find out where we're going, but by golly we're going to go. There may be some bumps, but we're going to have a good time doing it, and yes, there will be some challenges, but the fact is we're going and we're committed behind this adventure.

Mr. Chairman, as I close off my point, there are many subjects such as early childhood education, inclusive schooling and, as I mentioned the other day, first aid should be a requirement as part of our high school programming, but I'll find the specific page that I'll raise those particular subjects on. It's amazing how fast 10 minutes goes when you just get warmed up.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): I'd like to thank the Member for YK Centre, Mr. Hawkins. Moving to the Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm just taking the opportunity just to provide some comments on Education, Culture and Employment. I think the most common saying that our people hear all the time, especially in communities, is that education is important and now more than ever as we move forward to what lays ahead on the horizon for the North, especially in terms of the North's role in the global economics in terms of resource development. It's more important that people encourage, especially the young people, to try and advance themselves to higher levels of education and ultimately to try and get degrees in terms of achieving their goals through university and studies. I think more so we need to encourage, that for some time, at least in my era, it was accepted that yes you need to go to school and advance yourself and if you can get your Grade 12 that's good, but now I think times have changed. It's more important than ever for our people to advance as far as they can. We need to ensure that it's clearly understood that we encourage people, especially First Nations within the Northwest Territories, to try and go as far as they can and to try and be supportive and allow them to grow, to mold and at the same time just to recognize their efforts and their sacrifice during that time of their struggle to get their educational goals.

There are various initiatives that are very positive that I think the department has undertaken and been involved with. It's a big department, because there's education, culture and employment. But for the most part I've always been a very strong advocate of technology in terms of how it is that we use it to employ at least a medium to try to enhance education, especially for young people, because now we have a generation that are very knowledgeable in terms of computers, computer systems, iPads, cell phones. So the latest and most recent effort was to develop an iPad application for the languages, and I think that's something that I think the department has to be commended on and to try to at least make a medium like that, a technological medium to make it at least accessible to young people so that they could use it to employ at least writing in their own language, reading in their own language and I think that's a very big plus. That's just one example of a few things that I've noted.

But there are concerns expressed to me in the community and one of the biggest concerns is the rates of graduates. Are we doing all we can, whether statistics could maybe focus on that in terms of how successful we are? But the concern is that we should have more graduates coming out of Grade 12 and advancing themselves to a higher level of education through university. At the same time, there are all these concerns that parents have always expressed to me. Well, how is it that my son or daughter could graduate from Grade 12 and when they go down to Edmonton or Vancouver why is it that they have to struggle? I mean, what happens during that transition? For the most part their conclusion is just the standards of education that we use. Perhaps we need to maybe have a curriculum that both considers the unique part of the Northwest Territories and the culture, at the same time just the mainstream Canadian society in terms of trying to ready people for entering the workforce. So I think there needs to be perhaps some discussion and maybe some focus in terms of how it is that we can make some improvements on that.

The other concern that I have is just on the rates of dependence. I mean, if kids are not in school, then obviously they suffer and I think there's maybe some cooperative efforts that need to be considered in terms of working with the local district education authorities in terms of how it is that that circumstance could be remedied.

Also at the same time, we have a very burgeoning young population here in the Northwest Territories and there is almost a need for focus not only in terms of what's happening right now. Right now there's a lot of development in terms of mining in the mining industry. So they're trying to focus and tailor training programs to make opportunity for people that are interested in a mining career to enter into that area of work, but there are also clear indications of some other things that are very significant that are coming down the block in the Northwest Territories like oil and gas. There's forestry potential. So we almost have to try and diversify our approach and ensure that training programs meet the needs of people and the circumstances that arise.

In that instance, I don't know if the department has done a long-term human resource development strategy in terms of perhaps a five-year or 10-year analysis on what will be the needs in 10 years' time. We need to put some focus on that in terms of how it is that we could project the needs of our people down the road and what should we focus on right now. I think perhaps the department has done that and I would like to see something that could be revisited, and maybe in that instance, in that effort maybe an effort could be made to try and branch out into partnerships with regional groups or bodies that are at the receiving end, the federal dollars to

help them improve the human resources in their regions.

There are other concerns that I have. One of them is, of course, the lack of any capital infrastructure or aging infrastructure in communities. There's always a need for more buildings. One in particular is that we have preschools or initiatives that are very successful, but then they're having building issues. A very real need for us to see how it is that we can have a very successful preschool program, but then we don't have a building, or else there are issues with the building. I think those things are immediate. They have to be dealt with to try to at least engage with the local leaders to see how it is that we can resolve unfortunate realities that we have to deal with at the community level.

Another thing that I wanted to mention too was, you know, there could be, at some point, if there are successful partnerships with regional bodies, there could be efforts to maybe establish trade centres in some regions or communities, and there might be an interest from community leaders to try and achieve a concept like that. I'd really encourage the department to look at building upon partnerships and looking at these creative avenues of how groups could come together in light of the constraining fiscal resources and need for cooperation and partnership. In those instances, perhaps you might have an achievement of where there's a level of synergies and the output would be an effort that is clearly distinguished in terms of maybe a trade centre that could be established through the efforts of all sides.

The other thing that I note is just the closure of the Western Arctic Leadership Program. The Western Arctic Leadership Program in Fort Smith has been, I think, in my eyes, a very successful program. It created a lot of young leaders that have been residents in that place, in Fort Smith. It had some very committed house parents that made the sacrifice to try and help the youth of the Northwest Territories. They did not have the choice or else they made a clear, conscious effort to try and be in that residence and try to focus on the academics. Obviously, that's a concern but whether that thing is a foregone conclusion, I don't know. But I'd just like to distinguish that it was a very successful program for some years. It used to be that we didn't have high school in small communities but now that's normal and it's very common to have Grade 9 to Grade 12 in small communities. But I just wanted to make that distinction.

Last but not least, if at some point you recognize down the road the need for a university, I think it's real. I think this government, at some point, needs to see that, to try to at least have some discussion and focus in terms of how it is that it could become a reality. I think there are some very real issues that could be maybe focused in terms of some

discussions on some very global issues. Like, for one, on climate change. Things of that nature that could be a topic of study. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. We'll move on to Mr. Bromley for a very short supplementary and comment.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There was one more comment I had on the Minister's opening remarks, and that was his referral to the Anti-Poverty Strategy. I meant to mention that. I think the department and his staff have shown good leadership and are a very important partner in carrying that strategy forward and I wanted to recognize the good work that the department is doing on that front. It was just a slight miss that I wanted to mention. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Seeing that there are no further general comments, we will move over to the Minister of Education for the opportunity to respond.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. I will try to cover all questions and concerns that were addressed here today.

First of all, when we talk about the 1 percent increase over the year period from now, I'm just glad that we received an increase of 1 percent and not a decrease. Yes, we do have a greater opportunity for our ECE department to move forward. We have greater things on the go. I think we just have to be creative and innovative within our department. That's the direction I gave to my department, that we need to think creatively how we can maneuver and tackle all these different opportunities out there with what we have as a budget.

Dealing with education in the small communities, it's been brought up on the AATs over time, mostly highlighting the small communities. I think we're doing something a bit different than before where ASA we've reached out to the communities. We wanted to hear from the communities' perspective. They're the experts and we wanted to hear them out, so we did that. And it does capture AATs as well. As I indicated in my opening comments, there is a plan in place for implementation of ASA, an action plan towards that, so I'm truly looking forwards to rolling out the program. We have done that already to some degree on some of the small initiatives. I did highlight in my opening remarks, as well, mandatory orientation for teachers, cultural orientation and so forth. We'll continue to do that.

Just tracking of students after they leave high school to college and university and work. We can't do it all as a department but I'm hoping the communities are doing their part, because they have career development in communities, as well, and band councils and municipalities and so forth. I think we all need to get together and highlight those

certain individuals that have been in the system, because once they leave the college – because we sponsor them through SFA – then we don't know where they go at times. But if their name shows up in a trade or an apprenticeship program, then they're on the system again. But this is an area that has to be collaborated between the communities and our department and other departments as well.

The adult education, there's been talk about the ALBE federal funding. Federal funding is strictly towards enhancing our ALBE program. We will be monitoring and working closely with the college, and I believe we just received a planning process for the funding that's been identified, and I believe my department is going through that document. We will be working closely with them in identifying the key topics that have been discussed here around the table.

Income support clientele going down. That was great to hear from the Sahtu region. I wish every community had the economic boost as the Sahtu so we can have those people off income support. That is the hope and dream. We will continue to push in that venue.

Also, there was talk about some clientele, I guess, income support, where community members expect handouts. I guess I can provide an example where community members want to go duck hunting for elders and they ask this individual walking on the street who says, well, I can't go because I have an income support appointment. It was an embarrassing moment for that individual to be asking that but... Anyway, there are productive choices that the Member has stated and that maybe providing more detailed information on the progress to date. We can certainly provide that to the Members.

Arts and culture, of course, over the years we've increased the funding and we will continue to do so. It sounds like there wants to be more emphasis on that. The museum, it is a major tourism economy for the Northwest Territories, so I'm also happy to see the money identified to repair the fire damage.

There is talk about the language and the culture preservation and as we get into more detail we can discuss that further.

Early childhood development. It's been the forefront of our discussions since we started and we will continue to do so. ASA is also the forefront of discussion. We talked about the zero to three years we should start early. We agree. But at the same time, the parents need to be involved. It's the parents' responsibility, as well, when the child is breastfeeding. The parents need to be there. But we, as the department, what can we do to assist those parents? If we can provide some programming and some parental guidance, because some kids are having kids as well. There is a lot of work in this area. ASA has identified this

as a priority too. We'll do our part working along with the Department of Health and Social Services and also the community organizations to make this an effective program.

The revised ECD framework versus not renewed, those are discussions that we will be having. Training early childhood workers, the college has been very successful delivering that Early Childhood Certification Program over the years. With any programs, if there needs to be room for improvement, we'll definitely pursue that with the college. There have been a lot of changes in the college programming. This is an area of interest, especially in the early childhood development, so we'll definitely pursue that further with the college. More emphasis on the early years and early health, I believe Mr. Bromley alluded to.

The Anti-Poverty Strategy, we are actively involved with that with the committee that's been established, along with Health and Social Services and other departments. We'll continue to contribute towards this great initiative.

The Auditor General's recommendation, key indicators, performers, measures, so forth, I totally agree that we need to have those mechanisms in place to follow through with all of the recommendations that have been brought to our attention. We will be following through with each and every recommendation. We do have an action plan in place that's been created to tackle those areas.

Number of students excused, peer passing, I believe that the Aboriginal Student Achievement will definitely capture that. When we talk about Aboriginal Student Achievement we talk about the other students, as well, and compare them to Alberta. Those are the areas that will be captured through the Early Childhood Development Framework as well. This is a very serious area for us. It's been brought up in this House on several occasions that some of our students are not passing and then a lot of questions. My department's been working on this particular area, working closely with the school boards as well. We'll continue to do that.

Program review office integrating into 2013-2014 budget. As we move forward that will be part of the discussion that we need to have. When we talk about the new budget that will be coming on stream and how we can integrate that program review and the recommendations brought forward.

There was talk about the Inuvik Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative, the committee that was struck – and there's one here in Kaw Tay Whee as well. There's an ASA committee that's been established. It's been working well to date but from my understanding, meeting with the MLA and the mayor, there's been some lack of community involvement as well. We want, we're trying to find

out what's truly happening and through the school boards, the funding that we give them, if they could access that because with ASA we're still in the planning stages, the implementation. Once that kicks in, then there will definitely be some support mechanism there. It's very disheartening and sad to hear that the committee members departed, but I'm hoping they will be revived again.

The Member is correct that they reach out to our youth at a young age. That should be our overall goal.

The ALSA program, I believe there have been seven grads this year. I could be wrong but Behchoko also had a grad in the ALSA program. So we want to make this even more, I guess the deliverance into the communities, into the regions. Because without them it's going to be very difficult to deliver Aboriginal language programming into the school system. This is an area that what we tackled and we want to improve even further.

Anti-bullying legislation has been brought up in the House. My department has been actively busy pursuing that with research that has been done. Talks a couple weeks ago on this particular subject. The community members were asking what kind of legislation are we looking at. We wanted to look at the broad sector of a policy that is a directive from the department onto all the schools in 33 communities so they can have their policy, their own community perspective policy on how to deal with anti-bullying. We are moving forward on this and we will be meeting with the standing committee as we conclude our discussion on this particular subject.

PYs at headquarters. I totally agree that they should be in the regional communities. That's part of our overall goals and objectives of this government to decentralize. We've heard in this House already and in Detah when we first initially gathered. We'll do what we can, if we can find suitable positions in the community. Of course the housing will be a challenge. Those are the areas we need to highlight, but it is in the works. We're working closely with HR department on this perspective.

Graduation levels should go up and also even the graduation rates. There again, I totally agree that we need to do more. We need to work with the school boards because they're responsible for the operation of their school systems in the communities. We'll pressure them more to produce more of the true graduates that can go to post-secondary without upgrading. At the same time, when we first started ASA, we heard it's about awareness. The parents are sometimes not involved, are not aware of what their kids are taking. I think it's a matter of educating ourselves, whether it be the department going to the communities or the school board going to the

communities, having a forum with the parents, or one-on-one sessions. Over time I've heard some parents don't know what some of their kids are taking in high school. We want every child to be successful in our school system. As parents – I do have kids, as well – we want them to succeed in life. I read to them as much as I can at home and I know what program they're involved in, but unfortunately it's not like that in every household. This is an area that we need to tackle together. Not just the Department of Education, Culture and Employment but the school boards, the community leaders, the parents, the grandparents. We all have to do our part in this.

The Official Languages Act recommendations. It is coming forward. I'm glad the Member raised that issue. We just reviewed it and I believe it's next week that we'll be before standing committee on this particular subject. We want to act on the recommendations brought forward. Some of the areas will be ongoing work that's part of the recommendations, but we want to address those next week when we're before standing committee.

The college, ALBE possibly not being successful and possibly would like to see some changes in this area. This has been addressed with the college already. I also wanted to see more at the community-based level, not just ALBE but accounting program or other trade programs, certification, management certification program. That's what's been asked for at the community level. This will certainly be addressed with the college again. This is an area that the funding has been identified by the federal government, so we are again working closely as a department with the college to identify those needs at the community level.

Independent Aurora College campus and residence. This is an area that has been discussed in the House on numerous occasions. If I had \$100 million we would have the campus right now. I don't have that \$100 million in capital funds. At the same time, we are making progress. We are in the final stages of extending our lease with Northern United Place which will allow us some time to deal with this in part of the capital planning process. As the Member alluded to, enough talking. We still have to talk with our partners to create partnerships and to identify funds. Without them this won't be possible. Nowadays, even at the federal level, they're talking about partnerships. We've had, a couple weeks ago, a meeting on this particular subject, just a preliminary discussion, and the library was brought up at that time too as part of the college campus. These are just some of the exploration that we're pursuing with the various potential partners. We'll continue to have that dialogue. Especially this fall, we're gathering all the stakeholders on this subject, once we sign out the lease agreement for

extension. So we'll keep the Members in the loop of our progress on this particular subject.

Enhancing education technology for our students. Language apps was a very successful project and now we're dealing with other languages that are still outstanding. There are Smart Boards in classrooms that have been very successful to date and we'll continue to invest in those high-tech technologies for our students.

There is an extremely large population of young people in the Northwest Territories. This is an area of interest to us, how we can deal with that. There's also, again working with HR department on developing our own human resources strategy, the needs of the people, I guess, down the road. We also need to partner with the communities, the development corporations, the band councils. They're the ones that are experts on where their community members are because they have band lists, they have community lists. We need to work with them.

There is a lack of capital infrastructure for aging infrastructures in the communities. We need to go over those. Every capital planning process, we go through the communities and regions on what their most critical needs are and it's based on that the decision is being made. We'll have to be mindful of those preschools the Member has alluded to.

Also establishing trade centres in the communities. Again, the Member alluded to creating partnerships. I totally agree with that, that we need to step up to the plate and work with the communities. We have done that in the past and we should pursue it even further. I'm open to the concept as well.

Western Arctic Leadership Program. I believe there's been involvement over the past several years. ECE has been involved. ENR and Enbridge, I believe. Our contribution over the years, \$275,000 per year, has always been part of our contribution. Again, at the end of the day it was the decision of the board not to continue with this programming. Well, you know, we provided great extension into the communities. Maybe they've highlighted it as well. It was the decision of the board so we have to respect that decision. If they were to continue that, \$275,000 would have been disbursed this year.

The need for a university to focus more on whether it be climate change or scientific research, I totally agree. We talked about this just the other day as well. I'll be meeting with my counterparts from Nunavut and Yukon territories to specifically talk about the University of the North. Those are the discussions that we've been having with the federal government. Chuck Strahl of the day, at that time, but now we have Mr. Duncan, so it will certainly be addressed with that mandate as well. I believe I captured almost all of it. Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. That appears to conclude general comments. Does the committee wish to proceed to detail?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. With that in mind, I will ask committee members to turn to their pages of 10-7, just to make aware that the department summary. We will defer this until after consideration of detail. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. I will ask you to turn to page 10-8. Education, Culture and Employment, information item, infrastructure investment questions. Any questions? We will go over to 10-9. Education, Culture and Employment, information item, revenue summary. Any questions? Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a question here with regard to the change in revenue for the Cooperation Agreement for French and Aboriginal Languages. I know that from the revised main estimates for 2011-12 to the main estimates for 2012-13 there is a significant drop in revenue. I wondered if I could get an explanation. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Chairman, the difference is a multi-year agreement for K to 12 school programs covering fiscal years 2009-10 to 2012-13 was signed on March 30, 2010, I believe. Maybe if I can get Mr. Devitt to just give us a detailed breakdown of the difference. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Mr. Devitt.

MR. DEVITT: I believe the Member is referring to the additional funding in the revised estimates. I don't have the specifics of the program, but we received one-time funding through the agreement for a special project. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Again, Education, Culture and Employment, information item, revenue summary. Are there any further questions? Page 10-10, Education, Culture and Employment, information item, active position summary. Are there any questions? Page 10-13, Education, Culture and Employment, activity summary, directorate and administration, operations expenditure, \$10.296 million. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe the directorate deals with document management and so on. The government is implementing an electronic records and document management system, I believe. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment deals with requests for

fairly sensitive material I think in some cases relative to a residential school, students and so on. When the Information and Privacy Commissioner made her report a couple of months ago to committee, there was a concern on her part that the government is not necessarily always being as judicious as we should be in looking after our information. In terms of the information that the department has, particularly where it is considered quite sensitive and a lot of student information as well is very sensitive, has the department considered how they are handling their information in light of the Information and Privacy Commissioner's recommendations to just be aware and be wary of what we are doing with our information? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chairman. The Member is correct about the residential school. There have been a lot of requests over the years. Some of the requests go back 40 or 60 years. We do have some information and some are electronic-based and some are still manual. We are doing what we can to have most of the documentation in an electronic database. There is a lot of information there but we are pursuing it. I am fully aware that it was an Auditor General's recommendation that was brought forward, so this is part of our mandate of the department to pursue even further to make that a reality. Mahsi, Mr. Chairman.

MS. BISARO: My question related more to the security of information. It wasn't an Auditor General's report recommendation; it was from the Information and Privacy Commissioner. There was a concern on her part that not only Education but every department isn't necessarily securing their data as well as they should. To that, to the security of data within the department, could the Minister make some comment? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: We are monitoring ATIP requests on a weekly basis. The ATIP, there is a guideline and criteria that's in place. We are following through on that. That is my understanding from my department on dealing with those requests that are coming in. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Education, Culture and Employment, activity summary. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to ask a question on the Anti-Poverty Strategy development. Am I correct in assuming that currently, as that development is taking place in the planning and so on, that is being conducted by the directorate of ECE in terms of organizing the steering committee and so on? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. We will go to Ms. Iatridis.

MS. IATRIDIS: Actually, no, it is not being organized by the directorate. I was designated as the lead DM and it's under the guidance of the deputy ministers of the social envelope and the Ministers of the social envelope under the direction of the Department of Executive. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you for that information. Just to confirm then, any budget associated with that effort would occur in the Department of the Executive and there isn't one in Education, Culture and Employment at this time. If that's the case, that's all the questions I have on that. Thank you.

MS. IATRIDIS: Yes, that's correct.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Iatridis. No further questions. Education, Culture and Employment, activity summary, directorate and administration, operations expenditure summary, \$10.296 million. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Page 10-14, Education, Culture and Employment, information item, directorate and administration, active positions. Are there any questions? Being none, page 10-17, Education, Culture and Employment, activity summary, education and culture, operations expenditure summary, \$192.575 million. Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A couple of program delivery details on here that I had questions in regards to. The first one, obviously, is with the Early Childhood Development Program. Back in 2010-11 we were funding it more than what was asked, and 2011-12 it was at \$7.208 million, and this year again nothing has changed and yet the Minister continues to speak about how important early childhood development is, and we're waiting on some of those infrastructure and programs to help our communities and our early childhood succeed.

With this put in the budget, would the Minister be able to look at possibly looking for other ways to increase that funding so we can see some more programs in early childhood development? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Moses. Minister Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Chairman, we have identified the funds in there right now as it is. We are pursuing with the Early Childhood Development Framework. It's not only our department, it's with the Department of Health and Social Services and we're talking about the centres in the regions and having a pilot project in two of the communities. We've identified funds already which may not be covered in here, but we feel that

it's important to pursue with the Early Childhood Development Initiative. So we're doing what we can within our department to find the funds to cover the two centres that we talked about as part of the recommendations brought forward. So it is important to us and they may not be increasing the actual budget, but this is the budget that we're faced with with our fiscal restraints as well.

So, Mr. Chair, we just have to be creative and innovative within our department. Mahsi.

MR. MOSES: With the funding that he said that they've allocated but it's not directly in this budget line, where is that extra money? Which line can we find that in? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: When we talk about some areas that we could identify some funds so we can improve let's say the child and family centres, if we can allocate the funding then we identify those from the different pots of funds.

Within Education, Culture and Employment, the almost \$300 million budget, as you can see there is so many different pots that we can access from. There are areas that may not be exhausted all at once and then we can certainly access those areas of funding. So those are some of the discussions that we've been having within my department, because I told my department that this is important and we need to do this, let's find the funds. So that's what we're doing. Mahsi.

MR. MOSES: Thank you. I just want to make a comment that the Minister did say that there were those projects coming forward and they're not particularly in this fund, that they're in another line item. Now he's saying he has to look for those funds. So I just want to put that for the record, that he's looking and that it's not actually there.

I know some of my other colleagues have some questions that they'd like to ask as well. I just want to put the importance of the Early Childhood Development Program and if we start focusing some of our dollars there, you see four lines down the inclusive schooling and we're putting \$26 million, almost \$27 million into that. That's a lot of dollars out of this budget for an issue that affects all of our schools in all of our communities dealing with students that might have some learning disabilities, and if we just redirect some of those dollars into early childhood development it should cut down the costs of this budget line item of inclusive schooling in the years to come. I mean, the sooner we do it, the sooner we will start to see those results.

It's just more of a comment, Mr. Chair. I do have some other questions, but I'll leave a little bit of room for my colleagues to ask those questions. So more of a comment, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Moses. We'll go to the Minister if he'd like to reply. Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Yes, the \$26 million, it's a lot of money, but it's going strictly to the school boards, as well, and if we need to make those drastic changes, I need to work with the school boards. We're talking about positions as well. It's not only programming. So the teachers, the special needs teachers and support staff and so forth at the community level and at the regional level. So it does have a potential impact. But at the same time I understand where the Member is coming from, where maybe we can utilize some of those funds towards early childhood. That may be something that we've discussed before and an area that we can possibly look at as well. So it is up for discussion and it's been brought forward before. So we can discuss that further. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Moving in my questions, I have Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I have a number of questions as well on this page. Obviously, we're talking a great deal of money here. So I'd like to just follow up first on that early childhood aspect.

I want to say first off that we have, as a committee, had some good discussions with the Minister and we're looking forward to developing opportunities in the early childhood area. I think the Minister understands our interest from this side of the House and the priority we're placing on it.

Just reading the description, the activity description, Mr. Chair, the early childhood and school services division provides direction, standards, supports, as well as program and curriculum development for children from early childhood through to Grade 12 completion. That's such a massive effort. As the research comes in and understanding improves, we realize that there are significant aspects of early childhood that are really more of a health focus and yet ECE is the lead. I would suggest that they're starting to realize the importance of this and I'm sure they'll be a good lead, but can I get confirmation that the Minister understands and supports that statement that during the prenatal through to the time when the children enter the school system, be it preschool or whatever, that there's a real health and social service focus required?

I'll just add to that, that I completely agree with the Minister's description of that earlier, the focus is on the parents. I've just learned, I don't know if the Minister happened to catch the CBC radio program the other night, but I can put him in touch with that, it was a whole hour on this program in Harlem about baby college. They literally go out on the street and encourage any pregnant woman or parent with a stroller to attend baby college for nine

Saturday mornings. They're having amazing results.

But let me start with can I get the Minister's confirmation of similar understanding? Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. I believe there is a common understanding that all of these specified items have been integrated into our discussion with the ASA, Early Childhood Development Framework and even a couple weeks ago we had the agencies that came out to talk specifically on ages zero to three with more emphasis on that. So those are areas that we'll continue to integrate into our programming, whether it be Early Childhood Development Framework or ASA, Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative, because that also captures early childhood development within that as well. Mahsi.

MR. BROMLEY: So I know the Minister is interested in getting going with some things this fiscal year. Is the Minister able to confirm what those programs will be at this time?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: There are just some areas that we've talked about with the agencies and the discussion that we've had about the child and family resource centres. I talked about the piloting of possibly two communities. First we need to identify what's out there right now, what exists in the infrastructure in the community, how can we best utilize and add to it, ongoing support for daycare operations, implementation of an Early Development Instrument, development of revised kindergarten curriculum, updating and revising child daycare regulations, child care subsidy for parents who work or have returned to school, family literacy activities, healthy children initiatives, early child language nests and also early childhood development training for the college, as Members referred to earlier.

So those are just some of the initiatives that we have been discussing. Mahsi.

MR. BROMLEY: Obviously there are a lot of programs ongoing already in those areas. Many of them again focus on the school-age children. I'm trying to bring some focus to the age zero to three here. I'll leave it at that and look forward to further discussions in committee with the Minister and further exploration with my colleagues.

On the Aboriginal language and culture-based education item and my colleagues' reference to graduates this year, I was very glad to hear about those graduates of Aboriginal language and culture educators. How many graduates did we have this year, if the Minister happens to have that information? What is the duration of the program now to where these students achieve their certificates in this area?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I remember in 2005 when I first got onboard, the ALCIP program was more geared to certificate only. During deliberations, as we are doing here today, we've changed it to a diploma program as well. We can provide more detailed information to the Member on the graduates and, of course, the home base where they're coming from. Some are pursuing even further to get their degrees to become teachers. So, Mr. Chair, there's been some slight changes from certification to diploma and we are making progress in this area.

I'd definitely like to see more graduates out of this program. So I have the information here. One bit of the information is eight graduates from the Beaufort-Delta ALCIP program in May 2012. That's just one snapshot of it.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks for that information. Very good news on the eight graduates there on the move to a diploma. Just on the duration, at one point we were offering the programs at such a low rate that it would take 10 to 20 years to achieve all the programs and the courses required for that qualification. So is it possible to do this now in two or three years of going to school? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Specifically to the ALCIP program, it's a two-year program. The Member might be referring to the interpreting and translating program that's also being offered at Yamozha Kue Society. That takes a bit longer. I'm familiar with that because he raised that issue with me before. We are exploring options in that area with the college campus. We want to improve in that programming to deliver, I guess, you could say expeditiously so those individuals can receive their qualifications in due time. Mahsi.

MR. BROMLEY: I do have a couple more questions. Just quickly on the subject of NACC, the Northern Arts and Culture Centre facility and programs, I know they are planning to expand their facility and had submitted a request for some help. I believe that work is happening this summer and was too late for the infrastructure budget. I suppose there's a possibility of a transfer. Has the department made any decisions on that request for funding? I know they had achieved a major part of the funding from I believe the federal government and had some other partnerships already also contributing. Is ECE playing a role here? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: NACC has construction happening there. We did, as a department, commit towards this particular construction. So the Department of Education, Culture and Employment will be contributing towards this construction project. I've already committed to that. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Bromley, I've noticed your time is up.

I'll put you back into the queue. I know you have some more questions. However, noting the time, the Chair recognizes the need for a short recess. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you very much. We will be reconvening in a few minutes. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Welcome back, committee. We are resuming on page 10-17. I have on the list for questioning, the Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a number of questions. This section covers quite a bit, so I may jump around a little. I would like to first of all ask about – and this might have been asked before and I apologize if it has – the Early Childhood Development Program which is under education and culture.

We are, I think if I remember correctly, currently training early childhood teachers at Aurora College. I guess I would just like to ask the Minister what kind of a certificate people are getting, and if I remember rightly, our certificate is not one that is recognized nationally. Could I just get some clarification on that? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My understanding is it's a certification program and it's part of the on-line program that's been delivered and it's in association with Yukon College. It's in partnership with them that we have this particular program.

MS. BISARO: So this is an on-line program. So it's not a classroom taught program? My question was also whether this certificate was recognized nationally or not.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Ms. Iatridis.

MS. IATRIDIS: Yes, it's offered through distance education. It's a one-year certificate that's recognized through Aurora College and is affiliated with the Yukon College program, but the curriculum has been modified somewhat.

MS. BISARO: Thanks for the response from the acting DM. I guess my concern with a modified program is, you know, if we put the emphasis on early childhood, whether it be preschool or child care, daycares, playschool-type activity or facilities, and we have teachers and assistants in that facility working with the kids and if they are not taking a course that's fairly rigorous and that gives them a high level of skill, I would think that we're kind of cutting off our nose to spite our face in that we're

not getting the best we can for the kids in this program.

I don't know why the program has been modified. Maybe I'm wrong in my assumption. I would hope that we would try to train our people to the highest standard possible so we can provide the best programming possible to our children.

Under instructional and support services, curriculum review and revision and so on, I noted when we were discussing the business plan that the department is publishing a Science 30 text. I immediately wondered why we are publishing textbooks. It would seem to me that this is an activity that isn't necessary. Surely to goodness there must be Science 30 texts already published elsewhere in the wide world that we could acquire without having to go through the work of developing and publishing a text. Could I get an explanation as to why it is that we've decided we need to publish a textbook?

MS. IATRIDIS: Some work has been done to develop resources for the science program to ensure that the material is culturally relevant and covers specific topics relevant to the North that are important to share with students. It's an additional resource that can be used with the program and is just a supplementary resource for teachers to use.

MS. BISARO: Great, thanks for the answer. That makes sense. One of the things that has occurred to me – and I've expressed this in my opening comments about the difference in the standards or levels of education that students achieve depending upon where they live and what school they attend – is that high school students in particular probably don't take the high school courses that they need to get themselves into post-secondary institutions because I don't think they understand, nor do their parents understand, courses that are required for them to get into a post-secondary course or institution.

One of the things that I think is lacking in some of our schools is staffing, whether it be part time or full time, but staffing to provide counselling; and by counselling I mean counselling in proper courses and counselling in what the kids need to take to achieve their goals. I just wonder if the department has recognized this as a need, if there is any sort of assistance to education authorities, and to ensure that they do have that service to the students in every high school that we have. That would basically be career counselling, for lack of a better terminology. It's to assist the kids in making the right decisions in the courses they take and in making the right decisions to get them on the post-secondary school path of where they want to go.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chairman. This particular area has been brought up even at the ASA forum and early childhood development discussions, having guidance counsellors. Using previous experience has been very successful, why don't we have that anymore.

The funding that we contribute to the school boards, it's at their discretion if they want to hire a guidance counsellor, per se. At the same time, we are in discussion or will be in discussion with the school board, as well, that there is a great need to enter into discussions with the school board on particular guidance counselling.

The Member alluded to maybe a half-time position, per se. Those types of discussions we're currently having because we are in the process of developing implementation plans for ASA. ASA, when we were going around, we heard that same topic, a lack of guidance counsellors in the schools. There are also students who are in the process of completing a career action plan in Grade 9 that is reviewed annually. This is just going beyond that. A position into the regions. We will be discussing this with the school boards and how we can best rectify the situation to deal with those educational awareness with the parents and the students, the program they should be taking.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister for that. I'm really glad to hear that it's on the radar, that this is an issue that is being addressed to a certain extent. I guess I would like to encourage the department to be more demanding in what they ask the education authorities to do.

As I mentioned when we talked about the Auditor General's report some months ago, I think there is a need for the department to be a bit more autocratic and demanding in the things that... The department as a central body should demand certain things of the board and this is one of them where I don't think the board should have any choice. They should make sure that they have this service for the kids.

I wanted to ask my last question with regard to inclusive schooling. This is an area where the program review office has done some investigation; they've done some analysis of inclusive schooling. It's also an issue that has come from a number of boards. Particularly YK1 in Yellowknife has lobbied Yellowknife Members over the last while. There needs to be, I think, and I would look to the department for confirmation, but I believe there needs to be an analysis and evaluation of how we fund school boards for inclusive schooling and for particular individuals. I think – and we've had some conversations I think with the Minister – this kind of giving boards money as a percentage of their student population is not being fair to the schools and the teachers and the students who have a very large need, I guess for lack of a better way of

putting it. I think there needs to be a total evaluation of how we fund our schools for inclusive schooling and for special needs students. I guess I would like to ask the Minister whether or not that is something that the department is considering.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: This is an area that we've discussed within our department and even as far as a Cabinet discussion how we can deal with this matter. I've given my direction to my department that we need to explore it even further how we distribute funds on inclusive schooling to the school boards, whether it be based on percentage, and how can we deliver it even more effectively. The funding, the \$26 million over all. We need to review that again within my department and working with the school boards. It has to be a united approach because we are dealing with the 33 communities and a population of 40,000. Yes, we are exploring those areas.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Ms. Bisaro, just noting your time is expired. If you have further questions, we'll put you back in the queue. With that, we have Mr. Hawkins next.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm trying to get some details on a particular problem that's highlighted at a number of schools. I've been an MLA for nine years and I hear this repeatedly as a significant problem, not just from parents but other MLAs and other ridings and regions. That particular problem is social passing. I wonder what the department is doing to stop social passing and making it prevalent within our school systems out there. Kids need a fair shot, obviously, but if they're being passed under the guise of social passing, then they're not really being set up properly with all the tools and mechanisms to be prepared for the future. That said, maybe the Minister could enlighten us on the Department of Education's method or policy to stamp out social passing.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chairman. The peer passing has been brought up on numerous occasions. There are mixed feelings about this from the parents, even from the educators, due to research that has been done nationally and internationally that peer passing is benefitting those students and so forth. There are mixed reactions to this.

Within our department we're doing what we can to assist those individuals so they can achieve or be prepared for a workforce environment. We know that post-secondary is not for everybody. Some students would prefer going straight to the workforce once they receive their certification. That's what we've been focusing on. I'll get my acting DM to just elaborate more on the peer passing that's been in play and where it's at and where we should be going with that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Ms. Iatridis.

MS. IATRIDIS: Peer passing, I guess, is related to inclusive schooling and, really, inclusive schooling responds to the strengths and needs of each individual student. It's really not limited to students or persons with disabilities. It really allows students to work at their own pace but to follow along with students within the same age range.

In regard to students who may not be working at a specific grade level, they would have an individual education plan that would allow them to work at the pace that they're able to. It's really about looking at the needs of the individual students and allowing them to work with their peers, and developing a program that suits their needs. It also includes not just students who may not be at the grade level but also students who have excelled in their programs and need additional work to challenge the day-to-day learning. I hope that provides some clarification.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Iatridis. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My next question to the department would be: Do they have a defined policy on social passing?

MS. IATRIDIS: We don't have a defined policy on social passing but we do have an inclusive schooling directive that was revised in 2006.

MR. HAWKINS: Would the department be willing to supply that to all Members?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chairman. The revised version of 2006 we can certainly provide that for Members for their review.

MR. HAWKINS: If there's not a defined formal policy on social passing, where does it come up in the dialogue or policies under ECE? Where is it referenced? It seems to be an acknowledged policy or informal policy, so it must come up on something.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Ms. Iatridis.

MS. IATRIDIS: It's not a policy. It's a ministerial directive that was approved in 2006.

MR. HAWKINS: I'd like to request a copy of that ministerial directive, if possible, to be given to all Members.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I've already committed to that.

MR. HAWKINS: As I mentioned earlier, this is a significant issue with a number of Members here

and I'm glad we're starting to have this type of discussion. I would like to now move a committee motion on page 10-17 and I will read it as follows:

**COMMITTEE MOTION 1-17(3):
ELIMINATION OF SOCIAL PASSING,
CARRIED**

I move that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment take immediate actions to ensure that the education authorities discontinue the practice of social passing whereby students pass through the school system regardless of their academic performance under the guise of inclusive schooling.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. We'll just allow a minute here for the motion to circulate to the committee members.

A motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I anticipate other Members will speak to this particular motion, but it has caused concerns of parents that I have spoken to in the riding, as well as I've mentioned my colleagues have expressed concerns. Since I have been an MLA I've heard this numerous times in committee. I don't think this is a bureaucracy problem, but I think this is something that we could re-engineer and ask ourselves why are we doing this and are we setting our students up for the best abilities going forward in the future. I recognize that this dovetails into the Inclusive Schooling Policy and that is why it is part of the motion, but what the question really comes down to are we really helping them.

I have had parents tell me they have asked for their children to be held back. For specific reasons, the schools do not want to. They keep referencing Inclusive Schooling Policy or other particular reasons and say it's better to keep the kids with their peers. That said, yes, I couldn't fully disagree that that doesn't have some benefits. With that said, I'm not sure that we're giving the kids the best start. This type of positioning should be cause to re-examine why we are doing this and re-evaluate our policies, and that said, it would be best preferred and recommended that we discontinue it at this particular time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to lend my support to this motion. It speaks about the functional grade level that the Alberta Achievement Test showed us sometime in March. It talked about the grade levels in our small communities, that we are measured at a lower grade level than the larger centres and that in the small communities students were graded or measured lower than, far too low than my expectations compared to the regional centres and

Yellowknife. That is totally unacceptable and if the social passing has some contributing factors to those low score levels, than we need to make some changes.

For example, through the Alberta Achievement Test, the Grade 9 students were very low in our communities. Only 15 percent of Grade 9 had shown an acceptable standard in the English language arts compared to 53 in regional centres and 61 in Yellowknife. Small communities also showed that 12.1 percent of Grade 9 students have achieved acceptable standards in mathematics compared to 40 percent in regional and 38 percent in Yellowknife.

We have a high level of low standards in our community. Many of our students who are graduating from high school are requiring upgrades before they enter college or university. Even when they enter into the workforce, they require extra training and extra schooling. The data suggests that it is the results of social passing, particularly with respect to high school students and a number of students who are exempt from taking the AAT, the Alberta Achievement Test. Many would be exempted because they would be two or three years below the enrolment of their grade level.

The Alberta Achievement Test results are terrible. The data says nothing why this is the case. The performance of school and the education system is obviously one potential reason, but there are many other social factors that contribute to the child's success in the school. We have been trying to deal with that in the last eight years since I have been an MLA. This is my ninth year. There is a real difference between the Alberta Achievement Test and the functional grade level. I think that the government, the department needs to start looking at the social passing issue and get our students a fair chance in life and in this world to make it and not to allow this to continue when we have communities that are struggling, communities that we celebrate at graduation every year.

As we sit there, we think well, this child has to go back to school next year. These Grade 12 students only have to take one Grade 12 subject to get a diploma. That is not fair, Mr. Chairman. They should be able to take Grade 12 courses to be in Grade 12. Students do not have to...almost a norm, an acceptability that once you take your Grade 12 you would have to upgrade even to go to work unless you are very committed, strong parents, strong discipline to say I am going to take more than what is expected of me so I can go into university or college.

The social program passing, we need to change that. It might take awhile, but in the long run it will help us. It will help us with our students. We have to start somewhere. I have been an MLA for nine years. I can see it every year. I go back. The

leaders tell me that the students who have graduated are walking around with hands in their pockets in town. I heard it two years ago. I heard it last year, and say how come our education system...

We are pumping a lot of money into our education system. There might be some concerns that students who are 16 might be in Grade 4 or 5 and that is the issue we have to face in our school. We are not really doing any service to our children.

For myself the social passing is the easy way to get a diploma. It is a soft way. I think we need to make some changes that when a child enters into our education system, you know that child coming out at Grade 12 has a Grade 12 solid diploma and that Grade 12 diploma could get you into university, college or get into the workforce and say yes, that is a good school and the world will go around, that education is solid in the Northwest Territories. It is solid in our communities. They could go right into a university or college program in our community.

This motion hopefully will kick-start that long-term planning, struggle and work with the issues that need to be worked with. I look at that not only as an MLA here but also as a parent. It is a very fine line. Where does the MLA take a backseat and the parent comes out? Where does the parent come and take a backseat and the MLA comes out? That is a very fine line that I play, Mr. Chairman. I am very concerned. I have many constituents whose parents also have this issue with social passing, so much that they are sending kids out to Hay River, Yellowknife, Fort Smith and Edmonton because they are saying our education in our communities is not the way we want.

In closing, I take this analogy of also training my son to be a hunter or trapper. I would train him properly and train him so that when he is done at 16 or 14, I know he could survive on the land; not that I have to worry so much about him. That's how I look at my education for my son on the land. That I could leave him there and he could survive and he'll know how to hunt, he'll know how to trap off the land. That's what we need to look at for education for our children, but once they finish Grade 12 you'll know that they can write a formula on how to get a mathematical problem, they know the formula and won't have to take their computer or their calculator and say here it is, but they can actually explain a formula to me and they can write their name and they know that they can get a good job.

So we've got to be very, very serious about education. That's how I look at it when I put it into the context of being on the land with my son, train him well that I know that if I die tomorrow that he will be okay and he can make it in the world. So that for me is an education and that's how we need to look at our high school education.

Social passing for me, I think we're taking the shortcut. That's for me. My son is worth more than a shortcut to his education. So that's why I'm supporting this motion. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Speaking to the motion I have Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I appreciate my colleague bringing this motion forward. I will also be supporting the motion. We have talked about this before in committee and with the Minister about the decision to go with social passing based on data exclusively from the South. I know in discussions we've often talked about the need for northern data to really assess that decision and we've never received that information.

We have quite a different situation in the North with many very, very small communities. Everybody knows each other and it's quite a different situation. I certainly agree with the comments of my colleagues, though despite their best efforts, you know, trying social passing, pupil to teacher ratios that are off the charts and now we're talking about the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative and so on. A lot of good thinking has gone into that, but our graduation rates are not acceptable. Our various achievement scores do not show the progress we want and it is really guesstimating. When we see the bewilderment that our graduates experience when they finally realize or when they go on maybe for the next step in advanced education, that they do not have the qualifications that they are carrying certificates for, or the bewilderment or consternation of our businesspeople who have hired our graduates and are startled to find the lack of basic skills that depend on a good education causing grief to the employees as well.

So I would expect that the department would do due diligence here following this and making sure that we're on the right track. I would also urge, once again, that the thought and priority be given to the earliest years of early childhood development, because again I see the potential there for even this issue to be very much advanced with such an approach.

So that's it, Mr. Chair. I will be supporting the motion. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Speaking to the motion I have Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I, too, will support this motion moving forward. In my previous positions working with youth and working in various sectors of governments and community organizations, volunteer groups, concerned citizens at the table, interagency groups who have brought this as a concern for years, literally years we've been talking about this and to see a motion as such

brought before the House, to see some action that needs to be taken to address a situation that's failing our society – not just our students, it's failing society – I strongly support this motion and I do believe that we will garner a lot of support with this motion from residents across the Northwest Territories, professionals, business sector. We'll get a lot of support from all avenues across the Northwest Territories. Like I said, it's something that we've been discussing on numerous occasions at interagency groups, local community groups and I'm glad to see such a motion is brought forth.

I commend my colleague Mr. Hawkins for drafting a motion and bringing it before the House. So to see that some action is going to be taken, I strongly support the motion. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Moses. Speaking to the motion, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have to confess that I'm quite conflicted by this motion. As a teacher I understand the rationale behind the motion, but I have great difficulty in supporting the motion as it's written.

I actually lived through the implementation of the Inclusive Schooling Policy many years ago and it was hotly contested at the time. Teachers were not totally in support. It was probably 50/50. At the time we had classrooms where students were pulled out, special students were pulled out and were taught separate from other students. I don't support that. I think students should be included in with students in regular classrooms, but I think there's also an opportunity for students to be pulled out and to receive special teaching, whether it be on the lower end of the scale or the upper end of the scale.

I considered early start, late start for my own children and it's a difficult decision to make. Very often teachers can assist you with that. This policy takes away that flexibility that I think teachers and schools probably should have.

Thanks to modern technology, I've had a quick look at the directive and I think the operative part is that it states that students receive their education program in regular instructional settings in their local school with their age peers and the exceptions are only allowed in rare instances. I think that's part of the problem here. There's no flexibility on the part of the school or on the part of the teacher to make an exception for some student to stay back or some student to move forward.

It's a really complex issue for me. It's not just as simple as saying let's get rid of social passing. I'm not even sure what social passing means, or peer passing, whatever we want to call it. I think that as the acting deputy minister pointed out, many, many students have an individual education program and they are taught differently from their classmates, but they're in that classroom and they have the

interaction on a regular basis with kids at their own age level and that's a good thing. To have, as Mr. Yakeleya said, a 16-year-old in a Grade 5 class, many people consider that not to be the way to go. I wonder how the child is going to feel. It's not going to make them feel all that great, but there are instances when children should be held back, and in reading this policy it tells me that no we can't do that.

So I think this needs to be evaluated. I think it's probably time that we did an extremely thorough, extremely comprehensive review of the Inclusive Schooling Policy or directive. It's been in place for quite a number of years and I think that the thinking in the education field is changing a bit and I think some people are starting to think that pulling kids out is not the horrible thing that we thought it was about 20 years ago. I would urge the department to look at a really comprehensive evaluation of the policy and do some in-depth analysis of what this is doing. And that means talking to students, it means talking to parents, it means talking to the boards, it means talking to businesspeople. You know, we have to do a full cross-section evaluation of what our residents think about this policy and the impact that it has on them as individuals, as families and as business owners and operators.

That said, I am not going to vote against this motion but I will abstain. I appreciate where my colleagues are coming from. I just don't feel that this motion speaks to what I think is necessary, so I won't vote against it but I won't vote for it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Again, speaking to the motion, we have Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: I will not be supporting this motion for quite a number of reasons. I think that as Ms. Bisaro mentioned, we need flexibility. I don't think that all children mature at the same rate. I think that where a child may have a slow year one year they'll catch in the next. It's kind of like when kids are growing, you know, and the same as when they're developing intellectually. I mean, it comes on.

I don't think anybody really counts the cost and the effect that it has when a school system labels a child to have failed. If I could just share a personal experience: My oldest brother, who was kind of the leader of our little gang of five in our family, came home from school at the end of Grade 4 and hid behind the rocker on our veranda and cried. I remember that because I was his little sister and I watched that. That affected him for the entire rest of his life. Was he a smart guy? Sure he was. Was he book smart and school smart? No, he wasn't. Did he become a fully functioning member of society and support himself as a tradesman all his life? Yes, he did, and raised two fine young children into

adulthood. But he was told that day, I'm sorry, you've failed. You're a failure.

I think there needs to be some discretionary latitude for parents and teachers to look at different situations. Every child is different. Every scenario is different. If you want to talk about how we're turning students out at the end of Grade 12 and what they're equipped to do, let's look at are we funding inclusive schooling properly, not to distract the teacher completely with children with special needs. That's a question we should be asking ourselves. Let's look at whether we're teaching the basics in the curriculum that equips people for basic tasks in life. That's a question we need to ask ourselves.

Members on the committee get tired of me talking about it, but I was not a great student, but I'll tell you, even not being the top of the class student, I left high school with the ability to perform mathematical tasks and speak, and I knew about grammar, and it was all based on a very old-fashioned form of teaching. You know, phonetic spelling. Not new English. Not new math. Not all this new-fangled stuff that people try. But, you know, I guess that's the education system and where it's gone.

I can tell you from many experiences, both of my boys – I shouldn't talk about them in public – they were held back at Grade 1 level. They were not mature enough to go on. I thank those teachers for doing that. That's fine. But when my son Jeffrey got to about Grade 4, we had him diagnosed with developmental dyslexia. Did he move on with his peers? He surely did, on a modified program. And I was shocked when I sat in this Legislature when he was in Grade 12 and saw the Minister of Education, Jake Ootes, stand up and say that Jeffrey Groenewegen had won the departmental top mark for the Northwest Territories in Social Studies for the Alberta departmentals. I went, like, wow! That's the kid that in Grade 9 could barely read but he was on a modified program. He got advanced with his peers, and by the time he hit Grade 12 he was functioning at a normal level. He is a tradesman today, a qualified tradesman.

I don't know. I think we need some discretionary latitude. I don't think we can make a policy that just is *carte blanche* and that's the way it is. I think parents have a role to play in that. But can I say that although I'm not trying to discredit academic achievement, I think it's a wonderful thing. I encourage it for anybody that wants to proceed down that path, but everything about a person's self-worth, their value, I'm sorry, cannot be numbered, and how smart they are cannot be calculated on a bottom line on a report card. There's a lot more to life than what's on that report card and somehow we have to look at the whole person and we need to have some discretionary latitude within our education system to make

decisions about holding back or passing students to continue on in school with their peers.

Like I say, and if you want to talk about the quality of the outcome at the end of Grade 12, let's have a serious discussion about what's going into the curriculum these days and let's talk about what's going into the classroom in terms of financial support for inclusive schooling. Because I can tell you of educators that are almost ready to throw in the towel because of the stress that they experience. Inclusive schooling is a wonderful idea. It's a wonderful concept, but not if it's underfunded. Not if there's no classroom assistant there to help. Not if a teacher is being pulled in every direction because we've got students with every kind of aptitude from A to Z. You've got the gifted in with the kids that need that extra time and attention.

Anyway, we're all individual. I can't support the motion because I want to, and I've seen some of the value of social passing. That doesn't mean I think we should compromise on our standard, but I think we need the discretion in the system. That's my opinion and that's why I don't support the motion. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Speaking to the motion we have Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I myself will be abstaining from the motion simply because of the fact that I think this motion, we need to have a further study in terms of the analysis so that we have a mainstream academic focus in terms of ensuring that we have one class and not two separate classes. For those reasons, I feel, like my colleagues that previously spoke before me, conflicted on this matter. Therefore, I feel that I will be abstaining from this motion.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Speaking to the motion we have Mr. Bouchard.

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Some of my colleagues have indicated that they're in turmoil with this decision or this motion. I'm at the same point. I understand that we have a lot of issues with the current education system and some of the graduation levels. However, I'm not certain that with the changing of this motion would alleviate all those problems. I think we need to look at what the impacts of this would do. The department's indicated that they wish to continue to use it, and before we make a rash change, I think we should assess what the values are. I would be agreeable to discussing this more, and more agreeable to this motion at a later date, but currently, the way it stands, I won't be supporting the motion. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. Speaking to the motion, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I will be voting in favour of this motion because I am looking for some change and re-evaluation, and even though the motion seems extreme to some Members, that I believe it's a statement from Members of this side of this House that we cannot go on with the status quo and it should be at least re-evaluated working with our committee system and have a good look at just how we're doing business. It is a concern in my communities and in my riding, as well, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Speaking to the motion we have Minister Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, have some difficulty with the motion. I think the social passing has a negative connotation when you're dealing with students, students in the class. I think the phrase is referred to as peer placement. This is the practice of the department to do peer placement. The alternative is to have, as an example, a 10 year old sitting in a class with six year olds in Grade 2 if that's the level that they've achieved. Alternatively, they move with their peers and they're placed with their peers, and you support that individual and the teachers are essentially teaching multiple grades with the students that are the same age.

I know that when I was in the school system, the kids that were held back didn't finish school. In a small community, when somebody fails, the whole town knew about it. And that somebody was in Grade 2 for a second and third time, they never finished Grade 2. And kids that achieved Grade 5 by the time they hit puberty, didn't continue on in school. This is what this motion is saying they want to go back to.

This motion doesn't fix the problem of students not achieving Grade 12 and not being at a Grade 12 level when they achieve Grade 12. This motion doesn't achieve students that will be at the Alberta curriculum level when they graduate. What this motion does is it holds back students. Older students will be mixed in with young kids. That's what will happen with this motion. If we don't peer place students, then you're going to have to deal with the parents. The parents who are sending their kids to Grade 5 who are 10 years old, want to know why there's a 15 or 16-year-old student in that class as well. Those are the things that we have to contemplate when we're doing something like this.

There are systems built in where you have education assistance designed to address this specific issue, designed to address that the students that are operating at a lower grade function but they are all the same age. These education assistants are supporting and are able to help these students to try to achieve that level

without sticking out like a sore thumb. There are only two options with this: If we don't have peer placement, then we hold the student back. It's not a third option here. There are two options. Either he remains in Grade 2 or he advances to Grade 3 with the rest of the students and he continues doing Grade 2 work in Grade 3 so that student doesn't stick out like a sore thumb.

We have to watch out. We have to care for our students. We have to make sure that we're protecting the students as well. And the parents. The parents that want to send their children to school and expect that if they have a 10-year-old going to Grade 5 that they're going to be in school with others in the classroom that are 10 years old also, not students that are 16.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Speaking to the motion we have Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chairman. I've already committed to some of the Members that we are reviewing the inclusive schooling program dollars that are going to the school boards. This is an area that needs more detailed discussion, as Mr. Beaulieu alluded to. Those are areas that we need to have with the school boards, the parents, the teachers, the leaders, our department and various NGO departments as well.

It's not an easy said and done. This involves a lot of discussion that needs to take place.

I'm also in agreement with Mrs. Groenewegen about what she has stated where individuals being left behind not successfully achieving things in life. Mr. Beaulieu did address that as well. We've all experienced that. Not all students are the same. Very true. There are different needs for each student. We have to take all those into perspective on individual needs. Mrs. Groenewegen did talk about that need to assess what the values are in the school system and assist those individuals. That's what I've committed to already, that we need to review the inclusive schooling, the programming that's out there, and if it needs to be a comprehensive, overall review, that may be the topic of discussion that we need to have.

I did commit that we're going to review this inclusive schooling. We did address it at the Cabinet level and now we're here. My department's willing to pursue that as well, to review the inclusive schooling. I just wanted to relay that message that I did commit in this House.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. I will give opportunity to the mover of the motion for wrap-up. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll just be really quick. I want to thank the Members who are voting in favour of it. I want to thank those just a

little bit less who will be abstaining, and certainly those – darn it – I wish we could have persuaded those who are voting against it. But in all seriousness, this is a very important subject and I want to say that I do recognize and respect those that feel strongly that they have to vote against it. Of course, in this business you can't hold those as grudges. You have to realize that's how they feel and you have to respect it. I recognize and respect those who aren't voting in favour.

The ASA Committee recognizes that social passing is an issue in our education system and I think it's important. The frustrating part, of course, is everyone here is... I shouldn't say everyone. It's not meant to be a broad stroke. The examples that we heard here about the 15-year-old still being in Grade 5, that's an absolute extreme example. That's why we would have an Inclusive Schooling Policy, to find some way to get them going along. We're talking about social passing and that's really where we're at.

At this time I'll ask for a recorded vote and, of course, I will plead to our Cabinet friends that now is your chance for a free vote without the Premier here. The Premier's not here tonight, nor the stalwart...is anyone else. No one will tell, of course. That's all I have to say on this particular subject.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

RECORDED VOTE

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): We're going to be going to a recorded vote. I would ask you to please stand. All those in favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Bennett): Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Menicoche, Mr. Moses, Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Blake.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): I'll ask those opposed to stand.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Bennett): Mr. Bouchard, Mrs. Groenewegen.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): I'll ask those to stand who are abstaining.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Bennett): Mr. Bromley, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Lafferty, Mr. Ramsay, Mr. McLeod, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Nadli.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Results of the recorded vote: five Members in favour; two Members opposed; eight Members abstaining. Motion is carried.

---Carried

Thank you, Members. We'd ask that you return back to page 10-17 of your budget books. Speaking to this page I have Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to ask the Department of Education here to talk about special projects that are happening in the communities. We're looking at the curriculum and one of the things that Mr. Beaulieu and I, when we went to the Sahtu, talked about was the importance of addiction and wellness and health. In the schools, our high school students don't seem to have a curriculum – and I stand to be corrected – on drugs, alcohol, pregnancy, violence, health. Just on health itself in general. I want to ask the Minister if there are any plans within his department to start introducing a health curriculum for Grade 10, 11, and 12 students. That seems to be lacking a health curriculum. I hope the Minister can enlighten me if there's something like that already in place, or if something like that is going to take place to introduce a solid health curriculum for our students.

A lot of our students are now experimenting with cigarettes, they're experimenting with drugs, they're experimenting with getting into relationships. A lot of these students are in Grade 10, 11 and 12 and we don't have a very good, strong health curriculum for these students to learn about some of these important things that they are dealing with and need to know some place where they can get this proper teaching. I want to ask the Minister on this issue here.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Chair. Those areas that the Member specified are important to be part of our school system. I'll try and gather some more information on that specific topic which we don't have detail but can provide to the Members what is currently being delivered pertaining to those areas. I know there are certain curricula that are out there. Social studies that reflect on the northern perspective. Also inclusion of residential school era curriculum that is going to be delivered this fall. Those are some of the areas that we've captured already but I will be getting back to the Members on the actual specifics of the program that he's referring to.

MR. YAKELEYA: The Minister has made reference to a very important topic in the history of the people of the Northwest Territories and I want to applaud him and his staff for producing a residential school curriculum for the people, for the students, and I look forward to the Minister providing me with some information on the health curriculum that's needed in our high schools. We could have that discussion at that time.

I want to continue on with the curriculum and I want to ask the Minister is there's any thought about the department looking at a Dene Kede language curriculum that would be important for our people. I know one resident in Deline talked about a language curriculum for our people. More so the

support that what they're learning in school needs to be supported by the parents in the community so they can speak to each other and they know what's being taught in school. The parents want to know the terminology, what language sounds they're making in kindergarten and Grades 1, 2 and 3 so they could talk to the children and say we can support you through a concept of homework. Is the department looking at some type of a language curriculum pilot project that would support the parents in the community and support our language initiatives, and to strengthen the training of our students? Would the Minister briefly elaborate on my question? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: The quickest answer is yes. The K to 3 Dene language curriculum, there is a program that has been worked on for the teacher recommendation guide as a guide for them. The K to 3 small territorial pilot is on the way since February of 2012, after a pilot in-service with the teachers and Dene language specialists. It is in the works. We will continue to update the Members on this progress. Mahsi.

MR. YAKELEYA: I like the way the Minister has said it. I appreciate it. I hope the regions have an opportunity to be part of that by requesting or the Minister looking at it and say we could do it here or here and ask the various boards if they feel strong enough, or they can look at where the language could be developed and we could go out there and ask about that program. I thank the Minister for that. It's a good start. I'm happy to hear that.

Just to conclude the curriculum, I would like to ask the Minister if he would strongly work with his colleagues and the Department of Health and Social Services and his staff to look at a real strong... I really would like to see a health curriculum for high school students. I know we have it in the primary school, because my little one is in primary school. We need some strong ones in our high school with the high school students. They would benefit from what we can do with the health curriculum being with the high school students. I would like to see some concrete evidence where the Minister is working towards a health curriculum with high school students. I dare say that if something like this could be entertained by the upcoming business plans that we have in the fall time.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Madam Chair, I agree with the Member that this needs to be a collaborative approach with the Department of Health and Social Services. We have been working together on various projects already and we will continue to have this dialogue. It is an important piece of work. We will continue to discuss that further as we move along. Mahsi.

MR. YAKELEYA: I'm going to close off with the schooling, because it is important. That is where we

send our children for the good portion of our day to get real education. Part of that is offering in the different schools in my region, maybe other communities also, an opportunity to practice and learn about their own music. For us, to be Dene music, it would be fiddling. Different cultures have a different field of music. That music is very powerful and music is very powerful in my culture. Music is also very good for math. Math is really good with music. Is there a strong curriculum in music that we can teach our children, have elders come in, having the drummers, the singers, the women that sing songs that we could teach about our music through a project that we can record the music right across in different schools, more so with our songs in Tulita, Deline, Fort Good Hope, Colville? They have some very strong, powerful composers, singers way back that sometimes we don't quite understand our songs. Our songs are always almost equivalent to Beethoven and Mozart. That is how our songs come. We need to honour that. I will ask the Minister if he would look at some type of music curriculum in our schools. Mahsi.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Madam Chair, this is an area that I do believe the school boards are somewhat flexible to offer those programming. I know for a fact that I can speak specifically for TCSA. I usually go to their school because they are in my constituency, teaching them in the school and they can feel the beat of the drum during lunch hour and hand games demonstrations, so they are doing what they can to promote more of that in the schools. The school board has their own ways of dealing with these different programming. This will be shared with all of the school boards so they are aware of what we are discussing here today. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Next I have Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a couple of questions in this section. I want to start off with I referenced in my opening remarks the extensive review that was done by the Standing Committee on Government Operations in the previous Assembly and the recommendations in the report that they produced were many. That was the review of the Official Languages Act. Their recommendations have yet to be acted on, really, by the department.

I noted in the Minister's opening remarks he mentions that the Official Languages Act will be amended to eliminate the Official Languages Board, and that is one thing certainly that was recommended by the committee, but there were a number of other recommendations to legislation that were recommended in that report as well. I didn't see any reference to them in the Minister's remarks.

There was some action on changes to the legislation in the 16th Assembly, but it was minimal.

I guess I would like to know from the Minister, he is going to bring back, I presume, some changes to the legislation, from what he said in his opening remarks. I would like to know whether or not it is just a small amendment to remove the Official Languages Board or I think that might... I don't know if that is official languages or Aboriginal languages, but will it only be minor amendments to the act or will he be bringing forward most of the amendments that were recommended by committee? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Madam Chair, the extensive review that has been undertaken in the 16th Assembly, there were quite a few recommendations brought forward. When we are meeting with the standing committee next week, we will be going through... Actually, we will provide that detailed information beforehand. It does capture what my department is going to be following through with and each of the recommendations brought forward, what the plan is for ECE to follow up. Those are the areas that we are seriously taking into consideration.

The two language boards established under the Official Languages Act, one of the recommendations is to amalgamate that. So we are pursuing that and also the name change to South Slavey. Those are just some of the changes that we are pursuing further and we will provide more detailed information. I believe it might be before standing committee this week. Mahsi.

MS. BISARO: Madam Chair, thanks to the Minister for the information. I look forward to hearing what the department has to say when we have our briefing.

My other question here has to do with data collection. It is an area where I think the department has been roundly criticized quite often for, for not being accountable or not forcing education authorities to be accountable. I think it is an area in which the department is lacking. I say that not to say that the department is doing a bad job, but I don't think the department has the personnel that is required to do the data collection that is needed for us to get a good sense of what is going on in the department.

I would like to know whether or not the Minister feels that the department is getting the data that it needs to evaluate the programs and services that it supplies, particularly in terms of student results. I know Alberta Achievement Tests are written. That data is easily captured because it is a universal test, almost. There are lots of other data that is required and the department can't collect it if the education authorities don't provide it. It's maybe a sensitive question for the Minister, but I would like to know whether or not the department is getting

the data that they feel they need in order to make informed decisions and in order to properly evaluate the programs and services that we're asking them to provide. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Ms. Iatridis.

MS. IATRIDIS: Yes, under the office of the Auditor General there were a number of recommendations regarding the need for the department to better monitor and track information and there are a number of projects that are currently underway. Our department is in the process of developing two accountability frameworks, one for early childhood and school services that will outline some key performance indicators that we want to monitor and track over time. We also are working with a consultant right now to develop the Adult Education and Training Accountability Framework that will also outline some key performance indicators that we want to measure over time. There are also a number of new systems that are being put in place to allow us to track the information. PowerSchool is the new system that's going to replace ESIS, and it's our hope that with the new system we are able to develop more detailed reports so that we can gather more data from the school boards to be able to report and monitor over time. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Iatridis. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thanks for the information. I'm glad to hear that the new system is going to be able to provide more information.

One of the things that wasn't mentioned, two things I guess, two questions I have here, one is it's one thing to have the information, but it's another thing to have the staff to do the analysis and to do the evaluation of the information. So I would ask again whether or not the department has the capacity, the human resource capacity to do that.

The other question I have has to do with the term "accountability framework." I roughly understand what it is, but it's one thing to have a framework and it's another to... I guess I'm asking whether or not a framework is going to deliver the data that you need to do the evaluations or is the accountability framework simply a measuring tool. Thank you.

MS. IATRIDIS: The department is working towards enhancing supports to be able to better have their human resources to be able to analyze the data. We recognize that it is a challenge for us and that we need to give it a higher priority. So we are looking internally to see where we can build on the resources that we currently have.

As far as the accountability framework, the framework will help us identify key performance indicators that we should be looking at that help us monitor and track and provide data for future planning. Currently the department collects a lot of

data and in some cases some of the data may or may not be necessary. So having the accountability framework really helps us to identify what are the key indicators that we should be looking at, because we collect so much data, some of it is overwhelming and doesn't necessarily provide us with the necessary information for planning.

MS. BISARO: Thank you for the information. I have no further questions.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Next on the list I have Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. A particular issue I raised the other day about getting First Aid taught in our schools as part of our education program, since raising that issue I've been approached by a couple of parents and they think it's a really great idea. Talking to one of the local superintendents – I haven't had time to call three of them – but one of the superintendents thought it was an interesting idea and they said well, of course their staff learn it, but not seeing it as a bad idea they thought it would be an interesting issue to look into. Of course, that isn't ringing support; I wouldn't want to speak for them. But that said, they thought it was a really interesting subject to consider.

How does the Department of Education, Culture and Employment feel about that particular item? As I mentioned the other day, even bad first aid could probably save someone's life. I mean, the potential exists there, because it's a heck of a lot better than no first aid. I see it as an important element that we could add to our schooling system in a seamless manner.

If anything, Madam Chair, just a last point on this one is we had the unique jurisdiction that actually took these things quite seriously and it's an important value that we could be teaching our folks. I think I've said all that needed to be said during my Member's statement. I know the Member was listening very acutely to my passionate statement on how important it is. Let's open it up to that point, and I'd like to hear what the Minister thinks about this potential. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Chair. This particular program, I need to find out more clearly from the schools if they deliver through CTS programming, because it does deal with a safety aspect of it. When you deal with trades, they take WHMIS, they take First Aid and CPR. If it's not there already, I'm sure they'll be more than willing to accept that particular programming as part of an accredited program. That's an area that will be of interest to us, because we need to prepare our students, especially when they're going into trades programming. Even in the industrial or even the

workplace, they definitely need the First Aid and CPR, and to some degree WHMIS as well as Hazardous Goods. We are exploring this area and, again, there will be some partnerships involved probably to deliver this program as well. Mahsi.

MR. HAWKINS: I was also really referring to not just folks in some type of technical training program, but I was talking about the ages of high school. You know, your ages between Grades 9, 10, 11, 12. This could probably fit into some type of programming. Obviously, a fair bit of investigation would need to be done, but I'm thinking along the programming of career and life management that we offer our kids that they are all expected to take. This would be a good social value as well as a social skill to add to their toolbox of learning and sort of a broader community benefit.

That said, as I mentioned, I've already had a couple of parents think it was kind of an interesting and unique idea that could the NWT be a leader and be a model for other jurisdictions to emulate, and this could be something very simple, again, to articulate the values we have here in the North and the way we view things.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Through the CALM program, Career and Life Management, it has been delivered in schools and this could be part of that programming. Again, the Member indicated that there needs to be more discussion in this area. We are exploring this area and where it can best fit in a school system. As we move further along on this particular subject, we will keep the Members up to speed if we're going to make some changes to our school program. Mahsi.

MR. HAWKINS: I'm not sure I heard it clear on the record, but am I hearing the Minister that he would be willing to take this back to his department and investigate the feasibility of this becoming an element of our programming and give it some evaluation and consideration. If that's the case, that's all. Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: This is an area that is very preliminary right now and we need to talk to certain instructors and individuals in the school system and also the school board chairs and the school boards. We have to work with them, as well, because they deliver those programs in the communities with the instructors. We are at the exploration stage at this point.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Mr. Bouchard.

MR. BOUCHARD: Yes, Madam Chair. I'd like to make a motion to report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. The motion is in order.

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I will now rise and report progress.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SPEAKER: Could I have the report of Committee of the Whole, please? Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Tabled Document 3-17(3), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2012-2013, and would like to report progress with one motion being adopted. I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Is there a seconder to the motion? Mr. Moses.

---Carried

Item 23, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Wednesday, May 30, 2012, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Replies to Budget Address
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
14. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
15. Tabling of Documents
16. Notices of Motion
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. Motions
 - Motion 3-17(3), Increased Support for Renewable Energy
19. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 2, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2012
20. Second Reading of Bills

21. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

- Tabled Document 3-17(3), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2012-2013
- Tabled Document 2-17(3), Commissioner's Opening Address: Creating the Conditions for Success
- Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act

22. Report of Committee of the Whole

23. Third Reading of Bills

24. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Wednesday, May 30, 2012, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 8:05 p.m.