



# Yukon Legislative Assembly

---

Issue 3

35<sup>th</sup> Legislature

---

## **STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS**

### **Public Proceedings: Evidence**

**Wednesday, January 19, 2022 — 10:00 a.m.**

Chair: Currie Dixon

## **STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS**

**Chair:** Currie Dixon

**Vice-Chair:** Kate White

**Members:** Scott Kent

Hon. Richard Mostyn

Hon. Ranj Pillai (substituting for Hon. Jeanie McLean)

**Clerk:** Allison Lloyd, Clerk of Committees

**Witnesses:** **Department of Education**

Nicole Morgan, Deputy Minister

Kelli Taylor, Assistant Deputy Minister of Policy and Partnerships

Suzan Davy, Acting Assistant Deputy Minister of First Nation Initiatives

**EVIDENCE****Whitehorse, Yukon****Wednesday, January 19, 2022 — 10:00 a.m.**

**Chair (Mr. Dixon):** Thank you very much, everyone. Good morning. We are now streaming live on Facebook as well as on the Committee's website. I will now call this hearing to order.

A couple of kinks have been worked out, and here we are.

I will now call to order this hearing of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts at the Yukon Legislative Assembly. The Public Accounts Committee is established by Standing Order 45(3) of the Standing Orders of the Yukon Legislative Assembly. This Standing Order says: "At the commencement of the first Session of each Legislature a Standing Committee on Public Accounts shall be appointed and the Public Accounts and all Reports of the Auditor General shall stand referred automatically and permanently to the said Committee as they become available."

On May 17, 2021, the Yukon Legislative Assembly adopted Motion No. 11, which established the current Public Accounts Committee. In addition to appointing members to the Committee, the motion stipulated that the Committee shall "... have the power to call for persons, papers, and records and to sit during intersessional periods..."

Today, pursuant to Standing Order 45(3) and Motion No. 11, we will be discussing the report entitled *Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Legislative Assembly of Yukon, Kindergarten Through Grade 12 Education in Yukon — Department of Education*. This report was released on June 18, 2019.

The Public Accounts Committee is an all-party committee with a mandate to ensure economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of public spending — in other words, accountability for the use of public funds. Our task is not to challenge government policy but to examine its implementation.

As a part of its responsibility to scrutinize public spending, the Committee believes that it is important to keep departments accountable for commitments made in response to recommendations from the Auditor General.

On September 29, 2021, the Department of Education provided the Committee with an updated response report outlining how the department is addressing the recommendations from the 2019 audit report. The department's response report is available on the Committee's webpage.

To better understand the progress that the department has made, the Committee sought feedback from several organizations. The written responses that the Committee received from these organizations are available on the Committee's webpage.

I would like to thank the witnesses from the Department of Education for appearing. We have Deputy Minister Nicole Morgan, and she will introduce these witnesses during her opening remarks. I can introduce the members of the Committee. I am Currie Dixon, the Chair of the Committee and Member of the Legislative Assembly for Copperbelt North; the

vice-chair is Kate White, who is the Member for Takhini-Kopper King; we have the Hon. Ranj Pillai, Member for Porter Creek South, who is substituting for Committee member the Hon. Jeanie McLean; we also have Scott Kent, Member for Copperbelt South; and the Hon. Richard Mostyn, Member for Whitehorse West.

To begin the proceedings, Ms. Morgan will make an opening statement on behalf of the Department of Education. Committee members will then ask questions that the Committee has devised collectively.

The questions that each member will ask are not their personal questions on a particular subject but those of the entire Committee. After today's hearing, the Committee will prepare a report of its proceedings, including any recommendations that the Committee wishes to make. This report will then be tabled in the Legislative Assembly.

Before we start the hearing, I would ask that the questions and answers be kept brief and to the point so that we may deal with as many issues as possible in the time allotted to this hearing. I would also ask that Committee members and witnesses wait until they are recognized by the Chair before speaking.

As Hansard is transcribing this, they need to know who is speaking when; they can't see the video, so it's very important for the accurate transcription that we wait until someone is recognized before they speak.

So, with that, I will turn it over to our witnesses to give their opening remarks.

**Ms. Morgan:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will just dive right into my opening comments. Good morning; bonjour; dahn-tch-ay. I would like to acknowledge that we are here this morning on the traditional territory of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council. I have here with me today, Kelli Taylor, Assistant Deputy Minister of Policy and Partnerships, and also Suzan Davy, Acting Assistant Deputy Minister of First Nation Initiatives.

I welcome the opportunity to speak about the Department of Education's progress on the 2019 Auditor General of Canada's report on kindergarten to grade 12 education in the Yukon. In December 2019, I spoke before the Public Accounts Committee to report on our response, which would be a road map for where we would put our efforts to realize meaningful system change.

Who would have thought that, just four months later in March 2020, the COVID global pandemic would cause school systems around the world, including Yukon's, to send our children home? Since that unprecedented time, the department continues to work tirelessly to adapt, learn, and innovate to respond to an extended yet rapidly changing emergency situation. Staff in schools and the central administration building, now for the third school year, have been unwavering in our commitment to Yukon families to continue to sustain safe learning opportunities and to support the development and well-being of Yukon students.

We leaned into modernized learning practices and have relied on the incredible dedication and adaptability of educators, support staff, and administrators. We forged new

relationships with our partners in education that are characterized by greater clarity of our individual responsibilities and greater awareness of the critical role that each of us plays.

Navigating this pandemic has not been easy, but we are learning from our shared experience. We have a renewed understanding of the vital role that Yukon schools play in our communities and a realization of the inequities in the education system that have magnified during the pandemic. This highlights the need for meaningful system change that leads to success for all Yukon students.

Many of these areas align with the findings of the Auditor General's 2019 report. Therefore, system renewal is a fundamental priority in our pandemic recovery and regeneration of public education in the Yukon. Like all Yukoners, our staff are fatigued from the pandemic but, despite this, we have continued to seek system change.

A significant step that we have taken is the advent of the universal early learning and childcare program and enhanced early kindergarten in rural communities. Providing high-quality, culturally appropriate early learning opportunities has long-lasting positive impacts and outcomes for children in respect of their overall development and educational journey.

With the implementation of universal childcare in April 2021, parents on average paid \$10 per day for each child in licensed, full-time care, greatly increasing opportunities for children to participate in early learning programs.

Enhancement of early kindergarten in rural communities provides children with opportunities to engage in developmentally appropriate, play-based curriculum for longer periods of time over two years, which fosters deeper skills for lifelong learning.

All children need to feel welcomed and included at school. When we talk about transforming the education system, there is no greater area that we need to focus on more than inclusive and special education.

A review was completed of inclusive and special education programs through the 2020-21 school year. The final report was released in ceremony on June 1, 2021. The findings of that report reiterate what many of us have heard from students, families, educators, and First Nation people in Yukon — that in many cases, students' needs are not being met, with devastating consequences, and that colonial practices in our education system are failing not only First Nation students but all Yukon students —

**Chair:** Ms. Morgan, you have become muted somehow.

**Ms. Morgan:** I will just repeat this last sentence. Learning what is really happening for students and families across our education system is our first step to making informed and significant changes to improve our education system. We have heard loud and clear that the Department of Education needs to do a better job of working with Yukon First Nations, of ensuring that Yukon First Nations are supported and succeeding at school, and making sure that Yukon First Nation students, and all Yukon students, have opportunities to learn about Yukon First Nation history, cultures, languages, and ways of knowing, doing, and being.

The final report speaks to the devastating impacts of colonizing approaches on students and points out that, to achieve the kind of system change we are seeking, we must establish new, more ethical relationships. We want to decolonize Yukon's education system. We want to earn the trust of Yukoners. We acknowledge that this work must be done together and it must be done differently, where senior leaders in the system are learning and leading alongside.

We see the Department of Education as part of this circle, and our challenge is to collectively work to keep everyone in the circle but to also continue thinking outside the box. We need to bring everyone along with us to realize the change that we are seeking. We need to help people to trust in our intentions and trust in the change that we are seeking, especially educators, students, and families who are at the heart of this work.

A key example of our commitment is the work that we have done with the Chiefs Committee on Education to establish a Yukon First Nation school board. This is a significant stride in our sincere efforts to advance our relationship with Yukon First Nation governments and ensure that Yukon First Nations have greater authority and control in education, which is a commitment of the joint education action plan, and to continue to strive to take meaningful action on truth and reconciliation.

Our work does not stop there. The 2019 audit identifies that the department needs to work with Yukon First Nations to develop a collaborative framework that outlines how we work together. Currently, we work together through education agreements between our respective governments, the Chiefs Committee on Education, the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate, and the First Nations Education Commission.

We have heard that we are not getting it right, that there is more work that we need to do in respect of working together. This is not easy work — the work of reconciliation. It is hard work, and there are going to be hard conversations in our journey together. There is an inherent tension between getting to action and taking the time needed to build trusting relationships, to ask questions, to listen, to seek other perspectives, and, from there, to create new system structures together.

I acknowledge that those words are difficult for many Yukon First Nations to hear. Much patience is gone, and there is a call for action now. First Nations have worked hard for decades to see real change for their children. I want to honour and recognize those efforts. As a non-indigenous person, I know I cannot fully understand that experience, but I can acknowledge the impacts that continue today.

As a leader, I can name and notice the colonizing practices that must end, and I can ensure that we stand as allies to do the work necessary to ensure that the actions we take are lasting and lead to meaningful change for the benefit of Yukon First Nation students and all Yukon students.

It took many decades for Yukon's education system to become what it is today. No one individual created the system, but we each carry the responsibility and the influence to change it. I know there are some who feel that we have not made enough progress over the last two years in our audit response.

The ever-present demands of the pandemic on our education system have impacted our progress in some areas but not our resolve.

While we have made significant strides in some areas, we know that we still have much work to do to reach our vision for a renewed, decolonized education system that better supports all students to succeed.

Thank you, and I look forward to sharing more.

**Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. Morgan, for those opening remarks and for introducing Ms. Taylor and Ms. Davy as well. Just a quick reminder for Committee members, witnesses, and those watching that the questions that will be asked by Committee members are not their individual questions but rather questions that were come up with collectively by the Committee. These questions were provided to the department in advance, and that does not preclude the opportunity for Committee members to ask subsequent questions at a later time.

That being said, I also want to remind members of the Committee and witnesses that we are somewhat limited in our time, so I will ask again for everyone to be fairly brief and concise, as best they can, in responding to questions and in asking questions.

So, with that, the first questions will come from me. I will begin.

Last week, on January 12, 2022, the Yukon Chiefs Committee on Education, the CCOE, appeared before the Public Accounts Committee to share their input on the Department of Education's progress on the recommendations contained within the 2019 Report of the Auditor General of Canada on kindergarten through grade 12 education in Yukon. The CCOE also provided the Committee with a written submission.

The CCOE said in their submission — and I quote: “The recent Review of Inclusive and Special Education (RISE) Summit reiterated for us that the DOE is seeking superficial approval for directions already determined internally.” They have suggested that the recent RISE Summit focused only on what the department believes is going well. They point out, though, that recognizing both successes and challenges provides a well-informed opportunity for growth and improvement. There was little or no acknowledgement of what is not being done or not going well.

How does the department respond to this claim?

I presume Ms. Morgan — and if it is not Ms. Morgan, just put your hand up and let me know if someone else is going to respond.

**Ms. Morgan:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I think we can assume that it is me — otherwise, I will redirect.

So, just in terms of the work that was done on the review of inclusive and special education — and specifically to how this summit was put together — we work with two primary committees at the Department of Education. One is the First Nations Education Commission, which, of course, is supported with the First Nation Education Directorate through the leadership of the Chiefs Committee on Education. We also worked with the Advisory Committee for Yukon Education, which represents our partners in education.

So, discussions, of course, have been ongoing around the response to the audit with those groups and, in particular, the review of inclusive and special education. Those two groups, after the report of the findings of the review was released, worked with the Department of Education to put together a work plan that would be the response to that report. In that work plan was to host a summit where we would share the work plan with all of the participants at the summit. There were two individuals who presented at the summit; one was Dr. Nikki Yee, who, of course, conducted the report and review, and the other speaker was Shelley Moore, whose presentation was really to challenge our notions of what we believe an inclusive education system to be.

The department has accepted all of the recommendations of Dr. Yee's review, and I would just point to the exhibits that we have provided — an executive summary of that review. The report is pretty clear that there is much work needed and there are devastating consequences that come along with that. There were conversations at the summit around some of the aspects of that report that talk about our relationships and, in particular, about us seeing ourselves connected to one another as one of the key things that we are going to need to establish in order to make the kind of changes that we are looking for.

The second individual, Dr. Shelley Moore, really challenged our notions around decolonizing and talked about how we may not even be aware of how the structures in our system cause us to want all students to assimilate and become one notion of what we think an achieving student would look like and maybe challenged our thoughts there. The rest of the time was spent on establishing our communities of inquiry. I could go further into that, but I do want to keep my response fairly direct, so I will stop there.

**Chair:** I appreciate that, Ms. Morgan, and we will have further questions about the communities of inquiry later on.

How does the department intend to develop and implement a meaningful and fair approach to collaboration with education partners, staff, students, and parents in the schools?

**Ms. Morgan:** Thank you for that question, Mr. Chair. I think that this question really gets to the heart of what I was referring to as “challenging work”. I want to acknowledge the work of the Chiefs Committee on Education and the work of the First Nation Education Directorate. We are undertaking some pretty significant initiatives, one of them being, of course, the First Nation school board. I think that we both identified that this is work that is very significant to us both, and I recall the comments of the witnesses speaking to a desire to really limit that First Nation school board, work at the local level, build partnerships, and involve grassroots feedback as an ideal education system. That is our goal as well.

How we do that is going to be some of the work that we will have to map out together as we move forward with not only implementing the school board but also working on the collaboration framework. There is a draft of the collaboration framework. We have been doing that work with the guidance of the First Nation Education Directorate and the First Nations Education Commission. We were advised by the directorate to not start with an end in mind but to just come to the commission

to ask how that work will be done. The commission advised us that they would prefer that the work be done on a government-to-government level. So, where we are at now is that we have contracted Tosh Southwick of IRP consulting, and we look forward to that work getting underway here, hopefully in January.

**Chair:** What accountability mechanisms do we put in place for current program changes for students so that the required opportunities or interventions are adequately implemented and tracked for effectiveness in improving outcomes?

**Ms. Morgan:** Thank you again for that question. I feel like this question kind of gets to the heart of what the 2019 audit really spoke about. In a nutshell, it talked about how the department wasn't really using the accountability structures that it has to know whether or not supports that we were providing to students were effective or not, whether or not actions that we had taken were effective or not.

Those accountability structures that we have are, of course: school growth planning; the response-to-intervention model, which is the model that is currently being used to provide special education in Yukon; the use of performance data; teacher evaluation — these are all accountability tools that are part of our accountability framework. The audit of 2019 pointed out that the department could not provide evidence to show that we were using those structures.

There has been comment about what has changed since the 2009 audit, and I just use this as an example of some connection between the 2009 audit and the 2019 audit. One example would be that one of the responses coming from the 2009 audit was to look at the school growth process. So, action was taken, and that school growth process was moved from a Yukon school improvement process into the updated school growth planning process that was based more on an appreciative inquiry model.

Then, just prior to the audit of 2019, work got underway to implement a new curriculum in Yukon, and it was a pretty significant shift in this redesigned curriculum. As a result of that, work started to review and update that school growth process again. When the audit of 2019 occurred, one of the comments that the auditor had was that they noted that we were trying to move the school growth process into a more disciplined data/evidence-based process, which is what the spiral of inquiry is, but noted that the department had put on hold the review of these school growth plans.

The comment was that you can't put your accountability on hold while working on developing renewed structures. So, right now, these assurances that we have are that we are using the existing accountability structures we have. So, we are tracking teacher evaluation; we are tracking school growth, and those have been updated and interrupted in implementation because of the pandemic. I'm happy to share more on that on another question, but I think the biggest progress that we have made is on our data reports and the data MOU with the Chiefs Committee on Education, because we had slipped into a phase where we weren't providing data. One of the actions taken, leading into our December 2019 appearance, was the

establishment of a data and analytics unit within the Department of Education.

Some of the exhibits that we have provided are the reports that we're now producing showing five-year trends of data. I think the biggest transparency and accountability piece and is having these posted online so that the public can see them and the public can expect them. So, should we face this change and we lose track of things again, there is a good trail left behind that this is how we do data and that we make those transparent and put them online.

Do we have room to improve still? Yes. A significant part of the review of inclusive and special education and, more importantly, a significant part of the work that will come from the data MOU in working with Yukon First Nations is identifying where we have gaps in our data, and this will connect with the outcome strategy, of course.

There are some gaps there. One of the communities of inquiry from the review of inclusive and special education will be looking at data gaps, in particular, to how we track and how we monitor individual education plans and the provision of the supports needed to go to students.

I will stop there.

**Chair:** How will the department be transparently accountable for the implementation and effectiveness of any planned changes in response to the needed collaborative work?

**Ms. Morgan:** This question, I think, gets to a good example of how we are working together to learn what is the best type, or the most effective type, of collaboration to have with our partners and, in particular, with Yukon First Nations.

So, what we intend to do as we identify actions that will be taken — and, of course, these are coming from communities of inquiry, acknowledging that we want to have grassroots involvement. We have learned that we have to bring folks along with us when we are making these kinds of changes — lots of learning that we have pulled forward from the redesign of the curriculum — that we can't just tell teachers and school staff that they are going to do things differently now; they have to be part of that conversation to have input into and understand. That is the intent of the communities of inquiry.

What the challenge will be is to continue to honour and respect that there are different responsibilities and accountabilities in the education system — one of those, of course, being to the Minister of Education but also the involvement of Yukon First Nation governments and the involvement of partners that share responsibility, like school councils.

So, what we are planning and what we have talked about is that, in our work plan, we will go back to the First Nations Education Commission and the Advisory Committee for Yukon Education to share with them ideas that the communities of inquiry are bringing forward for system change. Now, it is complex work, so it gets a little confusing here, but examples may be the best help. So, we have a community of inquiry that is working on definitions, and I think that was one of the questions posed to the Chiefs Committee on Education around maximum potential. That was a clear recommendation from the Auditor General. So, we need to make a definition of

“maximum potential”, and that connects to the definition of “special education” and, of course, you can’t define “special education” without defining “inclusive education”. The community of inquiry working on these definitions will do research, they will do a bunch of work, and they will bring forward their ideas, and then we will take those to the communities. Then, of course, there will be other things that need to happen.

In the case of these definitions, they link directly to the *Education Act* and will likely require legal review. Depending on where the community of inquiry goes, they may require regulations and things that need to be put in place to assure families that we are indeed providing that service. That’s an example of something that really involves others in how we get to approving the action. Other actions can take place right at the local level, and they might be actions that are going to happen at a school level. There is nothing stopping those actions from happening. Those are things that schools are in fact working on right now. School communities are working on these kinds of actions, and those ones are happening even as we are speaking, and we may or may not be aware of them. They fit in that broader call to action for all of us to really notice our own actions within the system and even those colonizing practices and impacts that they have.

**Chair:** The next question is — Early Learning and Child Care, ELCC, has been a very big topic this year in the news, and evidence shows that a lot of the groundwork for positive educational outcomes is laid at this stage in a child’s development. Is there anything that the department is specifically doing to ensure that ELCC is effective in preparing children for success in school?

**Ms. Morgan:** I am just going to take a second here to gather a couple of things.

Sorry for the pause there; I just wanted to gather a couple of pieces of information that would help to, I think, show how significant this initiative is.

The questions are really around evidence that will show that there is positive change to be expected. The Early Learning and Child Care unit, and specifically the response around universal childcare, talks about three different areas: One of them is affordability, so that is one barrier to childcare and early learning; the quality, of course, of programming is another key area; and then the third is access. I just want to acknowledge that the Chiefs Committee on Education — and Melanie Bennett as the executive director of the First Nation Education Directorate — spoke about their strong support in this area. It would speak to the changes all across the country right now and what many are doing in terms of the pandemic response.

The research is clear that quality early learning will lead to more positive outcomes for students. So, in terms of getting that affordability, I have already mentioned how the cost has come down for families, which levels the playing field a bit more for who can access quality early learning programming.

When we talk specifically about the quality of that programming, they are using the *British Columbia Early Learning Framework* — that’s what Yukon is using — and it’s really designed around enriching a child’s early learning

experience. It includes key principles of learning that reflect indigenous perspectives. There is a connection into the kindergarten curriculum, so it speaks to the core competencies of skills for learning that have really become forefront in the pandemic. It allows for that transition to be a little bit more aligned as students come in — leave their early years into their school years.

There is more work to be done on that framework here in Yukon, but there have been a couple of things that have occurred to increase that quality already. One is an investment in the workforce, so a significant investment into increasing the wage for early childhood educators. That has been increased to \$30 an hour, which is now among the highest wages in Canada. It’s an important piece of showing that we value the work that early childhood educators do.

Also, work has happened along that front to increase access to ensure that early childhood educators are able to continue their growth and professional learning. For example, in 2021-22, we have a Yukon University agreement that has been increased by \$217,000 to support the early learning certification program. As well, \$50,000 has been allocated to support education bursaries.

To ensure that the quality of programming is there, we know that operators need support. So, as part of the transfer of the early learning and childcare program, we hired three FTEs for early learning program specialists, and their work is to work with the individual operators to help guide and to listen and learn about how we can help improve the quality of early learning programs.

We did hear about the importance of that programming being culturally appropriate, so there has also been investment — enhancement funding, and this is designed to support operators to provide culturally rich early learning programs.

Now, I think I’ll just kind of shift a bit to early kindergarten, because there were two parts to that question.

The transition happens in the school. There is an importance of scaffolding the shift that happens as students would typically enter kindergarten at age five. We have taken steps to introduce early kindergarten in rural communities. We have started in rural communities because our data shows that there is a difference in the students who are coming into kindergarten, between rural and Whitehorse. So, our efforts right now are to make sure that every rural community in Yukon is able to provide K4, so early kindergarten, as well as kindergarten.

I will just point to an exhibit that was provided this morning, and the whole binder of exhibits will come to all of you.

But there are 13 schools in rural Yukon, and to give a sense of the impact already in this school year, eight of 13 of those schools have now increased their K4 programming to full day. For their kindergarten programming, five of those 13 schools have increased to a full-day kindergarten program. The two that have not are the two schools prior that would have already had full-day kindergarten. This is a big change in rural communities. Previous to this, not all rural communities had

full-day kindergarten and not all rural communities had full-day early kindergarten.

**Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Morgan. We will switch up to our vice-chair, Kate White.

**Ms. White:** So, this next section of questions goes to the Auditor General's recommendation 42 — understanding root causes of gaps in student outcomes and strategy to close the gaps. The Auditor General recommended that — and I quote: "The Department of Education should develop and implement a strategy to address the long-standing gaps in student performance and improve student outcomes, particularly those of Yukon First Nations and rural students. The strategy should include: analyzing the root causes of poor student outcomes, defining performance targets, developing and implementing actions to reach these targets, and evaluating the effectiveness of these actions to improve student outcomes."

My first question is: What work has the department been doing to better understand the root causes of student outcome gaps, and is the department now utilizing student data to better identify causes and trends?

**Ms. Morgan:** Thank you for that question.

I will go into more detail here, and I will just flag that where we are in this work right now is, as I mentioned, working through Toshi Southwick and doing engagement with all Yukon First Nation governments to seek next steps on our outcome strategy. I also mentioned that, while we are doing this work, we still have that responsibility to be publicly accountable. So, in terms of what performance standards we have now, we took the existing data sets that we do have, and I have provided the two most recent — the "How are we doing?" report, as well as the Yukon system-wide report — for all of you.

For example, you will see that we track literacy, in terms of reading and writing, as well as numeracy through the foundation skills assessments. We have been doing that for a number of years. What we did is just set a performance target. We did this work with the Advisory Committee for Yukon Education. I will explain more about that if we need to explain about that committee, but regardless, we started with that group. One of the things that we talked about was focusing our attention on the students who need us the most.

So, in previous reports, we would talk about who is needing and exceeding. What we have done is we still have the same performance standard until we finish our work on the new outcome strategy. With this standard, we are now reporting who is emerging and who is unknown. We need to know what's going on for them. They are also the students who — if we can see impact on that group, then that gives us more reliability in the supports that we're providing to help students.

That's a little bit of where we are in terms of how we are talking about performance targets right now.

In terms of analyzing and trying to understand root causes, I would share a couple of things on this front. First of all, in terms of analysis, we have worked hard, and you will see in our submissions that we talk a lot about adding some different structures, tools to be able to make data more readily available to users in the system. As part of those tools, while they also

allow us to show different segments of students, they also allow us to do meaningful reports that show trends over time.

When we talk about data, really, data leads us to more questions. It doesn't lead to really clear-cut distinctions on what is happening. That's the root of asking more questions — to get to root causes. For example, if we looked at a trend — and you have this, as exhibits of this system-wide five-year trend, and the "How are we doing?" report is in the three-year trend — we would look, typically, at graduation rates, and what our trend would show for Yukon First Nations in, I believe, the 2015-16 school year is a 64-percent graduation rate. Over the five years leading to where we are today, the highest graduation rate would be at 80 percent, and then, over the last two years, it has trended down to 74 percent.

So, over a five-year span, there is improvement on First Nation graduation rates, but it's not where it should be, and that leads us to then asking the question: Why not?

If we go a little bit further with that, if we look at non-First Nation students and their graduation rate over five years, it's flat. We have 84 percent, 86 percent — 81, 86, 84 — so, across time, it's fairly flat. Why? How do we use our data to go deeper into that analysis?

Again, looking at that five-year trend — and I'm not going to go too deep into the weeds here, but I think it's an important context for early years and what we are doing to at least start with some kind of action around some of the things that we do know.

If we look at the early years data, which is typically presented with the Boehm assessment — and I do want to acknowledge, in this space, the learning that we have done from the First Nation Education Directorate, from First Nation governments, to always look at this data from the sense that there needs to be a cultural lens placed over top as well. In particular, in early years evaluations, we are working with a number of First Nation governments, and the First Nation Education Directorate can speak very well to the need for some culturally appropriate tools here. But with the tools that we do have, we would see a trend over time where, in rural Yukon, if we were looking at the number of students, there's no concern — you're coming into kindergarten, there's no concern. With the Boehm tool, you would be presenting as tracking toward being at grade level. In rural Yukon, that averages out in about the 25-percent range for rural students; for First Nation students, that averages more to the 17-percent range; and for non-First Nation students — here's the stark difference, and Melanie Bennett speaks so well about this gap and what it means — 45 percent are of no concern. That speaks to there being something going on in the early years, and we need to ask more questions and get to root causes. I think that there is opportunity there now with some of the changes that I spoke about in the previous question.

We would see the same pattern. If I was to continue talking about what reading looks like and what numeracy looks like for those different segments, we would see the same pattern. We really have to get to the root causes, and this is what the Auditor General talked about.



I would say that where we are in progress there is we are getting some of those structures in place. We have better data sets now. As I mentioned, that's leading us to these questions. The Auditor General talked about a 31-percent increase in educational assistants in — I'm just going by memory here — the 2014-15 school year — a 31-percent increase in EAs — and that the department did nothing to go back and check. Did that increase make a difference? These are the kinds of questions that are really the next step of where we go.

The communities of inquiry are looking, as I mentioned, into what additional data we need to be collecting so that we can understand what's actually going on for students. If the pandemic has taught us anything, it has taught us that the experience, the lived experience, of education is completely different in all of our schools. When we look at the report that Dr. Yee has provided, these questions all came forward — of no connection back to our data of what is actually happening, what the underlying root causes are — and that's why we chose to use a different tool to gather feedback in the review of inclusive and special education. We really wanted to hear the stories of the experiences so we could understand better where the barriers and breakdowns are.

A snapshot of that data was provided at the back of the final report from Dr. Yee, but I just want to make a connection here.

The feedback from parents, staff, and families speaks to a sense of wasted resources, a sense that they are not being allocated properly. So, here is a way now that we can start to take these pieces of evidence that we have. We have people who are using — and they are the clients who are experiencing the service that we are providing — and they are suggesting that we probably are not resourcing it right. Then we have data that is telling us year over year that we are not making a change in those trends. So, we have to go deeper now. We have to keep asking about those root causes and how we are going to unpack what is going on.

The last thing that I will say on this piece is something that we talked about when we came before the Public Accounts Committee in December 2019.

In my time in Education, there has been a lot of conversation about the gap in achievement, and one of my colleagues from the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, in a working group that we were in, once said: "Whose gap is this? When you talk about a gap, whose gap is it, because there are different world views here?" I have taken that comment to heart, and I have learned that what we are probably talking about here is a gap in opportunity, and we see that in the pandemic. When we talk about the students who are impacted more than others, we are learning that there are gaps in opportunity. When First Nations talk to us about those gaps that we see so clearly now in the pandemic, what are we going to do to start to address those? I know that this is a question that is coming.

Sorry — that was a long answer, but I felt like it was kind of important to not counter — this is not about countering narratives; it is about weaving our narratives together. Everyone who looks at that report will pull something different

from the data report, and it is from those diverse perspectives that we will get to a deeper understanding.

**Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Morgan. I know that you acknowledged it, but just a brief reminder to try to keep things as concise and tight as possible time-wise.

**Ms. White:** I feel like you answered, in large part, about how the implementation of a comprehensive strategy is going to be made, so I am actually going to skip question 7 and move on.

The Committee has heard from organizations that they were not aware that work on performance targets had taken place, nor are they aware of where these targets are published. They also wonder how the targets established will be reflected in the work of Tosh Southwick, referenced in the department's response. How does the department respond?

**Ms. Morgan:** As I mentioned, we did do this work with the Advisory Committee for Yukon Education, and I know that there has been a lot of conversation on the difference between partners and stakeholders and so on and so forth. All of this is to say that those partner groups came out of work that was done around the curriculum redesign and the new vision for Yukon education. I can speak more to that. It is not really related to this question, so I just flag that there.

In terms of where these get published, the Government of Yukon posts a performance report back to the public — that's one place where they are posted. Now that we have a data group put together, we are putting that data in our annual report now, so you can see it there, and it is posted online. But this does speak to a bigger piece around communication, for sure.

In terms of the work that Tosh Southwick is doing, we are providing her with all of these pieces that we do have, and she is going to take all of this conversation around data and outcomes out to First Nations when they —

Sorry about that. Something was unmuted in our room, so we'll get that sorted out. Our apologies.

That will part of it, and then there will be pieces of performance that we don't have right now, but there have been wide conversations with both the First Nations Education Commission and the directorate, as well as the advisory committee — that we don't have any student satisfaction data or any data around cultural implementation, so I think there will be new aspects that will come from that work as well.

**Ms. White:** I'll just highlight — when you mention the communication issue, you have mentioned highlighting the gaps since the pandemic. Communication has definitely skyrocketed to a pivotal point, and maybe I'll urge the department to take a look there.

Question 9 is: The Department's action plan includes the item "Improve data sharing with Yukon First Nations and analysis of First Nations student performance data." The response report states: "The department entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Chiefs Committee on Education (CCOE) and established a Data Working Group to collaborate and share YFN student data and to engage in research and analysis relating to that data and program performance. The department worked with Yukon First Nations to implement a process for creating and distributing

annual ‘How Are We Doing’ reports.” The CCOE notes that — and I am quoting — “it is unclear how the data has been integrated with the ‘How Are We Doing?’ (HAWD) reporting process as agreed to in the Data MOU with CCOE. In fact, accurate data on student performance is increasingly hard to get. HAWD reports have all been delayed, missing parts and analysis completed by YFNED on behalf of CCOE & FNEC have not been acknowledged or the issues addressed.”

How does the department respond?”

**Ms. Morgan:** I think this is one where I feel that our Assistant Deputy Minister of Policy and Partnerships, Kelli Taylor, would be best positioned to respond.

**Ms. Taylor:** I actually got bumped. Are you able to hear me okay?

**Chair:** Yes, we can hear you fine. The screen is not as relevant as the audio, so please proceed.

**Ms. Taylor:** Okay, thanks.

Certainly, we are working collaboratively with the Chiefs Committee on Education through the MOU to produce data reports, primarily the “How are we doing?” report. Again, absolutely, to Deputy Minister Morgan’s point, she would have known in 2020 when we signed it that we would be propelled into a pandemic.

We admit that some of the reports throughout the last two years have been delayed — certainly, I mean, for a whole host of reasons. In many cases, assessments have been delayed across Canada due to the pandemic and ensuring that students could take them safely. In other situations, we have just had a delay in actually receiving the data. I am happy to report that, as of last month, we are up to date with all of the data reports as committed to within the MOU, and we certainly recognize that, as recently as Friday, we have met with officials from the directorate to start work on updating the MOU to ensure that it is reflective of the transformation that has happened over the last two years. We are fast-tracking that, and we have another meeting next week. We have committed to providing our responses to the draft MOU. We look forward to the ongoing work and ensuring that they are receiving the data that meet the needs.

**Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Taylor. We will switch gears now to Mr. Pillai, but I think that it is a good segue because Mr. Pillai’s questions are around this theme as well.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Yes, still on the same topic, really — around data.

The submission from the CCOE mentions data-sharing issues and that the CCOE and the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate experience difficulties in accessing data that they feel should be shared with them under the MOU. Can the department tell us what barriers they see in providing accurate and timely data to their partners?

There is a bit of repetition there, but I will put it back out to the department.

**Ms. Taylor:** Thank you for the question. Absolutely, this was one of the primary points that we dug into at the officials’ level last week. I must say that I certainly appreciate meeting with the group so that we can really ensure that we have an in-depth conversation around their needs and how we

can work toward meeting them. Certainly, the conversation was around their request for raw data. I guess, as simply put as I can make it, at this point we would not be able to provide raw data, when we took away the personal identifier, in a way that would be meaningful. So, that was the conversation we had.

We have a fairly new data unit, and we are absolutely doing the work to determine what it is that we need behind the scenes in order to share the data in a meaningful way. Future conversations around that we will be exploring the use of a data warehouse, because we do receive data in different formats and so it is not as simple as being able to turn that data around in one data warehouse that would be meaningful. I won’t get too in the weeds there. It is fairly technical, but needless to say, evaluating the conversation and the collaboration that we had last week, we were able to really have that meaningful conversation so that the parties understand. It is not that we’re interested in withholding data; it is just what we are able to do at this time.

The other part of the MOU spoke about: What do we do with that data, and what are the next steps? The conversation that we had is that it’s not necessarily at the technical data working group, so we reclarified that. We’re going to be changing the language in the new MOU to kind of pivot back to more strategic conversation at the regular opportunity that the three ADMs from Education have with the executive director from the directorate to actually dig in more about those actions.

Again, the richness of the conversation — we were able to really tease out what the needs are and where they are better placed.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I appreciate that. We’re shifting gears a little bit on this into the next question, but I also would like to just flag for the department that one of the things that I would love to hear about from you folks is — you have chatted a little bit about the data, which I appreciate, and there are other things that the Chiefs Committee on Education addressed, as well, that they don’t feel that they are getting access to.

One of my colleagues will shift into that question about teacher evaluations, but are there things that we need to know? I will just flag: Are there things that we need to know that, because of collective agreements or privacy, are being asked — or they are saying that they are not getting — that you have some legal reason why you can’t share?

You could add that onto the next piece that I’m going to ask. I am wondering about those items because of collective agreements and privacy, but also: With regards to the department’s plan to develop a definition of “maximum potential”, the CCOE notes that the unilateral decision to define “maximum potential” through implementing the recommendations of the review of inclusive and special education is not acceptable. It should be noted that the working groups developed to address the review are based on having a majority of Department of Education employees who report to the Department of Education as participants, which creates an impression that the work done may be superficial and simply used as a vehicle for the Department of Education to do what it

already planned rather than engage collaboratively with First Nations, acknowledging the unique and complex approaches required to improve the success of First Nation students.

We would just like to hear how the department would like to respond to that.

**Ms. Morgan:** In terms of “maximum potential”, we have not created a new definition of that. That is part of the work plan. It is a specific recommendation from the review of inclusive and special education. As I mentioned, there is a community of inquiry that is working to develop these definitions.

This is an example, when we talk about different structures — when those definitions are done, there is work that the department will have to do with Justice to ensure that our definitions do align appropriately, and, of course, we will be advised if they need to become regulations, and so on and so forth, but this is really specific here because there are mechanisms within the *Education Act* that connect to tribunal and other pieces. That’s why this one becomes something that requires a lot more conversation beyond just: “Let’s get a group of people together to come up with a definition”.

So, it will go back to the First Nations Education Commission, which is supported by the directorate and thereby — I am sure that the Chiefs Committee on Education will receive the definitions — what the group has put together. We do have members of Yukon First Nations who are part of various working groups. The working group that is working on definitions, for example, has both rural and urban school-based staff, so that could be a principal, an EA, or an LAT. There are two members on that inquiry group from a First Nation government or FNEC. There are two stakeholders, four central admin, three school council members, and one unknown affiliation, for a total of 23 individuals who are working on those definitions and doing some inquiry around that.

In terms of unilateral, top-down responses in the review of inclusive and special education — the work plan that has been developed with the First Nation Education Directorate and the Advisory Committee for Yukon Education — when I spoke to everyone at the summit — you know, we talk about the department being part of a circle — really, we are approaching this work as learners. We have a lot of learning to do in order to decolonize the system. I spoke to the group about a quote by Justice Murray Sinclair that talked about — when you have racist systems and structures, it causes non-racist people to do racist things unless we can actually question what’s happening. So, we want to be part of the circle as well in order to understand. There is a real information sharing and learning that can go back and forth with Yukon First Nations. We are seeking their guidance and are coming to the work as learners, and we appreciate when they tell us that we are getting it wrong. That means we dig in and learn, and we keep coming to the table to understand. That is part of why we want central admin staff there. They are not all decision-makers. Many of these individuals are in Student Support Services and they want to learn as well how to do this work differently and be part of the conversation.

I hope that we answered the question. I will stop there.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** The CCOE has flagged, again, the imbalance — sort of the same piece — on the RISE working groups, citing majority membership of department employees as a barrier to meaningful collaboration. Does the department have any intention of reviewing or changing the makeup of these groups?

Again, I think you touched a little bit on participation, but again, I will put it back to the department.

**Ms. Morgan:** Thank you for that question. I can certainly go a little bit deeper.

I provided the Committee with an exhibit here on this one of the spiral of inquiry. I tried to screen-share it and it was not very good to read, so I think, rather than screen-share, I will just trust that you have that image.

The spiral of inquiry has no beginning and no end. There is no off-ramp where there is an authority that’s making the decision or determining what these groups do. The intent behind the spiral is that it makes it a safe place for people to come together, not as experts — it’s not who has the biggest brain but just really being curious about what’s happening and learning from one another.

So, in those phases, there is a piece where you gather information. We tried to do this with the review, to mirror it along this inquiry path. The work that Dr. Yee did — and an online tool — was really scanning the system to help us understand what’s going on.

These inquiry groups now are focusing, and they are asking questions and developing the hunch of what might be causing some of the issue that they are trying to tackle in their inquiry group, and then there is an environment there where they do some learning. One of the things that the consultant, Dr. Yee, pointed out is a big part of that learning and is going to come from Yukon First Nations. That’s part of the terms of reference for these communities of inquiry. They need to seek to understand Yukon First Nation ways of knowing and doing, culture, language, and history in their work, and then they propose actions. That’s one aspect of how the playing field is levelled.

When recommendations come out, as I mentioned, there are accountability structures that are legislated, and when you asked about where some no-go areas are, one of the things that we have talked about — and it’s part of the First Nation school board agreement — is: Where does the decision-making happen, and how is that decision-making being done?

Right now, all of this work that we are doing is staying within the *Education Act*. I do acknowledge — and I know that all of the witnesses with the CCOE talked about the desire for a separate education system. They also talked about — that this is further down the road, and right now they are very focused on the First Nation school board. Within that framework, in section C of that framework agreement, it speaks to our work together to think about how the Minister of Education will continue to exercise oversight but do that by working with all 14 Yukon First Nations and the trustees of the First Nation school board, as well as the CCOE.

So, this theme of understanding how we collaborate together is so important. I think we’re doing that work. We’re

not holding up action until we get that collaboration sorted out. We are taking these steps together. We are moving to establish a First Nation school board, and the conversation is continuous about how we are doing that work together. When we get into tough patches, then we have to sit down and talk some more about what that looks like, but we have acknowledged that those decision-making points continue to happen right now within the *Education Act* framework.

**Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Morgan. Just one note: The exhibits that you provided to the Committee are posted to the website, so we can refer to them in future, but screen-sharing isn't something that will be an option for us today. You can feel free to refer to the exhibits, but we won't be able to do the screen-sharing.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Again, sort of on the same topic — I mean, we may be focusing a bit more on gaps here. You touched on it before in your earlier responses about that term — about “gaps”.

Again, how is the department ensuring that the gap is not worsened by the emergence of COVID-19? What remote learning options are in place to support the system in the coming months?

**Ms. Morgan:** You referenced the pandemic. I think that one example I would share is — and people are experiencing it right now — moving into remote learning and moving back into in-person. We know that schools and communities do this work differently. Some do it online, some do it with physical packages, and some do a mixture.

What we have learned during the pandemic is that these are future skills. We are all getting — as we are right now — a lot more comfortable with doing things online, with using the skillsets that technology provides us. This was part of our redesigned curriculum. These are identified as future skills. What we saw during the pandemic is that gap of opportunity — where that was just not the same for all students. We did try to reprofile funding that was not being used while schools were in remote learning and did a distribution out to parents in the 2020 year. More importantly, though, we learned from that, and First Nations led the way for us to partner with them in providing devices for every First Nation student in Yukon so that, should they need to move in this remote way again, they would be better prepared. Of course, we are seeing right now that it is, in fact, what is happening and we have taken that action there.

The other piece around the gap — and again this notion of a gap of opportunity — is really around literacy and numeracy. So, opportunity has been interrupted for all Yukon students. We have had to adapt for three school years now. We had one school year end in remote learning, one school year last year where the majority of students were in class face to face for the whole school year, but we did have three high schools in Whitehorse in half-day remote and half-day in-person at least until April of that school year. Now we are seeing this school year interrupted with — for lack of a better word — rolling remote learning. We are doing that because we know that in-person is the best scenario for students.

We have done three surveys, and we know that in-person is best, and remote is better than school being closed. So, when

we are making those adjustments, it becomes harder for teachers to be able to deliver the full curriculum. What we say to teachers is to focus on literacy and numeracy. When you are in those spots, focus on literacy and numeracy; focus on foundational learning that is going to carry forward across grades so that, by doing that, we start to minimize the impact of all of those interruptions.

**Mr. Kent:** I will start with some questions regarding OAG recommendation 47. In that recommendation, the Auditor General recommended that: “The Department of Education should implement its required oversight mechanisms to provide summary reports to the Minister and complete teacher evaluations.”

The Department's response report states — and I quote: “In collaboration with the ACYE...” — which I'm assuming is the Advisory Committee for Yukon Education — “... the department is revising its School Growth Planning Policy to improve the school growth planning process.”

My question is: Has the department addressed the need for annual summary reports of school growth plans via their revision of the school growth planning policy?

In the response that was provided to the original Auditor General's report, it did mention that the process would be developed and implemented by the end of the 2019-20 school year, but I'm assuming that this has changed, given the pandemic and what has occurred there.

**Ms. Morgan:** This points to an area of our response to the audit where our hope would have been that we were much further along on these aspects. The pandemic has definitely caused some disruption here in terms of how do you complete a teacher evaluation when staff are delivering school remotely and there are no students in the school — to the school growth process and being able to engage as a school community.

We have come partway. What we have been able to do is that we have collected the summary reports. Those will be provided to you as exhibits so you will see what each school is working on, in terms of their school growth process. As I mentioned early on, we were already underway before we received the audit report. We were underway in moving the school growth process from an appreciative inquiry lens to a more disciplined inquiry that requires the use of evidence-learning questions. That did move forward, and that is the process that they are using to report, and you will see that reflected in the exhibits. They all have a question that they are working on, and then their report talks about what activities they have taken. It speaks to the effects on learning and how they know that and what is next in their steps. That will come to you as an exhibit.

Where we would have liked to have been was — a new process for how we share the external part of the school growth process. There's an internal piece of work that happens with a committee, and then the intent is that you share out.

In our previous process, we would have an external committee that would come into a school. Feedback from school councils, from schools, was that this process really wasn't working for them. We noted that, when you have good practices, you are not able to share them. It was challenging to

get members for these external committees, so we had just started a conversation on how we could do that differently so that schools share more broadly what they are doing with their school growth plan. Especially if they're making significant changes for student outcomes, we want all schools to hear about that, not just a handful of individuals who are going in as an external team.

We have not progressed on that. That will be work that we will have to go back and do the first chance we get, and, of course, we will do that with the First Nations Education Commission and the Advisory Committee for Yukon Education.

**Mr. Kent:** I thank the deputy minister for that. Just a quick clarification then — and I apologize because this isn't one of the questions that was provided to you. The Advisory Committee for Yukon Education — it might be a clerical issue with the website, but it says that the last minutes posted are from September 2020. You probably don't have the answer today, but if you can maybe get us an update on when that committee last met, and if the website could be updated with the latest minutes, that would be great.

My next question that was provided to you is: Can you please explain the process undertaken to implement the department's improved process for annually monitoring teacher evaluations, their completion, and tracking?

**Ms. Morgan:** As I alluded to in my previous response, this, too, has been a challenge, and interruptions in the school function, the operation of the school, have had some impact here, for sure. We have been able to continue to put together the summary report of teacher evaluations that have been completed, and I have provided that — not this morning as an exhibit, but it will come in your full package.

We have focused on probationary teachers and education assistants — LATs. The reason why we are focusing on probationary is that there are connections to the collective agreement with the Yukon Teachers' Association. There is a set time period for that evaluation to occur, and so we are focusing our efforts there, but we have continued to train and support and implement the new teacher evaluation process, which has competency areas. One of those includes Yukon First Nation ways of knowing and doing. That is where we would like to go, when we can start this work again, to be able to use more of an understanding of where teachers are at to help us — it's not just teachers, but all educators in the school setting — so we can be better informed about what training needs are — as one tool. There are other tools that will tell us about training needs as well, but this would be one.

**Mr. Kent:** Specific to the Auditor General's recommendations, can you describe the approaches that the department is taking to improve communications with school administrators, support staff, and families?

**Ms. Morgan:** Yes, I can, and I do want to acknowledge the vice-chair's comments earlier, as well, of things that we are learning in the pandemic, and communication is definitely one of those things that is front of mind.

There are a couple of things that I can point to here that we have done. We are certainly learning that clear, accurate, and

timely information is the best kind of information that we can provide. It is a priority in the pandemic response, but I think that we are learning that it is a priority at all times.

Over the last few school years, we have done a couple of things. One is the electronic messaging system, and that has made us able to better use our student information system and contact families directly. Some of you may have experienced that yourselves. It is a tool that we have been relying on for exposure notices and for information that we need to get out to parents really quickly. It is also a tool that we use when there are emergency or crisis situations that happen in the school and we need to get information to parents quickly.

I would just mention right here that, in terms of that emergency crisis response, we are working to create a tool — we have a draft tool — that will help guide administrators on when to communicate with parents when emergency situations happen at school, because we would like to see greater consistency across the system in how and when parents are informed.

We have also moved to having more regular updates being provided. So, in those efforts, we can communicate by text message and e-mail. We are doing that, as I mentioned, for information that we need to get out to families specifically. We have done that to communicate around IEPs and changes that happened at the end of the last school year. I mentioned the COVID notifications.

We are also taking steps to provide more regular touchpoints, and so we do now share information with school staff and our partners through various different ways. We have a weekly administrator update that goes out to all school administrators. We have a weekly educator update that goes out to all school staff, and we also have the deputy minister's weekly newsletter that goes out to, of course, central admin here in the building but also school administrators and key partners, which include Yukon First Nation governments, school councils, and the Yukon Association of Education Professionals. So, those are just some examples, but we fully acknowledge that more work is needed in this area — in particular, using modern tools like digital tools to enhance communication.

**Mr. Kent:** The next set of questions is with respect to the OAG's recommendation 70. In the question that we provided to the department, we did cite that entire recommendation, but in the interest of time, it is with respect to conducting a full review of its services and supports for inclusive education. Again, it can be found at section 70 in the 2019 OAG report.

The first question with respect to that is: When did the department begin its review of services and supports for inclusive education? How did that process take shape? Maybe I will read question 18 as well: Following that review, what strategies have been developed, and which ones have been implemented already?

**Ms. Morgan:** There is a lot there, and I'm going to try and be as brief as possible. In terms of the review piece, we received the audit and we made that commitment to do the review. We started conversations at that time primarily with the

Advisory Committee for Yukon Education, which at that time had two members of the First Nations Education Commission and two members of the Council of Yukon First Nations. We have evolved in that conversation. The First Nation Education Directorate now sits with the First Nations Education Commission representatives, but more importantly, through the initial winter of 2019, we learned a lot and heard from First Nations that we cannot expect two or three people who are First Nation to represent the views of First Nations. So, we made that commitment that we would go to the First Nations Education Commission for advice and help with decisions in the same way that we do the advisory committee. So, we don't now assume that those members of the advisory committee speak on their behalf.

From there, a fair bit of time passed. We were trying to get our review up and running, and we established a group to help decide how we would move forward. The Kwanlin Dün First Nation wanted to part of that conversation, the First Nation Education Directorate, and the Council of Yukon First Nations — to be brief, we determined to just each provide a consultant and try to get the review moving.

We offered up that our preference would be to work with Dr. Nikki Yee, and then we were advised that Bill Bennett would be a good individual from the First Nation perspective to help with that work. I think that Melanie Bennett referenced that in her discussion with you on January 12.

From there, off we went to do some work, and there were a couple of things. The review went ahead, and Dr. Nikki Yee did a number of focus groups. I have provided, as an exhibit, those focus groups — it's not in your package for today, but you will have it. It basically walks through the timeline where we got started in that work in January 2020, and then, in March 2020, everything was put on hold because of the pandemic. Then we picked up again with the advisory committee in September 2020.

At this point, we are identifying that, even in the midst of the pandemic and even if online is not ideal, we feel that this is going to be central to what is going to become our response to the pandemic, because it started to become evident who was going to be more impacted.

We went ahead. I'm not going to read it out to you but just to say that, from September all the way through to May, there were a number of focus groups that occurred with partner groups, focus groups that occurred with NGOs and with Health and Social Services and Justice representatives. There were focus groups with all 14 Yukon First Nations, and then we received the consultant's report, and on June 1, it was released.

From there, after the report was released at Haa Shagóon Hídi, the Carcross learning centre, we worked then with the two committees that I mentioned, through July and September, to put together the work plan — one of the actions in there being the summit. The summit occurred on November 12. Since then, the communities of inquiry have been forming. So, everybody who attended the summit was given an invitation to choose if they wanted to be part of a community of inquiry, and we asked that the communities of inquiry have at least two meetings before the winter break, and that did, in fact, happen. We

continue those communities of inquiry. Because of the spiral process, they can take new members into their working group at any time, and we are working right now quite actively to try to have more balance in the committees. In particular, there are a number of groups that asked if they could just revisit their commitment to being on a committee after Christmas. There was a fair bit going on.

I think that I will stop there with some of the timeline, and certainly the exhibits will give you a little bit more detail.

**Mr. Kent:** If the deputy or one of the ADMs can let us know how the department is planning to accurately evaluate whether this revised approach is working to improve inclusive education — and how has oversight been improved to ensure that we evaluate whether supports and services are effective?

**Ms. Morgan:** Thank you for that question.

One of the pieces that I wrote down was the "How will we know?" Of course, that is one of the questions in the spiral process. The communities of inquiry will be sharing that with us — what they are identifying as measures for the action they are proposing we take — that this is what they will be looking for to know that the action has either made enough of a difference or is resulting in the desired outcome that they are looking for. Some will be coming from the grassroots up. Then, of course, we talk about the outcome strategy. That is a really key piece for knowing how we are doing in this work. There is a community of inquiry that is specifically looking at how we track, monitor, and ensure that the whole process around individual education plans is actually accounted for. So, I think that there will be new data sets there that we will be looking to track.

**Mr. Kent:** My final question here for this set is: What initiatives has the department taken to ensure that access to resources and technology is equitable for all students?

Again, this isn't part of the questions that we submitted, but it reminded me of that partnership on supplying iPads to indigenous students, which was a collaboration, I believe, between Yukon University and the Council of Yukon First Nations. Perhaps that will part of the deputy's response, but if not, if you could give an update now or in writing, that would be great.

**Ms. Morgan:** Thank you for that question. We will make a commitment to do a more in-depth answer, but I will say that I think this speaks to the call to decolonize the education system and the kind of shift in thinking that we are looking for. When we talk about equitable resources, I will be very transparent in saying that many of these resources are being distributed by enrolment and not by need. So, just that alone is going to create inequity. It certainly creates inequity between rural and urban — where we have larger schools in urban settings, typically.

These are the kinds of things that our community of inquiry is looking at — around how resources are allocated, some of the formulas that are used to do that. That's an example of one type of work, but I would also offer up that we could put some more work behind that and give you a more detailed response.

**Chair:** You're still muted there and not coming through.

Sorry, we can't hear you, Mr. Mostyn. No, we can't hear you.

Okay, maybe we'll use the break to sort out Mr. Mostyn's audio, but maybe I'll just read his questions for now, and we'll try to sort out what's going on.

I'll give you one more chance, Mr. Mostyn, if you can — Okay, I see your mouth moving, but —

Ms. Morgan, can you hear Mr. Mostyn, by chance?

No, I can't hear you either. We will try to sort that out, perhaps at the break here in 15 minutes, but I'll just take over Mr. Mostyn's questions, then, Ms. Morgan.

These questions are in relation to the CCOE's submission. So, the CCOE's submission states that Yukon First Nations are making significant efforts to collaborate. However, Yukon First Nations are often met with processes, procedures, or initiatives that are the result of unilateral decisions made by Yukon Education. The spiral of inquiry is an example of a unilateral decision that underwent superficial collaboration. YFN's consultation or collaboration has two concerns. The first is that the spiral may result in positive things over time, but in the interim, there is limited change for indigenous students struggling in schools. More than two years is too long for kids to wait for help.

The second is that many of the activities planned by the Department of Education are activities where adults are engaged with little impact on students. Yukon First Nations are deeply concerned that this path forward is similar to the processes that followed the 2009 AG report, which resulted in little change for indigenous students.

So, the question is fairly simple: How does the department respond to that?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Can you hear me now?

**Chair:** I can hear you now, Mr. Mostyn, yes. So, I just read —

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I'm terribly sorry.

**Chair:** I am not sure what happened there, but I just read your first question, so I will pass it on to you after this answer.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Ms. Morgan:** There are a couple of things that I would mention here — first of all, acknowledging the comments made by the Chiefs Committee on Education. This is a very real experience that I think many First Nations feel, and that was shared very clearly in their information that they shared on January 12. So, I want to start with that acknowledgement because it speaks to what I mentioned in my opening comments about the need to get to action but also the need to be able to have the conversations that we need to have to be able to do things differently and, most importantly, to create the trust that is needed to be able to really shift how we are doing our work together.

With that sort of tension in mind, I think that what I would point to is that these spirals of inquiry — this community of inquiry that we talk about in response to the review of inclusive and special education is not the only place where the work is happening. We do have — I guess it is spirals of spirals. At the individual teacher level, they have been working since we brought in the redesigned curriculum using the spiral of inquiry

— this disciplined evidence-based approach — to make changes at their classroom level. We started that work to encourage moving into the new curriculum and checking in on that impact because, of course, it is designed to increase student engagement.

For several years now, pre-pandemic, our educators have had the opportunity to go to the Network of Innovation and Inquiry in British Columbia and share our learning and benefit from the learning of teachers all across the Province of British Columbia who were following this same process, so there is a lot of immediate action there. We are often not necessarily aware of that at the systems level because it is right at the heart of where the work is happening — in the classroom.

As I mentioned, we have also moved our school growth process into this place so that school communities can ask questions about what is going on for their students. You will see, in the summary report on the school growth process, the kinds of questions that they are working on and the actions they are taking — many of them learning about race-based cultural programming and how it can increase student engagement, which is, of course, a community of inquiry of the review of inclusive and special education as well. It is a recommendation that we have to learn from Yukon First Nations. It is a strength that we potentially have and we are not leveraging it as much as we could.

That is a bit of how there is engagement at so many different levels. In terms of the process being different, I would agree with the comment that the previous process didn't really seem to get to action. As I mentioned in earlier comments, I think that the work around the school growth process that was built on an appreciative inquiry lens was meant to go to a place where we could leverage strength, which is a good thing. We do want to be able to leverage strength, but we also need to be able to have the discipline and the data that goes along with that, and the checking in — that we've made enough of a difference. The Auditor General has pointed out that we haven't done that, and so this process allows for that.

In terms of a unilateral decision, the use of the spiral was a recommendation in the review of inclusive and special education, and we have accepted that. We also like the alignment to the other processes that we have going on. It enables more common language as we do our work.

I couldn't agree more that student voice is so important, and that has come up several times in our conversations together and in the communities of inquiry — that we have to find ways to seek and to get more student voice. It was our smallest group in terms of the online tool of responding. I guess that tells us that we have to work in different ways with students. It was a similar pattern in our COVID surveys — lower responses from students.

We have to talk to them in different ways. We are learning from the First Nation Education Directorate about how to engage with students more authentically. They have their ambassadors — Moccasin Trailblazers? — hat program — there is so much that we could learn from that and are learning from that. The communities of inquiry have all been tasked with — where their work takes them, they have to figure out

how they are going to engage with students and with parents so that we are more effective in that work.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, for stepping in during my technical difficulties there, and my apologies to both the officials and the viewing public for that glitch.

I want to welcome the officials this morning. It's great to ask this question. My first question will relate to Yukon First Nation culture and languages, the Office of the Auditor General's report recommendation 89.

It recommended: "The Department of Education should complete and implement its policy to collaborate with Yukon First Nations to meet the *Education Act's* requirements. It should also develop a strategic action plan with specific, measurable actions and timelines to support its work with Yukon First Nations."

I wanted to ask: How has the department been working with the First Nations' Strategic Initiatives branch to build First Nation culture into the curriculum and student life, and can you give some examples, including how early does this begin?

**Chair:** I just wanted to note, for both Committee members and witnesses, that I will interject at noon regardless of who is speaking, so feel free to just carry on without paying mind to the clock. I will take care of that.

**Ms. Morgan:** I think that this question — maybe I'll just get to the heart of our implementation status and where we are at with this. We have broken our response into items that are completed and items that are underway.

What we have completed is a signed agreement respecting education and the establishment of the First Nation school board. We have signed a three-year transfer payment agreement with all 14 Yukon First Nations, and we did that by allocating \$1.5 million for that initiative. We have signed the memorandum of understanding of the data working group. We signed an education agreement with Kwanlin Dün First Nation in June 2019, and we have increased funding to the Council of Yukon First Nations for the Yukon Native Language Centre to support their ongoing work to address language revitalization.

Work that is underway, of course, is the referendum around the First Nation school board. That timeline, of course, is to end on January 27, 2022.

We are continuing to discuss and establish additional education agreements with Yukon First Nations. The following education agreements are in place or are being negotiated: Ta'an Kwäch'än Council — we are currently negotiating a new agreement; Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation — existing agreement expires in March 2023; Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in — existing 17.7 agreement, signed in July 2013, is in place until terminated; Selkirk First Nation — existing agreement signed in June 2015, in place until terminated; Kluane First Nation — existing agreement expires in March 2023; Liard First Nation — existing agreement expires in March 2023; Ross River Dena Council — existing agreement expires in March 2023; Na-Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation — existing agreement expires in March 2024; Kwanlin Dün First Nation agreement expires on March 31, 2022 — currently negotiating a new agreement;

and White River First Nation existing agreement expires in March 2023.

We are also working with the First Nations Education Commission, the First Nation Education Directorate, to develop a collaboration framework. As we have mentioned, that is now moving to a consultant, Tosh Southwick. We are working with Kwanlin Dün First Nation, the First Nation Education Directorate, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, and F.H. Collins Secondary School on implementing a new indigenous academy at F.H. Collins Secondary School. We are working to continue to meet with the joint education action plan senior officials group. We did meet in November 2019, and at that time we agreed that the four pillars still remain the priority work and have continued to work and support Yukon First Nations as they establish the Yukon First Nation school board. Those pieces, of course, will change who is at the JEAP senior officials group. I believe that Melanie Bennett mentioned that she now will hold that space as CYFN moves away from that role.

Work that we are continuing to do is to improve the educational experience and outcomes for First Nation students and provide culturally inclusive education programs. Some big learning that is happening on this front — in particular, as First Nations engage in some really significant work around language revitalization —

We say that First Nations are best placed to know what their citizens need, and I think that we're learning now what that really means. First Nation governments really are best placed to provide the kind of effective training and resources that are going to help Yukon educators create an authentic experience in Yukon schools.

I learned from one particular chief who was sharing what they were doing in their community that a lot of this work has to be place-based. Whether you are learning language or whether you're learning the ways of knowing, doing, and being, the importance of being in the traditional territory with the knowledge-keepers and elders — it just can't be replicated and it can't be replaced, so we do have to think outside the box. We have to find different ways to do that work. We are certainly hearing that it cannot be done in the central admin building with a unit that is created in the bureaucratic structure and expect that the unit is going to be able to deliver something different — so, more conversation happening on that front.

Two minutes — there's so much here that I could say. There's a long list of resources and courses that have since come into play, whether they are core credit courses or resources that First Nations have developed that are now becoming part of our curriculum resources that we provide the schools. That will be shared with you in an exhibit so you can see that list of work that has gone into sample units at various grade levels and that take western ideas that are in the curriculum and integrate and weave them with Yukon First Nation ways of knowing, doing, and being. We will provide you with those resources, which teachers have access to online, and work that has been underway with the curriculum working group to develop elaborations for Yukon's curriculum in all subject areas, from kindergarten to grade 9.



I will stop there. I can see the clock.

**Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Morgan. I just want to note that, if you are going to list a number of things, you are referring us to the exhibits, which is sufficient as well. The Committee will have access to all those exhibits, going forward, and they will be posted on the website as well.

We will conclude there for lunch. Just as a matter of logistics, I would ask if everyone could stay on the line, but if you could just mute your microphone and turn off your screen, we will pick back up at 1:00 p.m.

There won't be any recording or streaming from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. here, but it's just easier than relogging on and redoing it all, so if we could just turn off our cameras and our mics and then pick back up at 1:00.

Is that all right with everyone?

Excellent. I will call us back to order at about one or two minutes before 1:00. Thank you very much.

#### *Recess*

**Chair:** It is 1:00 p.m. now, so I think we can resume now. I understand that we are again streaming. I note that the radio issue has been addressed, so we are on the radio now as well, at 93.5, and, of course, being broadcast through the Legislative Assembly site as well.

When we broke, Ms. Morgan had just responded to a question from Mr. Mostyn, so if there was additional material that you would like to add, feel free, but at this point, I will turn it over to Mr. Mostyn for his next question.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I am going to now focus on implementation of the joint education action plan, which is item 93. The Auditor General recommended that the Department of Education should meet regularly with Yukon First Nations to assess the status of the joint education action plan's initiatives and determine how and when to complete those that remain. I wanted to ask: How much money is provided for implementation of the plan, and does the department believe that the budget is sufficient?

**Ms. Morgan:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. In terms of funding the joint education action plan, we have increased that funding by \$300,000. I know that it was discussed in the January 12 conversation, so I won't elaborate much further there than to say that, if you thought that was the only funding that was going toward joint education priorities, that would be misleading. That is the funding that goes to the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate and supports the work with the First Nations Education Commission. There are other joint priorities that we have that come to us from our mandate letter and that come to us from the various other action plans that we have, where those become part of the Department of Education's business plan and thereby are connected to our budget. For example, funding that goes to the Yukon Native Language Centre is a line item in our budget and, of course, language is a pillar of the joint education action plan.

There is a group of senior officials who oversee the tripartite agreement. As I mentioned earlier, in November 2019, we came together and agreed that those four pillars would

continue to be the guiding principles, and First Nations, of course, underwent some growth in the capacity, especially at the collective level, for working on First Nation education joint priorities.

An example of that, then, becomes — okay, we said that a pillar was greater authority and control over education, and so, in the mandate letter, there is a mandate to advance the work on the First Nation education school board, which is a priority for the Chiefs Committee on Education. What we do there is that we continue to reprofile our funds that we have to work toward those priorities, so additional funding goes toward that initiative. An example would be paying for the increased services that we are getting from Elections Yukon to conduct these referendums, and, of course, at some point there will be the election of the trustees of the school board. Thank you for the question.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I am now going to shift to supports, resources, and cultural training, which is on the Office of the Auditor General's recommendations — number 109. The Auditor General recommended that the Department of Education should determine the human resources and training required to develop sufficient classroom support and materials to help teachers implement the new curriculum as it pertains to Yukon First Nation culture and languages.

The department responded that a number of ongoing initiatives continue to provide educator resources and training to support the delivery of curriculum, including resources and training relating to Yukon First Nation cultures and languages developed with Yukon First Nations. Yukon schools are working with cultural inclusion standards developed by the First Nation education council to integrate Yukon First Nation ways of knowing, doing, and being into school programs.

Madam deputy minister, in its submission to the CCOE, you noted that the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate's wraparound model supports an integrated model, building an educator's toolbox over time to support First Nation student inclusion and First Nation worldview learning for all. I wanted to ask a couple of things related to this.

You also, I guess, noted: How does the department assess these services, and does the department agree that it is in fact work that should actually be the responsibility of the department? In addition to that, as my colleague, Minister Ranj Pillai, raised earlier: Can third parties be involved in the evaluation of teachers, and is this allowed under the existing collective agreement with the YTA?

There is a lot there. That was a lot of talk.

**Ms. Morgan:** Thank you for the context for that question. I think that it was important to share, and I will endeavour not to repeat what I had mentioned earlier about what we are learning in terms of the most effective resources and supports really being in the traditional territory with the knowledge-keepers and resources that First Nation governments have worked so hard to develop within their own governments and, of course, noting the significant support that the First Nation Education Directorate provides to help support all First Nation governments in increasing their capacity to be able to provide these kinds of supports.

A couple of questions, then — in terms of resourcing, I think one thing here is that it speaks to the collaboration that we develop with one another and our ongoing learning about how we work together on providing these kinds of opportunities. We know, and we have certainly learned, that Education — the department — cannot do this work alone. We have to seek out effective partnerships with Yukon First Nations, with partners, and with community resources and organizations to really fully meet the diverse needs of students. So, one of the conversations that we are having is really looking at where there are opportunities to be able to increase this type of support for Yukon educators. As part of that conversation, we absolutely have taken a good look at the First Nation Initiatives unit within the Department of Education. This unit, of course, was reprofiled from the previous unit, which was the First Nations Partnerships and Programs unit. It was reprofiled when we established the ADM of First Nation Initiatives. As Melanie Bennett has expressed so well, that work with done with the Chiefs Committee on Education, and we acknowledge that it has not resulted in the outcomes that the Chiefs Committee on Education was looking for.

I would say that it is the same case for the Department of Education. We are very interested — and have within our action plan with the Chiefs Committee on Education — to go back and review the work that we did to initially establish the role. We currently have Suzan Davy here with us today acting in this role, and we want to thank Suzan for stepping into the role. It is a very big job, and we want to make sure that we continue to engage with the chiefs committee on getting it right. One of the pieces of that conversation, then, becomes: Who is best placed, and where is it best placed, to develop these kinds of training and supports, and does it belong in one place or can it exist in several places? By that, I mean: Can the First Nation Education Directorate, individual First Nation governments, and the Department of Education all play a role in how we support educators in providing truly culturally appropriate learning that is infused with Yukon First Nation ways of knowing and doing?

In terms of the third-party evaluation, I am really glad that this was brought forward because it has been an ongoing conversation and it is one of those ones that I mentioned — the work of reconciliation. I have heard people say that if it is easy, then it is probably not reconciliation. So, we continue to have conversations on this front. We do have a collective agreement in place on two different fronts — so, of course, school-based staff — there is a collective agreement with the Yukon Association of Education Professionals. There are, within that, some expectations connected to teacher evaluation. In the framework for teacher evaluation, there are expectations that are laid out in terms of benchmarks that we ask our teachers and school-based staff to strive toward in terms of delivering classroom instruction that reflects Yukon First Nation ways of knowing, doing, and being.

When it comes to evaluation, though, like many employers, there is a process whereby we seek feedback, but the determinations of what then happens to an employee from that are done within processes that are outlined under — in the

case of school staff — our *Education Labour Relations Act* and various other pieces of legislation. It is really about the rights of the employee and the expectation that we are very clear on how an employee is evaluated and that the process is fair and transparent and so on and so forth. So, conversations continue on that front.

In the case of the ADM of First Nation Initiatives, of course, this is a different role. It is part of section M, which is the excluded management within Yukon government, and we work with a different union for employees who are not part of our school environment, so those employees in the central admin building work under the Yukon Employees' Union, and within there, again, there are set processes for how we work through employee evaluation, discipline, release, and all of those aspects. This is in section M. For those who are outside the YEU, there are still, within our labour acts, expectations for how we do that work. So, we are trying to continue that conversation, and I do want to acknowledge — I know that Daryn, when he spoke on January 12, did identify that, as the First Nation school board comes in, the employees who are working in schools that will be led by the First Nation school board trustees — that those processes that are there for those employees — they can expect that those will continue to be there.

**Chair:** We are going to shift gears now in terms of the questions. As witnesses, members, and those watching may be aware, the Committee received a number of written responses from groups in this regard. I won't list them all now, but they are on our website. The following questions from this point are all derived from those written submissions that we received from stakeholder groups about the department's response to the Auditor General's report.

There are two here that are identified for myself; however, I would note that the first has been answered already, and the second will be answered in the next question. So, at this point, Ms. White, I will turn it over to you to ask the questions that are identified for you, starting with number 27.

**Ms. White:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, the questions that I have are around IEPs. Through stakeholder submissions, the individualized education plans, or IEPs, have been identified as an area of concern. What is — and I am quoting — “inclusive and diverse special education”? How are students with diverse learning abilities or special education needs supported? How are those supports determined?

Please tell us about the learning plans that are available to Yukon students, and how are parents informed that learning plans are available, and how are these plans implemented in a school setting?

**Chair:** Ms. Morgan, I presume — and if you could include in that the department's definition of “inclusive education” and “special needs” as well.

**Ms. Morgan:** There are a number of pieces to that question, so I will do my best to keep it to the point and answer each of the subsequent pieces.

The first part of the question speaks to the definition of “inclusive and diverse special education”. Of course, we have talked about how, as part of this review and as the audit pointed

out, the definition is not clearly understood across the system, and therefore we need to work on actually establishing clearly that the definition is for both “inclusive education” and “special education”.

What we currently work with — as I mentioned earlier, when we are identifying that we need to update or refine processes, we still have to continue with our accountability, and so we are working right now with the previous vision for inclusive and special education that was identified in the Student Support Services manual from 2015. I won’t read from the manual; we will provide that as an exhibit. The intent is that, for special education, there would be a determination that learning needs are learning needs that will be outside what would typically be provided by the classroom teacher — so, either by an assessment or through the school-based team process. I will go into how this is defined in just a moment.

So, in terms of the definition — so this would include “maximum potential”, that these definitions are part of community of inquiry number 1, and their work is to co-construct these definitions and to make sure that a Yukon definition for those two types of environments is identified.

How are students supported, and how do we identify the resources needed? Currently, we would respond to a student’s needs following the response-to-intervention model. This model is highlighted in the review of inclusive and special education, and it is based on the notion of a pyramid and the notion that the majority of students would have their needs met in a classroom setting. There will be some students who will need some additional supports, but they will be able to meet curriculum outcomes. Then, at the very top of the pyramid, there is a smaller group of students, not as representative, who will need modifications or significant changes to their learning to support reaching outcomes.

The review on inclusive and special education speaks to the fact that there’s evidence to say that this model is not working for Yukon, and there is a community of inquiry that is going to look into this. The report speaks to the potential that, in Yukon, this triangle could be inverted. That’s one possibility. So, actually, the bulk of our students need targeted interventions, and very few students would actually be able to learn in the classroom. That’s one end of the spectrum. Is the model completely inverted here? Or — and/or — is there another model that would be more suited to Yukon’s needs? So, a community of inquiry is looking into that, but for now, we continue to use the response-to-intervention model. This would then, as I mentioned, identify students — or the intent is for those who would need to be allocated more resources.

The five steps in the model would be that, first, students would be identified as — we were either identifying or assessing students who may need additional supports. I know that there are lots of questions around assessment, so I would just add in here that there are formal assessments — these are assessments that are typically done by educational psychologists — and then there are a whole range of assessments in between there, and often it starts with some initial informal assessments at the school level and then cascades up from there in the response-to-intervention model.

So, when students are identified and when they start to be assessed for additional supports, there’s a plan that’s put in place for those supports. Then, from that — to make sure that they are effective — there is the development of a learning plan for the student, and that would identify how their supports are put in place. So, that’s an individualized education plan. It could be a student learning plan where the supports needed for the student can be provided in the classroom environment, and there is a need, though, for this plan to be put in place in order to help both the student and the teacher — and, of course, the family is another part of that triangle — to be able to ensure that everyone is aware of the type of support. This is typically the reader or scribe to help or more time for doing assignments — these kinds of things. It may be determined that the support is behavioural in nature, and so there is a behaviour support plan option. Then there is an individualized education plan. In that individualized education plan, there are typically more assessments involved, and these students with IEPs would typically be students who are receiving a modified program, so there will be aspects of their learning that will be adapted around the outcomes of the curriculum.

What I mean by that is that a student may require some modification in just one subject area — perhaps math — but for all of the other subject areas, they’re able to still meet the similar curricular outcomes. So, that’s the kind of thinking work that goes into the establishment of a student’s learning plan. Then, from there, there is a process of expectations around evaluating, recording the supports, and then reporting to families on the progress that is in place. That reporting and checking in with families should happen three times a year. That was one of the questions: How do parents know? For these types of plans, for them to be effective, there has to be conversation with the caregiver as well as the student to ensure that they are effective.

So, ways, then, that we determine the specific supports that might go into identifying what can happen for that student and be expected in their learning day — teachers might work with families to identify if they can meet the needs of the student in the classroom with some adjustments. If the student needs more significant support, the teacher would then refer to the school-based team. The school-based team then is a broader group of supports within the school. So, the teacher tries to work with the parents — and this is an important conversation because parents — especially parents of kids with diverse learning needs — know their children well, and it’s very important that the conversation happens with the parents and the student at the initial stages.

More supports are brought in — school-based teams — so this might look like your learning assistance teacher or counsellor at the school — and they continue to look at what supports are needed.

There may be referrals that are made to Student Support Services to bring in more targeted resources to help determine what is the best support needed. Of course, in this process at any time, the parent or guardian can request a school-based team to happen, but essentially the school-based team is in place to ensure that communication is happening across those

supports. Then, along this journey, if it is still determined that, even with the central support coming from Student Support Services, there are still questions unanswered about what is getting in the way of learning or what type of support is needed, the school-based team can request for a more specialized or formal assessment from the specialist — this is typically supported by the Student Support Services unit — and then the school-based team works together to make a plan. Will it be an informal assessment or will it be a formal assessment by an educational psychologist? There is a determination made there. Whatever comes out of that is, of course, intended to be reported in the IEP and then that is the road map for the support strategy that needs to be put in place for that student. That is the process that is outlined.

Of course, what the audit found when they went to look at the schools that they did look at — a representative but smaller group of schools, not every school in the Yukon — is that there are inconsistencies in how schools are going through that process. They found that, essentially, at the schools that they went to, these processes were not being followed.

I think I have answered the question about the types of education plans. How parents are being informed — I mentioned that, you know, we do have this requirement. It is part of the procedures that there is that check-in at the start of the school year. There is typically the check-in: Where are we at? What are we anticipating for this school year? Checking in is always good — and how things went over the summer. Are plans that were left off in June still appropriate? Significant work is done at the start of the school year, with a check-in ideally midway through. At the end of the year, these meetings are really talking about: How far did we get, and what are we looking to do as we head into the anticipated coming school year?

Maybe I will just stop there and just check in to see if I have answered all of the pieces of that question.

**Ms. White:** I thank you for that answer — and parts, for sure. Just a reminder that these questions come from community organizations directly, and so I appreciate that you listed things that should be happening, but you also highlighted that, in the 2019 audit, processes were not being followed within school communities, which is part of the problem. So, from the standpoint of these organizations, they have questions about whether or not there is a policy or guideline for the use of IEPs, and has it been formalized, and if it is in use, who was consulted in its creation? Then I will add one question to that, which is: Where can these organizations find them?

**Ms. Morgan:** Thank you for that question. I think that it is a very important one.

The first piece — what is the procedure, and is there actually a formal one in place? Yes, there is. It is the 2015 handbook of procedures and that will be an exhibit — as you can imagine, one of the larger documents. That will be provided to all of you.

Then, how is that communicated? We met with a number of folks — Autism Yukon, LDAY, the Yukon Teachers' Association, and the First Nation Education Directorate — and listened to many of the concerns. I just want to acknowledge

those groups and others, like the Child Development Centre — all of the community resources that are in place to try to help families with children and, in particular, families with children with diverse needs. Their work and their advocacy are so important. They know things — and they have a different relationship with how they work with families — that enable them to be very effective advocates. One of the things that they talked to us about in this meeting that we had was around the fact that this information is just so hard to find, and we identified that communication is a significant challenge. This will be part of the review of inclusive and special education. There is a community inquiry working group working on this, and I know that stakeholders are part of this conversation as well — that we have to communicate to parents in a different way. A big piece of holding the system accountable is making sure that the folks accessing these systems — so, students and families — actually know what they're entitled to and what they should be receiving.

From that meeting, we discussed that this information about the handbook needs to be on a website; it needs to be somewhere that's easily accessed so parents know about that. I can confirm that this work was done and is now available on yukon.ca.

I appreciate that it doesn't reflect all the work that still needs to be done. That's only capturing the current process of where we're at. There is big work to be done to ask questions around why schools are not getting the work done. There for sure is a piece around monitoring and tracking, and we have done some work in our student information system to allow us to, at the central location, better track that, but more importantly, we have to make sure that schools are able to monitor and track what is being outlined in these individualized education plans and what's getting in the way of the delivery of those supports that are put in place.

So, this is the work of the community of inquiry, and it is of course part of the reflection from the review of inclusive and special education. It was an important piece of how we engaged in that review to begin with. So, the number of people whom Dr. Yee spoke with — it is so much more than the online tool. In that review, we needed to hear the experiences of families so we could understand where the barriers are.

I would point to the end of the report where there's the feedback from families, which was the highest group that submitted feedback. They speak to a breakdown in communication within the department itself and it speaks to a lack of training, so there are a number of potential actions that we can take to ensure that these supports are in place — that we can begin to do immediately. That work and those conversations are underway. I would raise my hand and just really point to — it's really incredible — the work that the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate has done in such a short time with the mobile therapeutic unit and supports, in particular, for rural communities. These are examples of the kinds of partnerships that we need and ways in which we have to think outside the box.

In Dr. Yee's report, she connected with between 300 to 500 people. She reviewed notes from 31 focus groups, 26

individual interviews, which were pulled out from focus groups, where she offered that, if anybody wanted to go more in-depth with their experience, she would host the individual interviews. She received more than 73 submissions, and there were 500 stories and comments shared through the online tool.

So, while we could always reach further — of course, we want to reach further, but I would suggest, in terms of efforts that have been made to really understand what's going on, this is a significant improvement in engagement, of really trying to understand from stakeholders and families. It's just the start. The communities of inquiry are designed to continue to receive that feedback and understanding.

**Chair:** Thank you. Just a reminder that the forum questions are fairly specific, and so if you can keep your answers concise, brief, and to the point, we appreciate it.

**Ms. White:** I guess the one concern that I would have is that we have just recently asked some of those groups that you listed for submissions on the Department of Education's review of what they responded with in 2019, and these concerns were highlighted and brought back. I just wanted to put that in there.

The next question that they asked was: Can the department explain whether or not all students who were on IEPs have had them reinstated?

**Ms. Morgan:** We can give you an update on where we are with the reinstatement of IEPs. That was in response to a change that the Department of Education had put in place for aligning IEPs with processes that are part of the BC ministry's graduation program. We did work to reverse that back to the previous practice, and that work began in May and June of last year. I can confirm that, as a result of that work, there were student support plans that were changed. Parents and guardians were contacted, and changes from an IEP to another type of learning plan were then — they were offered the option to reverse and go back to an IEP or continue on with the current plan that their child was on.

As a result of that work, 39 students in learning plans were identified to be reinstated and in fact have been reinstated as IEPs: four as individualized education plans for implementation at the start of the 2021-22 school year; 22 families affirmed the desire for their child to remain on the student learning plan; and 10 plans were identified as students who have moved out of the territory or graduated.

**Ms. White:** One of the concerns that we have heard from these organizations, of course, was that, in some cases, families that they supported were not contacted. Did the Department of Education reach out directly to all caregivers who had children on IEPs to discuss next steps? If you weren't able to reach the parents, what steps did the department take?

**Ms. Morgan:** Thank you very much for the question. It kind of speaks to the full breadth of the department. The central administration and, of course, school-based staff are also with the Department of Education.

We asked our school-based staff who actually are in charge of the IEPs to reach out and contact them to do this work. They have assured us that they have contacted families and have reinstated IEPs.

My invitation here would be — for folks who are aware, I hear these conversations of parents not being contacted — please encourage them to contact either their school principal or the superintendent. Sometimes I know that they feel like they need to elevate that a little higher, so, for sure, they can contact the superintendent — and/or, if they know the name of the family, that can be provided to the central administration and to the superintendent, and we will follow up.

**Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Morgan. I just want to confirm this, then. So, based on those two questions, the department's position is that all students who were on IEPs have been reinstated, and the department's position is that all caregivers who had children on IEPs were indeed contacted?

**Ms. Morgan:** Yes, and I believe that there were, at the end of the school year last year, five families with whom we were unable to make contact, and they were marked for follow-up at the start of the school year, and it was confirmed to us from those schools that those five families were indeed contacted and the individualized education plans were reinstated.

**Ms. White:** In one of your previous answers, you talked about the importance of the outreach that had been done by the First Nation Education Directorate, which begs the next question. What additional resources have been put in place by the Department of Education to support the reinstatement of IEPs?

**Ms. Morgan:** In terms of additional supports for the reinstatement, when changes were made to IEPs, no changes were made to supports. The change was really around the type of IEP and how that IEP is tracked and used at the school level, but we did provide some support from central administration staff to assist schools in identifying which students needed to be contacted for reinstatement of a change. It was offered to each school — our central administration staff here — to help update plans according to the collaboration of the school-based team and where that was relevant to the student.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** We are going to switch gears to the officials who are here — now, really, questions focused on comments that we had from Autism Yukon.

The first question is: What data collection has begun since the 2019 Auditor General's report to measure the effectiveness of the approach to inclusive and special education that will allow for data-based decisions to be made? I will send that over to you. I assume that the last couple of years have been pretty difficult — in the middle of managing a pandemic — but we would like to hear what your approach has been to data collection on that.

**Ms. Morgan:** Probably the biggest piece of data collection has been through the review of inclusive and special education and really getting to what is happening in the system. Of course, a lot of these supports are not only provided by the Department of Education but span across Health and Social Services and other organizations as well. So, that was a big part of that work.

We've also made some updates to our student performance reports, as I mentioned, that now are referencing those students who are emerging or unknown — in particular on the reading,

writing, and numeracy assessments and the Boehm assessment, which is the tool that's used at kindergarten. By shining the light on the students who are struggling, we will have a better sense of whether or not the supports that we're putting in place for students are having the desired effect. That's with the tools that we do have.

As I mentioned, a big part of the review of inclusive and special education — the community of inquiry — they are going to continue working on identifying where there are data gaps and what types of tools and information we need to keep better track of how we're providing support for students with diverse learning needs and how we're ensuring that learning environments are, in fact, inclusive. That points to student satisfaction surveys. We do use some tools at the local level. Schools do use a survey — my school survey — that helps them get to the kind of experience that students are having at school. We know that we need to have some more targeted types of benchmarks, and so that came out in the review of inclusive and special education.

As I mentioned, the feedback from parents — a lot of questions about whether or not we're using those resources that we do have effectively. So, we want to understand that. We want to get to those root causes.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** My next question is: Following the report, is there a work plan that is in place to address that report? If so, who was consulted with on the creation of that work plan?

**Ms. Morgan:** Yes, there is a work plan. We do want to acknowledge the members of the First Nations Education Commission and the Advisory Committee for Yukon Education. We released the final report in June of last year — on June 1 — so that meant that our work on the work plan happened through the summer months. I just want to acknowledge all our partners who continued on that journey with us through the summer to put together the work plan. It is one of the exhibits that we are providing for the Committee. There are a number of actions in there — which I won't read — but I would say this: We have accepted all of the recommendations that have been provided to us in the review of inclusive and special education. The work plan is designed to follow all of the recommendations that were made and what we're doing with them.

I would highlight that, at the same time, on June 1 when we released, in ceremony, that report, we also made effort to speak to the child advocate's review that they had done on attendance. We have linked these two responses together because the report from the child advocate identified a lot of similar things that came out of the review of inclusive and special education really speaking to — when a student loses confidence in themselves as learners, when they feel like they don't really belong in the classroom setting, they typically start to disengage. That's when we see the increase in absenteeism. There are a number of other recommendations in the child advocate's report, but we have included that response in the work plan that was done together with our partners so that we can demonstrate that we are actioning both of those very important reports.

I think I'll stop.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** So, carrying on with that theme or topic, what training and support is available to support teachers and professionals who work directly with children with neurodiversity and those who are at risk for emotional and behavioural problems? I just wanted to focus on some of the capacity building that is being done by the department.

**Ms. Morgan:** Thank you very much for that question. In terms of training and support — and this is one of the themes that will come out of the community of inquiry, but it's good to touch base on what we're doing right now so we are not waiting for the communities of inquiry before we take any action.

There are training and professional development resources and these supports are really quite critical to making sure that we are implementing not only the modernized curriculum but also the appropriate supports for students who have diverse learning needs. One of the positions that we have here at the department is the positive behaviour and intervention support coach. This individual works very closely with school staff. It helps to provide support and train staff — in particular, work around students with autism and identifying risks and supports for students with emotional or behavioural needs. That would include students who have behavioural IEPs.

Training and support are available to all staff in areas working with students on the autism spectrum, supporting students with self-regulation, trauma-informed care, positive behaviour support, and then, depending on the needs of the school, there are other targeted types of training available.

We expect that, from the work of the review of the inclusive and special education report, the communities of inquiry, that we are going to see recommendations for more training and support in this area. It certainly comes out as feedback from folks who filled out the online survey tool. It also is identified in the review of inclusive and special education, and it is something that we are looking at when we work with jurisdictions across the country. We are not alone in our challenges to find specialized services and supports. The demand for those supports had been on the rise before the pandemic, and it has even increased as we wade our way through the pandemic.

So, one thing that we are learning from other jurisdictions is to have more trained generalists so that we can make maximum use of the specialists that we do have. I think that there is going to be more to come on this piece.

All of that is to say that our intended outcomes really are — it would be great to establish a professional development policy and a professional development calendar that would help us to support and maintain professional development. The Yukon Association of Education Professionals has really engaged in this work, and we just want to acknowledge their efforts. They spent a lot of effort in really thinking about how they do that work with their membership to support their professional learning. Of course, the association does a lot of work on this front. They have a transfer payment agreement with the Department of Education which flows significant amounts of funding for them to support the membership in their professional learning. That amount is \$475,000 per year, and

they work with their membership and have a lot of autonomy so that professionals can have agency over their learning. We look forward to continuing to partner with them on initiatives that will help us move forward in this area.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** This one — you have touched on it a bit, and I don't know how much feasibility you have to the professional development that is being covered through that PPA that you have with the professionals, but I will say broadly, what we are looking at for this question — since the 2019 report, what initiatives and programs have been started under the direction of the Department of Education to help address supports for children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, cited by the audit? Secondly, what is the goal of these initiatives and programs, and how do they enhance the existing supports in both in the short term and long term? I think that you touched on some stuff that is happening already, but if you could give us a sense — maybe as you talk to those other jurisdictions or are looking at what best practices are — of some of the things that you are thinking about and how they would be congruent with the existing programs and delivery.

**Chair:** So, Ms. Morgan, the question is about what initiatives and programs have been developed since 2019, not ongoing.

**Ms. Morgan:** Thank you for that clarification.

In terms of autism specifically, since 2019, I mentioned the positive behaviour coach who is working very closely, in particular, to support school staff working with students on the autism spectrum. We also, most recently, have assigned a teacher FTE this school year that was identified for a pilot to establish an autism spectrum teacher — an itinerant teacher who could work with all Yukon schools, especially those with higher populations of students with autism. We have started to recruit for that position and, at this point, we have not been able to successfully fill the position, but we intend to keep working to fill that role. We do see it as very important.

The last thing that I want to say on this piece is that we also know that, when we do look to other jurisdictions — for sure we do, but we also know that there is a lot of expertise here in Yukon as well, and so we absolutely would like to, and do try to, work with Autism Yukon and with the parents of children on the autism spectrum so that we can shape that support to meet their needs here in Yukon.

I would just then share that the positive behaviour intervention coach — although all schools can access this support, there are some schools that are working more closely right now with the positive behaviour intervention coach, and those schools would be Hidden Valley, Jack Hulland, Robert Service, Christ the King, Grey Mountain Primary, F.H. Collins, Takhini, Elijah Smith, and Vanier. I'll stop there.

**Chair:** Thank you. Just before I move on, can I just seek some clarification on that. You said that the pilot position that you put and weren't able to fill, specific to autism support — can you explain why it is that you weren't able to fill that position? Is there nobody qualified in the territory, or what happened with that position?

**Ms. Morgan:** There are a number of qualifications that are listed in the job posting, and we, just at this point, have not found anybody who is qualified in the territory.

**Chair:** Okay.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I believe that the deputy minister did touch on a number of parts of this question, so maybe it's on the latter part. The question is: What schools are benefitting from these programs — you did touch on a number of schools — and why were these selected?

I'll hand that over to you.

**Ms. Morgan:** Thank you for that question. I will answer it in part and then make a commitment to return a more detailed, written response. One of the reasons that I am aware of that we would be targeting the positive behaviour coach to go to schools is that, for example, at Jack Hulland school, they do have a shared resource program — the Grove Street program — and a past program that are behavioural programs, and so that would allow them some additional support from that particular coach.

I will, of course, indicate that Hidden Valley — I think we're all aware that there are other circumstances related to the sexual assault review that is going on and ongoing support for that school community, so those are the two connections that I am very familiar with, but I will follow up with a written response for you detailing how other schools access it.

I just want to clarify that those schools accessing right now the support from the positive behaviour support coach — it does not mean that other schools cannot access them. This is just a report on the schools with which they are spending most of their time right now.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** This is my final question on the theme: How is the Department of Education engaging with education partners and parents to track the progress of these programs that you have touched on? Does the department feel that the measures that they are taking at this point satisfy the recommendations found in the report?

**Ms. Morgan:** In terms of how we're engaging with partners, specific to the audit, we have worked with structures that have helped us to make a broader reach out. An example of that would be the online tool — the summit that was held on November 12. We were able to invite stakeholders — and, really, anybody who wanted to participate in that summit — to join us. Many stakeholders took us up on that offer. We had over 600 online participants for the summit.

These are just some ways — in terms of the targeted response to the audit — that we are reaching out to partners. We know that we have to do more work on this front, and we have to continue to reach out.

One of the things we have heard in the feedback of the review of inclusive and special education — and was mentioned in the January 12 hearing — is that sometimes schools, the central administration — we can appear like we're a fortress, and we are trying to reach in. I think sometimes where that comes from is that we too often respond with inviting folks to contact us if they are interested. I think we have to do more reaching out and contacting others.

An example of this is — I just want to again thank Melanie Bennett for her work, because she has helped us to see — for example, in the review of inclusive and special education — that the way in which we have invited First Nation partners to join us in the communities of inquiry didn't work. It's one of the areas that we are working on to get more representatives from First Nation governments and the First Nations Education Commission to join us in responding to the work plan and establishing those communities of inquiry. So, we heard that it doesn't work. We've already started conversations with Melanie and her team about: "What do we do?" We tried something; it didn't work; let's re-engage. Help us to understand a better way to do that. So, we are making efforts on those fronts.

Then, in terms of progress and tracking, I would say that, first to all, in terms of progress, we know that we have to have a greater presence — as I mentioned just before lunch — with access anytime, 24/7 information that parents, the public, and stakeholders can go to in order to get questions answered. So, as an example, we've already put the current procedures for IEPs online. This is significant for parents to understand at least what the current process is. Many parents have provided us feedback that they don't even know, for example, what the different IEPs are or that they can call a school-based team meeting at any time that they want one. So, we're starting on that journey. We have committed to that in our work for the review of inclusive and special education — that we will provide monthly updates on our work. So, a website is in development for us to be able to post how we're doing on our response. We're also going back to the First Nations Education Commission and the Advisory Committee for Yukon Education quarterly to report to them and share where we are collectively on our next steps on this work.

**Chair:** At this point, I just want to remind both the witnesses and the Committee members that we are in our final hour, so we'll just try to tighten up here for the last little bit to get through the remainder.

**Mr. Kent:** With that in mind, just for colleagues on the Committee as well as the witnesses, I'm going to drop question 40, because I think that it was largely answered in question 34, asked by Minister Pillai.

So, these two questions from me are also related to the Autism Yukon submission. The first one is: How will the Department of Education ensure that documentation of successful work done by support personnel is adequate to enable the continuation of those supports when there is a change in staffing or otherwise?

**Ms. Morgan:** This really speaks to how schools work within their own school setting and then how families and schools work when we are supporting the transition of students from, say, elementary to high school or switching the school that they are attending.

I will commit to a more detailed written response because I think that there are definitely some examples that we can give around how schools do that. But typically, what happens in a school year is that, when the school year comes to an end, the teachers and school staff — the school-based team — they do

have a series of meetings and they talk about the transition of students. The degree to which they are, in those conversations, looking at the outcomes that are outlined in an IEP or supports that have been put in place to support the diverse learning needs of a student — I think that this is an area that is more inconsistent across schools. So, we will commit to a written report that will give you more detail there on that front, but I would say that we certainly hear from parents and from educators that it would be a good practice to be able to take — when we know that there are successful interventions in place, that we make sure that those transition on to the next year because it does result in better outcomes for students. If that information is not passed on, what actually happens is that the new teacher, the new educational assistant, the new learning assistance teacher — they will all spend a lot of time at the start of the school year figuring that out. It's a bit of doing the same thing over and over again and not necessary. So, we agree that it is important, and we'll get back to you with a written submission with more detail. Thank you for the question.

**Mr. Kent:** This question is with respect to the ongoing implementation of the 2019 Auditor General's report. Can the department advise if there is a working plan, going forward, to involve stakeholders like Autism Yukon to provide status updates and work collaboratively on that progress being made with regard to these points in the 2019 report?

**Ms. Morgan:** Our intent is that we do want to work with the stakeholder groups. Many of these stakeholder groups — not all but many — have funding agreements with the Department of Education, and they are part of a variety of resources — that we need to make sure that we are effective in delivering the support that is needed for students. We really want to work with them.

We do have an opportunity every year for those that aren't funded by us. We have very valuable conversations when we have those meetings around funding agreements, because often they talk to us about what has been successful in programming that they are providing and what feedback they are hearing from the families that they are working with. We have invited stakeholders to be part of our community of inquiry, and there are some stakeholders that are already participating — I think that was reflected in the Child Development Centre's response to the Committee — and we will continue to reach out to stakeholder groups and really encourage them to be part of the communities of inquiry.

The other piece, of course, will be getting our website online and being able to share what the opportunities are so that we make sure that everyone knows that there is always an opportunity to come and engage in the work. Just because these communities of inquiry have started does not mean that we cannot add more into the working groups. They're designed in such a way that they can be very fluid. We expect that there will be people who will leave the committee for various reasons; that has happened on many committees. There may be some who, after the initial phase, will step away and others will join in, and that process is designed to allow for that.

Yes, we absolutely feel that stakeholders play an important role in having a broader set of resources, of helping us to see



that — educational assistants are very important — absolutely they are, but we are learning that they're also not the only support that students need, and we have to diversify that.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I'm going to follow up with questions from the Yukon Speech Language Pathology and Audiology Association. These are relatively quick, I think.

Does the department collect data on the number of students with language disorders? If so, how many students with language disorders do we have?

**Ms. Morgan:** Information about student needs and supports, including diagnoses around language disorders, are contained in their individual student files. For any student who has received an assessment, whether it's from Student Support Services or Health and Social Services or through a private clinician, that would still be documented on their individual student file.

At this time, we do not currently collate that data centrally; however, we believe that, as part of the work to respond to the findings of the review, we are working to identify options to improve tracking and monitoring. So, there is a community of inquiry where we're working, and it's really about monitoring what's in the learning plans and then the strategies that are identified for that support and tracking if they are actually happening.

When we start to build this data set, it will give us a better sense of where the greatest need is and what type of need is out there and an ongoing way that we can do this, because my suspicion would be that it's not the same all the time. Students grow up, they graduate, they move through the system, and new groups come in, and so we have to develop a tool and a way to track and monitor so that we can respond with the resources.

It does speak to what we've heard in the feedback from the online tool — that many feel like we are not allocating those resources in the right way, so we do acknowledge that this is an important piece of work that will be part of the review of inclusive and special education.

**Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Morgan. Kate White had her hand up for a minute there. Kate, did you have a follow-up question?

**Ms. White:** I don't mean to cut in front of Mr. Mostyn, but it just applies to the second question, so maybe I can just tack it on and then he can ask his question. Without tracking and collecting the data on how many students have a language disorder, how can the department make the decision that there are adequate resources to meet the needs without having that number?

**Chair:** Okay, I think that can blend with Mr. Mostyn's next question. Mr. Mostyn, I will let you go ahead with your question and then we can let Ms. Morgan answer them both.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** How many speech language pathologists are available at Student Support Services? In the view of the department, is this number sufficient?

**Ms. Morgan:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you both for that question.

I would think that the short answer, of course, is that this is what the audit pointed out — that we don't know. In the absence of this information, we don't know if the resources that

we do have are being allocated appropriately and, when they are allocated, if they are having the impact that we are looking for. So, that is one piece and it is why we have accepted the recommendation and have the community of inquiry underway to look into this and to identify the gaps and what kinds of information we need to be collecting and tracking.

In terms of speech and language pathologists, there are currently four FTEs at the Department of Education. They are specially trained individuals, of course. The Department of Education's speech and language pathologists are members of the interdisciplinary education team that provides a wide range of services. They don't just provide programming; they also do consultation assessments, training, and community liaison and, of course, provide the support in the education setting. They work collaboratively with other staff to provide understanding of student oral language and social communication. They support literacy development, behaviour, and general ability for students to participate in the classroom.

The role of the speech and language pathologists in Yukon schools — I do think that this is important because one of the questions that we have been asked in the past is: How many assessments have been completed here at the Department of Education by our educational psychologists? The bulk of our staff — specialists here at the Student Support Services unit who are located centrally — play two roles. They deliver service, and they also support training. That is the same case for the speech and language pathologists. So, they would support school staff in identifying students with oral and written language difficulty. They support the screenings of early development literacy skills. They help with assessing oral and written language. They function as members of school-based teams, so they consult with parents, guardians, and school staff to identify goals, strategies, and resources to assist students. They also develop and monitor individualized programs and support that work. They help to provide professional development for school personnel in collaboration with outside agencies.

So, do we think it is adequate? We don't know, but we do have a community of inquiry — inquiry group 7. They will be looking into examining how we do staff allocations, funding models, how we are resourcing student supports, and then working with the other communities of inquiry to help us determine how we can better allocate those resources.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you for that comprehensive answer.

Who was consulted and what was the critical analysis taken to select a balanced literacy approach over the use of science, of reading for literacy instruction, prior to the purchase of the Fountas and Pinnell program?

**Ms. Morgan:** My apologies, the binder has lots of paper in it.

So, in terms of the balanced literacy approach, this work was done to support Yukon's curriculum redesign when we were bringing in that redesigned curriculum. Consultants in the curriculum and assessment unit developed Yukon's balanced literacy approach using current research. This approach is quite well-researched as an instructional approach. It is scientifically

supported with evidence around the five components and is part of the balanced literacy program. We will make sure that an exhibit for the balanced literacy program is provided to you. It is basically a five-stream instructional approach that ensures the various levels of literacy — so, beyond reading — things like oral literacy, oral language, help with reading, and that kind of notion. Balancing that out in the classroom helps to support students. It doesn't eliminate other interventions that we have in place. So, to continue to support readers who are struggling, we continue to support the Reading Recovery program of kindergarten and the Wilson reading program.

Then the program selected for intervention for literacy — the second part of that question — the Fountas and Pinnell piece of that question — our schools use a number of different literacy tools to help benchmark where students are at in their reading. There is not just Fountas and Pinnell; there's Pearson literacy resources; there's Nelson literacy resources. What we have asked of schools and what we have seen in the past is that we can get pretty bogged down in trying to determine which of the benchmarking resources we use. What we are asking of our school communities is that they do the work to benchmark and find out where students are in their reading and that it's really about the support that you are putting in place to support those students in their literacy development and how you are tracking that the work is in fact successful — that you are seeing the desired outcome that you are looking for — that it's happening. They are using a number of different literacy resources to benchmark students' reading. They also use the DART and School-wide Write — so the DART is the district assessment reading tool — and that's another tool that they can use to check in on where students are at. That, combined with one of the reading benchmark tools — such as Fountas and Pinnell — will assist schools in better determining what other strategies to use with the students whom they are supporting.

So, there is a combination of literacy pieces — balanced literacy in the classroom, an instructional approach, and then getting into more targeted support through reading benchmarks and then interventions like Reading Recovery and Wilson reading — that go to students who are struggling the most.

This is an important piece for us in terms of outcomes. So, right now, this is one of the outcomes that we have had in place for a number of years — really tracking how students are doing in their reading by grade 3. There is a fair bit of research around the importance of being able to read to learn at grade 3. There is a very strong connection and correlation between that reading level at grade 3 and whether or not you will graduate and whether or not you will be able to catch up that reading in your educational journey. So, this is very important work. It is part of our recovery response to the pandemic. As many parents are, we are concerned about outcomes around reading in the early grade levels, and we're working to take steps to support schools in tracking that.

The last thing that I'll say is that, when we look at the school growth summary — the summary of the school growth plan — you will see a number of schools in there talking about how they are using this tool as part of their school growth plan and tracking literacy at their schools.

**Chair:** Mr. Mostyn, it sounds like the witness may have just answered the next question, but I'll leave it to you to ask that.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I was actually going to note that, Mr. Chair. That's absolutely correct. I will skip 46 and go on to 47, which seems like a new question. Who will participate in the community of inquiry to explore solutions for inclusive education?

**Ms. Morgan:** In terms of that participation overall — I'll try not to repeat too much of what has already been said — I think we have identified the work that we have done — the focus groups, the online tool, trying to gather feedback there. We have talked about how we are working with partners in education, establishing the work plan. We frame this work — as we talked about — in the spiral of inquiry because we feel that process is going to identify some specific things that the Auditor General pointed to — those including the use of data — so we collect it. We need to actually now use it in a strategic way to inform what we're doing and then, most importantly, as part of that process, to come back and check in on how we are doing. The communities of inquiry are working groups that provide opportunities for a number of folks to be involved.

We have talked a lot about partners. I want to keep on the forefront the importance of school staff being part of this process. It goes back to that notion that we all want to be part of the circle.

Many talk about this top-down approach, and we are working very intentionally not to be top-down, because we know that it doesn't result in the impact that we're looking for at the school level, so we really want school staff to be part of this process, to engage in the questions with curiosity. Being at the table to be able to listen to partner groups, to stakeholders, to parents, to other educators from across the territory — that diversity of perspective is significant, and it's an important piece for our school staff to be part of — then, of course, to be part of the recommendations and have some sense of agency and engagement and involvement in this work, so they are part of the community of inquiry. Also, representatives from First Nations, other stakeholders — and we're naming here who was invited to the summit: Autism Yukon, the Learning Disabilities Association of Yukon, the Child Development Centre, school councils, and I've already mentioned school staff — all of these folks were invited to the education summit, as well as First Nation chiefs and government representatives. We have invited — and, as I mentioned, are going to continue to invite — individuals to come and join these communities of inquiry when they can. It's not the only way to provide us feedback. Our intention is to use the information that has been provided as part of today's hearing, to share that with the communities of inquiry and make sure that those groups that took time to provide feedback — that feedback is going back to the communities of inquiry.

There are, as of today, eight different people from these organizations — Autism Yukon, Learning Disabilities Association of Yukon, FASSY, the Child Development Centre — six of eight working groups have representation from those groups on them, so that's an encouraging start, but we would

like to see more. As I mentioned, we have targeted work conversations underway with the First Nation Education Directorate on how we can rethink how we invite First Nations to join us in this work.

**Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Morgan. I believe, in the course of your previous answers, you have addressed many of the subsequent questions, so I'll skip ahead a bit, but the one I did want to note, just based on your last answer: Does the Department of Education have a plan to engage with the Yukon Speech Language Pathology and Audiology Association to consider ways in which speech language pathologist supports can be improved or expanded?

**Ms. Morgan:** As I mentioned earlier, we do see speech and language pathologists as a valuable resource, and certainly this association is a very important resource. I really appreciated the time that they took to provide very thoughtful feedback in their response that was provided to the Committee. These are services that are in demand, and I know that they are services that are being provided by the mobile therapeutic unit as well. In terms of how we plan to engage with them, they provided this response. We are going to reach out to them, let them know that we are sharing that information with the communities of inquiry, and invite them, if they would like, to participate in this work with us.

**Chair:** Excellent. Thank you, Ms. Morgan.

So, we'll carry on to the next section. Ms. White has questions in relation to the submission from the Yukon Association of School Councils, Boards and Committees.

**Ms. White:** Is there a policy framework in place, or under development, for Yukon First Nation language instruction within Yukon schools?

**Ms. Morgan:** The short answer is not at this time. We have been engaging with the Yukon Native Language Centre and the Council of Yukon First Nations in our desire to move this work forward, fully acknowledging that this work needs to be led by Yukon First Nations.

It has been made clear to us that the work right now for Yukon First Nations — the priority is language revitalization. This is a good example of how we work together and the learning that we continue to do. While this is a priority for us as part of the audit, it's not necessarily the priority work for First Nations or for the Yukon Native Language Centre.

I think we all agree that it is important work and that we want to get to putting a policy together; it's just how we go about it. We have to make sure that we continue to build up and be allies with First Nations in their work around language revitalization.

So, we do have ongoing discussions with the Yukon Native Language Centre. We have increased their funding to do some work around programming, and we have re-established the language position within the First Nation Initiatives grant that was something that was identified as a need. We now have that position back in place, and we look forward to continuing our conversations on that work. So, it is still ongoing but not at the expense of language revitalization.

**Ms. White:** Thank you for that answer.

The next two questions that we had — actually, you have answered previously, so they are about the data and analytics unit and collection of information and then student outcomes. They have already been answered, so I will hand it over.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Just give me one second; I am scrolling up on my little phone here.

**Chair:** Do you want me to read the questions here?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Yes, I am just trying to pull it up on my screen — I'm sorry.

**Chair:** Okay, the next questions are about specialized assessments. Go ahead.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** The next one within that is: Is there a system for prioritizing students for specialized assessments?

**Ms. Morgan:** Thank you for that question. I am just working my way through this binder here. Sometimes it is just easier to rip the page out.

So, we have heard, through the review of inclusive and special education and certainly in the audit and from many families, partners, and stakeholder groups, about the need for more specialized assessments. Work will be ongoing and part of the review — there is a group working on this area — a community of inquiry — and working on this very question.

In the meantime, is there a process? So, if a student needs a formal assessment, school staff may implement many strategies, supports, and accommodations that would be recommended through the school-based team through its informal assessment. That is a bit of that process that I mentioned earlier where they start with informal processes, working their way toward: Do we need a formal assessment and what kind will it be? The length of time to perform an assessment is dependent on the complexity of the student's needs, the nature of the assessment needed, and the schedule of the professional who is administering this assessment. So, when an educator or a parent has concerns about student learning, that first step is through the school-based team, as I described. If a referral is needed from the school-based team, Student Support Services staff will then determine the type of assessment needed. The nature of the need that is described to them by the school-based team is all part of the review, along with the student's file. So, there is no line; there is no list of who is in any kind of queue or order. It really is trying to be responsive to the needs and the type of assessment that the school-based team is looking for. We hear that it is not working. As I mentioned, there will be work done on this as part of the community of inquiry.

I mentioned, I think, earlier — but just to make sure that I haven't forgotten this — that the Department of Education educational psychologists have completed 123 assessments in the last year, and those would include academic assessments to determine a student's ability in relation to the curriculum as well as the more complex, multi-faceted assessments.

I will stop there.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** The second question is: How does the department assess and track specialized recommendations and teachers' use of recommended strategies? I am just wondering, when you answer that, if you can touch on one other thing. I know that, with my previous experience in dealing with school

councils, there was a period of time when we were even seeing doctors or GPs writing notes and saying, “Hey, you have to do this specialized assessment.” I know that, working with other teachers — and my colleague, who was here today, was a minister at the time — I think that the administration felt that it was difficult — just because you have a GP who is sort of informing that there has to be an assessment. I don’t know if that is still happening, but if you could touch on that, it would be great.

**Ms. Morgan:** Yes, thank you for the question. I may start at the end and go to the first part of the question. In terms of recommendations from GPs and other professional resources where a recommendation might be made for a student to be assessed, that does follow a similar process. It comes in either through the school-based team or through Student Support Services. Those assessments would become part of the student’s individual education plan and then part of any following student learning plan or individualized education plan that would be developed.

Then to the question about how we are tracking — I think that there are a couple of pieces here to think about. One is around how we use report cards and our requirements to communicate to parents about student progress. There are requirements for teachers to be able to report around the progress that students are making on their individualized education plans. Those records, of course, become part of the student’s file. That is one way that we are tracking within the school and then also reporting back to parents.

The other piece around this is our student information system. I think that this will be a big opportunity, as we continue to move forward. This is where, now, the information for our student’s individualized education plan is placed into the student information system and then, from there, it does offer that the student information system — referred to as “Aspen” — is used every day by Yukon teachers. It’s a way where they can see — so if you are a teacher of a student who has an IEP, you would be able to see that in the student information system. So, every student who is on a learning plan of any type is flagged within that student information system so that the teacher is aware that the student has an individualized education plan.

These are just some of the pieces that we have right now where we can ensure that we are checking in and actually tracking and implementing what is in a student’s individualized education plan. The requirements for schools on how they report on student learning is all part of our communicating student learning professional learning tool. That outlines not just report cards but also informal assessments that are used to communicate where students are at.

Of course, the community of inquiry is going to look into this because, as we mentioned in today’s hearing, communication to parents, communication between the school and parents, communication between the school-based team and the Student Support Services unit — these are all areas that we need to improve, in particular, making sure that information is flowing and that information is being tracked so that we can ensure that we are providing the student supports that have been

identified for them. So, we fully expect that there will be more that will come to us from the community of inquiry on where we can leverage these tools, and others, to improve on this front.

**Chair:** There is one further question from the Yukon Association of School Councils, Boards and Committees.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Has the department considered holding anticipatory hiring for teachers and teachers on call earlier in the calendar year? So, a bit of a change.

**Ms. Morgan:** Thank you very much for that question. That is certainly something that has been front of mind throughout this school year and part of many conversations with school councils and with school administrators. We do want to work toward anticipatory hiring for teachers. The Yukon government — Department of Education — does allocate teaching positions based on full-time equivalents. We do present that in a staffing allocation. It’s primarily based on student enrolment and class sizes, which are outlined in the Yukon Association of Education Professionals collective agreement.

There are other aspects of that staffing allocation. We know, of course, that student enrolment is one piece. There are also some differentiated types of FTEs that are provided to schools. An example of that would be Reading Recovery.

One of the key pieces of getting anticipatory hiring is being able to finalize our staffing allocation as early as we can. Then, when we move out to actively recruiting, we are working really hard to recruit caring and qualified staff for Yukon schools. We maintain high standards for staff who are selected to work in Yukon schools.

Finding the best combination of qualifications, experience, and suitability can be difficult at times. If we know that we have some kinds of positions that are hard to fill — French immersion would be an example of that, where there are additional layers. But we agree that the earlier we can get that recruitment process started, we want to do it. We are also looking, through our Human Resources unit, at additional ways that we can use various online tools to help us with our recruiting efforts, to get information out about positions that we do have — and working with the Public Service Commission on recruiting efforts — again, an example would be for French immersion positions and participating with them in opportunities to target French-speaking communities so that we can broaden our reach for hard-to-fill positions.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** My last question from this group, starting with: Why were educational stakeholders — such as Autism Yukon, Learning Disabilities Association of Yukon, and the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate — not invited to participate in the working groups set up to work on special and inclusive education?

I’ll put that to you. Just out of interest, when do teachers have to inform the department if they are coming back for the following year or not? I am touching on your HR strategy, just out of interest.

**Ms. Morgan:** In terms of when a teacher has to inform, it is a bit of a challenge because it is later in the school year. I will confirm the actual month with you, but I believe that it is

either the month of May or June — I believe it's June — when they have to confirm, but we do agree that the earlier that process occurs, it does help us with anticipatory hiring, for sure.

In terms of participation for key stakeholders like Autism Yukon, Learning Disabilities Association of Yukon, and the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate, it speaks to what I have commented on earlier. These groups were invited to participate in the November 12 summit where we worked to establish the communities of inquiry. That invitation was extended there at the summit. There was some follow-up provided to participants of the summit, just connecting to resources and reporting of the summit.

Some of these groups are participating in communities of inquiry, and others are not. As I mentioned earlier, we are going to be continuing to reach back out to stakeholder groups and reach back out to members of the First Nations Education Commission and members of First Nation governments to ensure that they are aware that it is not too late and that they can participate in these communities of inquiry. We welcome their perspectives and value those perspectives.

**Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Morgan. For my colleagues, we have about 14 minutes left, so I think that Mr. Kent's next questions are from the Yukon T1D Support Network, and if we get through those, there's one more from Mr. Mostyn.

**Mr. Kent:** As you mentioned, Mr. Chair, this is the last set of questions that I will be asking. I just wanted to quickly thank the deputy minister and the ADMs who are here today, as well as all the support staff who helped prepare for the hearing. It's much appreciated.

As the Chair mentioned, the Yukon T1D Support Network also made a submission. One of the first questions that we would like to ask from that is: What is the Department of Education doing to incorporate other groups, such as children living with disease, in their inclusive education planning? How does the department foresee action to better educate employees on this demographic and provide supports, where necessary?

**Ms. Morgan:** Thank you very much for that question. It's an important one because this is part of the role that educational assistants, teachers, and school-based staff play in supporting students and keeping them safe when they are at school.

School staff have a duty of care to students who are at risk from severe medical conditions, including conditions such as diabetes or anaphylaxis, and if they require medication and other care while under school supervision. These students require and receive planned care and support at school on field trips, and while being transported to and from school, to ensure their safety.

We do that through asking Yukon schools to follow the requirement of the administration of medicine to students policy, which includes processes for documentation of chronic medical conditions that may require support from adults while at school.

A collaborative approach is taken to develop a detailed and specific response plan to keep the student well. The parent of a child with a severe or chronic medical condition is required to inform the school of their child's condition. The requirements,

including providing any medication or medical devices that the student requires, are at school. All school staff identified to provide supervisory support to a student with a severe or chronic medical condition must be informed of the student's medical condition and the planned response to emergency situations and must be provided with specific training and other support required to deal with a medical emergency and administer medication to the student.

The school bus registration form also contains information about medication and care that a student may require. This information is provided to Standard Bus and may ensure that the student's bus driver is provided with information and training to support the student.

Just in the efforts of time, in terms of this policy, I know that there have been questions around the development of a policy around type 1 diabetes. For specific conditions like this, we welcome the opportunity to have a meeting with the T1D Support Network to review the existing policy that I just talked about and to review that, to share what schools are giving, and then to identify any gaps that need attention.

**Chair:** Mr. Kent, if there are other questions there that can perhaps be added or that haven't been addressed — go ahead.

**Mr. Kent:** I think that the deputy minister provided quite a bit of information on the next question about what supports are being provided, and she did commit to a meeting with the T1D Support Network. Perhaps I could get her to clarify if that meeting would include work to develop and implement type 1 diabetes policies to be used and adapted in all Yukon schools.

**Ms. Morgan:** Thank you for that follow-up question.

I think that we would determine that next step after we review the existing policy and then identify where there are any gaps — what that looks like in terms of the policy that we do have and how we can address the concern with the T1D Support Network. Does it warrant a separate policy? Can we make it work within the policy that exists?

**Mr. Kent:** I guess, as a sort of follow-up on that question, I am curious if the department is open to working with families with children living with other diseases to develop and implement policies that reflect their diverse needs as well.

**Ms. Morgan:** I would say that it is very important for the policy, as I have just described it — there are responsibilities for families; there are responsibilities for school staff or partners like Standard Bus who work with us. We welcome opportunities to ensure that we are able to help folks understand the policies at schools, how they work, how we keep children safe, and how we work together to ensure that this happens. We are always interested to hear from partner and stakeholder organizations, and this may lead to a broader conversation around the use of the policies in schools, so we are always open to conversations.

**Mr. Kent:** One final question: In the 2021 Spring Sitting, the Legislature passed a unanimous motion for the development of a Yukon diabetes strategy with a target for the fall of 2022. I know that the T1D Support Network is one of the partners in developing that, and I believe that the lead department is Health and Social Services. I am just curious if

the Department of Education is also playing a role in the development of that strategy.

**Ms. Morgan:** We are certainly aware of and supportive of that. Earlier this year, the Yukon government was the first jurisdiction in Canada to provide permanent coverage for continuous glucose monitors to, I believe, those 18 and younger with type 1 diabetes.

We know, of course, that there will be conversation happening in the communities of inquiry that may put forward some additional strategies to improve overall the education system's response to supporting students. We know that we will be receiving some recommendations there that might touch on this work. We expect this work to include collaborative work with Health and Social Services to ensure that services in our schools are coordinated across governments. I look forward to having the opportunity to sit down with the Yukon T1D Support Network, because I think these conversations will weave together in helping Education to ensure that we have the right policies in place and that we are addressing the concerns.

**Chair:** I believe that's it for you, Mr. Kent. Mr. Mostyn, perhaps, with one final question — I think we have time for one more.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** The grand finale of the day — thank you very much for your participation — we will say to the officials before I wrap this up — and to all those supporting this hearing this afternoon.

My final question this afternoon is sort of a summary question, I suppose. How will the department be accountable for required changes that are currently part of the department's data set, for example, progress related to decolonization or racism and progress related to addressing social and cultural issues?

Thank you very much. It has been an honour to be part of this today.

**Chair:** Ms. Morgan, one of the broadest questions to conclude with.

**Ms. Morgan:** Thank you for the question. You saved the hardest for the last, didn't you?

There is significant work in this area. It's at the core of the challenges that we are facing and really asking us to rethink what we are doing and to rethink what we know.

As a change or an update that is being made, the communities of inquiry are required to check for impact. We will be reporting, as I mentioned, monthly and going to our advisory committees quarterly throughout this process. I think that this is one way that we will be able to really be tracking on progress.

In terms of really getting to decolonization and racism and really asking ourselves, "What is the impact of colonizing structures?" — I mentioned a little bit in my opening around ethical relationships. We have a community of inquiry working through what that means. In a nutshell, that means that we see each other as connected to one another and that we see that our futures are tied together. Whether we see that or not, that is the reality. So, this lens that we are taking to decolonize — and we talk about assimilation and we use the example — we've been talking about this through this summit and ongoing — that a

colonizing structure looks like a structure that assimilates and that decides for everyone that this is the norm. We do that in school. We say, "You are a grade 4 student. This is the learning that you should have. This is the behaviour that you should display when you are at school. This is the way that you should do your homework." We apply that, and any student who doesn't meet that — we "other" them, we stream them, we identify them as vulnerable, and we do different things. So, we have asked and we are encouraging all of our staff to name and notice those structures. That is the first step in actually getting to acknowledging where the damage begins and where we can start to take meaningful action to change that system.

We are looking for these communities of inquiry to ask those questions and to feel safe in their questions and to do the research of how it can look different. We're not expecting more of the same. We are expecting that we will be able to know that we're on a good path because we will be doing things differently from how we have done them before.

In the past, schools have been conducting surveys about culture and belonging at their schools. We are hoping that the outcome strategy is going to come forward with some very different ways that we track how students are doing. Right now, we look like a typical jurisdiction in any part of the country that is tracking the graduation rate, numeracy, and literacy. What do we need to track to know that our schools are inclusive? What do we need to track to know that all Yukon students see themselves reflected in the school? How do we know that the way we are providing special education is actually having the outcome that we desire?

So, we will continue to be as transparent as we can in providing information on how our communities of inquiry are doing, and we look forward to continued work with First Nations, in particular around how we collaborate together and the student outcome strategy, which will help to continue to enable us to show the progress that we are hoping to make.

**Chair:** We'll have to leave it there, Ms. Morgan. Sorry to cut you off, but I think we have to leave it there. Our time has elapsed.

On behalf of the Committee, I just want to recognize that you have spent four of the last five hours steadily answering very detailed questions from this Committee, and so I want to commend you on your stamina and professionalism. Thank you very much. Thank you to Suzan Davy and Kelli Taylor, as well, for their support and the rest of your staff who have supported you this far, Ms. Morgan.

Before I adjourn the hearing, I have a few concluding remarks. As I said, I want to thank all of the witnesses. Today's hearing does not necessarily signal the end of the Committee's consideration of the issues raised in the Auditor General's report on education. The Committee may follow up further with the department. This could include more public hearings at some point in the future as well.

The Committee's report on progress on kindergarten through grade 12 education in Yukon will be tabled in the Legislative Assembly, and we invite those who appeared before the Committee, and other Yukoners who have been following

this, to read the report and communicate to the Committee their reaction to it.

More information on the Committee's work, including the submissions that the Committee has received, is available on the Committee's webpage, including the most recent submissions from the Department of Education submitted today.

With that, I would again like to thank all those who participated in and helped organize this hearing — in particular, Allison. With that, I will conclude and declare that this hearing is now adjourned.

*The Committee adjourned at 3:02 p.m.*