

**Yukon Legislative Assembly**  
**Whitehorse, Yukon**  
**Monday, November 16, 2009 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

*Prayers*

## DAILY ROUTINE

**Speaker:** We will proceed at this time with the Order Paper.

Are there any tributes?

## TRIBUTES

### In recognition of H1N1 staff

**Hon. Mr. Hart:** I rise today on behalf of the House to pay tribute to the people who have worked so hard to prepare and manage the H1N1 pandemic. In the past three weeks we have demonstrated the strength of our community and our sense of belonging to something bigger than ourselves.

Our chief medical officer of health, Dr. Brendan Hanley, has provided excellent leadership; nurses and physicians have put in long hours. Staff throughout the department and throughout the Yukon government have provided support at the mass immunization clinics, and the generosity of the City of Whitehorse took the sting out of waiting for the vaccine.

We have committed to keeping Yukoners up to date on the level of flu activity in the Yukon. Since mid-October, influenza activity throughout the Yukon has been increasing; however, as of last week, the indicators suggest this activity is steady. According to FluWatch, Canada's national surveillance system, we have moved from sporadic to localized flu activity. We also committed to speaking about the first hospitalization, the first outbreak, and the first death. Sadly, we have already announced each. There is no greater loss to a family than the death of a child. I speak on behalf of all Yukoners in offering our deepest sympathy to the family of the young girl who passed away recently due to the complications from H1N1.

The department's pandemic health response plan is essentially a three-pronged approach, with the goals of preventing widespread illness among Yukoners and providing appropriate care to those ill with influenza. The first prong of the plan is communication with the public to ensure that Yukoners are well-informed about how to protect themselves and their families from illness.

We have undertaken two large-scale mass media campaigns to reinforce good respiratory manners. "Critters" was focused at school-aged children and "Don't Be Sick" was aimed at Yukoners of all ages to remind people of the simple precautions they can take to reduce the spread of illness in their homes and workplaces.

During the latter part of the summer and into the fall, we visited each rural community and held information sessions with municipal officials, First Nations and the public at large to inform them about H1N1 and assist them in their preparations. We have used householders, radio spots and websites to get the

word out and we are reminding Yukoners to phone 811 for excellent, up-to-date information on prevention and self-care.

The second prong of our plan is the mass vaccination clinics, because immunization is the single most important public health measure to reduce the occurrence and severity of influenza illness. We were fortunate to receive most of our vaccine allotment in the first shipment. As a result, we do not have the shortages, and we do not need to limit or prioritize recipients for the vaccine. It is with a mixture of pride and relief that I report to this House that approximately 17,000 Yukoners have been vaccinated to date. That represents approximately 49 percent of the population. The outpouring of support from Yukoners has been tremendous and in the true spirit of wellness, we are grateful to the Canada Games Centre and the City of Whitehorse for providing free passes to their activities while Yukoners waited for their immunization. As good as 49 percent is, we want to boost these numbers even more. If we can approach close to 70 percent, we can literally bring pandemic influenza to a halt here in the Yukon.

That is why we will continue to hold clinics and make the vaccine available until every Yukoner who wants to be vaccinated is vaccinated.

The third prong of our plan is to ensure that Yukoners who are ill with influenza receive the care needed. This begins with having informed health practitioners. The chief medical officer of health and the staff of Yukon communicable disease control have ensured that physicians and other primary-care providers receive the most current guidelines on clinical care of those who are sick.

We have set up a flu assessment clinic in Whitehorse to alleviate the pressure on doctors' offices and the emergency room at Whitehorse General Hospital. By providing alternative care, the flu assessment clinic allows doctors to continue to provide a range of services Yukoners need. To date, we have had 10 hospitalizations with positive H1N1. Daily monitoring and surveillance of illness from a number of sources gives us the information we need to make good decisions. In this regard, we are being assisted by epidemiologists arranged through the Public Health Agency of Canada.

We have distributed antiviral medications to all medical centres and streamlined access in Whitehorse, and we have staff redeployment plans in place. We have developed outbreak and management plans in the facilities we manage such as Copper Ridge Place and assisted other closed facilities such as Whitehorse Correctional Centre. This plan is supported by a centralized coordination and management.

A health emergency operation centre is fully operational with up to eight staff at any time working to support the department and other health-sector partners. This centre also ensures that we are coordinated with the many other national activities.

I would like to close on a note of optimism and pride. Surviving a pandemic is about belonging to the community that cares for its fellow citizens and demonstrates in words and actions that we are all in this together. If each of us does what we can — from getting immunized to practising good respiratory manners, to helping out a friend, a neighbour or co-worker —

then we will be a stronger community when it is all said and done.

Again, I would like to thank our chief medical officer of health, the nurses and physicians who have put in long hours, and the staff from throughout the Department of Health and Social Services and the Yukon government, providing excellent service at the mass immunization clinics throughout the Yukon.

### **In recognition of National Restorative Justice Week**

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Restorative Justice Week. National Restorative Justice Week offers us the opportunity to reflect on the efforts made to find alternative ways to deal with harm caused by crime. The annual celebration of Restorative Justice Week was originally initiated in 1996 by the Correctional Service of Canada and has since expanded throughout Canada and around the world.

Restorative justice is a process that seeks to repair the harm caused by crime by bringing together the community, victims and offenders to find solutions. Restorative justice processes recognize that offenders harm victims, communities and also themselves. It is an approach that focuses on repairing and healing the harm caused by crime. It is grounded in values such as respect, inclusion, healing and compassion. It promotes community accountability and responsibility and responds to the needs of First Nations communities.

This year the theme of National Restorative Justice Week is, "Communities responding to human needs." Through locally developed responses, Yukon restorative and community-based justice is responding to human needs in our communities on a daily basis. These responses are reflected through the ongoing work of community justice to acknowledge the needs of victims, offenders and community.

Community justice initiatives continue to support, educate and deliver alternative measures in response to harmful behaviour. They prevent crime through greater community involvement and enable communities to reinforce values, traditions and expectations. Community justice responds to human needs by offering accessible means for repairing relationships, supporting healing, and offering hope for change. As a government, we are proud to be working on solutions that are based on a restorative philosophy and to be working to ensure that the positive impacts of restorative justice processes in the Yukon are being felt throughout Yukon.

Through the correctional redevelopment strategic plan and victims of crime strategy, we are working to promote healing and to offer support to victims and families while holding offenders accountable and encouraging healing and reintegration. As individuals, we all have a role in creating safe and healthy communities, beginning with how we deal with conflict. What can we do as caring citizens to promote restorative justice approaches in our lives and our communities? How do we work better together for positive outcomes?

Many of us work hard to support restorative and respectful processes in our families, relationships and workplaces. It is hard work, but the results are clear: more productive and healthier relationships, less bullying and victimization, and stronger communities.

At this time I would like to sincerely thank the individuals in the Yukon who are involved in restorative and community justice for their hard work and dedication to seeking local solutions to resolve conflict. These include members of community justice committees, community justice coordinators, government and First Nation officials, families, elders and individuals who all take part in restorative processes.

Günilschish.

**Mr. Elias:** I rise on behalf of the Official Opposition to pay tribute to National Restorative Justice Week. The theme for National Restorative Justice Week 2009 is, "Communities responding to human needs." Restorative justice is about giving all parties affected by crime — victim, offender and families and communities — an opportunity to engage in a dialogue in a safe and respectful manner. Restorative justice allows open dialogue between all the parties. For the offenders, it is about taking responsibility and being held accountable for the harm they have caused. For the victim it provides an opportunity to talk about the harm caused as part of the healing process. For the communities surrounding the victim and offender, it provides an understanding of the root cause of the conflict.

Community involvement in restorative justice is one of the core components of the approach. Communities are one of the strongest key players, as they include and represent all of the key members that need to be involved in the restorative justice approach.

Dialogue with, and a connection to their community and elders are two important factors that need to be fostered for an individual sense of belonging. When a sense of belonging to a community exists, it is less likely a person will cause harm. In addition, more educational institutions are exploring restorative justice approaches and training as a valuable tool in dealing with student conflict and bullying across our country.

On a personal note, Mr. Speaker, some 22 years ago in junior high school, I was a victim of some pretty consistent bullying. This very morning, I received an e-mail message from the person who used to bully me and others. I'd like to quote from that e-mail — a couple of sections: "Darius, I would like to take this time to apologize to you for the way I had treated people like yourself. I was a bully and didn't have the right to treat people the way that I did. I know you may never accept my apology and I don't blame you if this is your choice, but I just wanted to let you know I do realize that I was wrong and I am regretful."

Well, Mr. Speaker, I accept his apology. I explained to him in the e-mail I responded to about how brave he was and recognized the emotions he must have been feeling when he was dealing with his past. I wished him well, wherever he was, and I said I wish more people were as courageous as he to repair a harm done years and years ago.

I felt it necessary and fitting to share this unique and special experience I had this morning during National Restorative Justice Week.

**Mr. Cardiff:** I rise in tribute to National Restorative Justice Week on behalf of the New Democratic caucus. This

year's theme, as we've heard, is, "Communities responding to human needs". Within Canada, the movement for restorative justice owes much to the Yukon, and particularly to Yukon First Nation healing traditions. Restorative justice is a participatory process. It is intense; it is not an easy process. It responds to the concerns that locking people up does not necessarily make our community safer.

Within restorative justice, victims have the opportunity to speak directly to the offender about the crime and the damage caused. Talking about things, having those feelings validated, opens the doors for healing. For the offender, a full reckoning of the real human impact of their actions provides an opportunity for taking the personal responsibility that is necessary for real change and personal growth.

We give thanks and appreciation to community justice committees throughout the Yukon, all those volunteers, the community members, the coordinators and professionals who are involved in restorative justice throughout the Yukon. These committees have a very important responsibility for making our communities safer and more just. They don't get enough support — whether it's financial support or professional training.

If we truly subscribe to the vision of restorative justice, we must provide the resources and direction so it can survive and flourish here in the Yukon.

**Speaker:** Are there any further tributes?

Introduction of visitors.

Returns or documents for tabling.

## TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

**Mr. Nordick:** I have for tabling a letter dated November 12 to the chair of the Public Accounts Committee from the vice-chair of the Public Accounts Committee.

**Mr. McRobb:** I have for tabling a letter regarding the Public Accounts Committee. I also have for tabling a letter from the MLA for Copperbelt.

**Speaker:** Are there any further documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Notices of motion.

## NOTICES OF MOTION

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I give notice of the following motion:

THAT the membership of the Members' Services Board, as established by Motion No. 7 of the First Session of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Legislative Assembly, be amended by rescinding the appointment of Brad Cathers and appointing the Hon. Glenn Hart to the board.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT the membership of the Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges, as established by Motion No. 6 of the First Session of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Legislative Assembly, be

amended by rescinding the appointment of Brad Cathers and appointing John Edzerza to the committee.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT the membership of the Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, as established by Motion No. 9 of the First Session of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Legislative Assembly, be amended by rescinding the appointments of Brad Cathers and John Edzerza and appointing the Hon. Patrick Rouble and Steve Cardiff to the committee.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT it is the opinion of this House that

(1) climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing the world today;

(2) in Yukon and across the circumpolar north the effects of climate change are occurring at a rapid rate and are impacting forests, wildlife, transportation corridors, infrastructure, water, food security, and traditional ways of life;

(3) addressing climate change requires collaboration and action at all levels of government.

THAT this House recognizes the role of subnational governments' experience and expertise in informing and supporting national governments in achieving a global climate agreement at the upcoming Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen in December 2009; and

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada and all national governments to make every effort to reach an international agreement on climate change.

**Mr. Mitchell:** I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to lobby the Government of Canada to continue funding the territorial health access fund beyond March 31, 2010.

**Mr. McRobb:** I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue funding for the Yukon palliative care program.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the four Yukon government members of the Public Accounts Committee to ensure the committee functions properly by refusing to follow the Premier's political instructions to 'blow up' the committee.

**Mr. Fairclough:** I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Premier to begin acting in a professional and respectful manner when interacting with Yukon's professional public servants.

**Mr. Cardiff:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House supports the efforts of the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs as they seek to increase the viability of volunteer fire departments across Canada through reforms to the federal tax system that would:

(1) provide volunteer firefighters who perform at least 200 hours of service in a taxation year with a \$3,000 income tax deduction; and

(2) provide an employer with a \$500 tax credit for each employee who is actively serving as a volunteer firefighter or officer.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to seek answers and solutions to the deplorable health and living conditions of aboriginal people which affect their health, as indicated in the unanimous resolution of the Yukon Medical Association.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to undertake a sweeping judicial inquiry into the causes of the alarming decline happening to nine of Canada's 11 caribou herds, including the Porcupine caribou herd;

THAT this inquiry include, but not be limited to, the impact of environmental conditions such as climate change, recreational and subsistence hunting, predation, habitat loss due to industrial development, and other factors; and

THAT this inquiry should be modelled after the inquiry the federal government recently announced to look into the decline of the Fraser River sockeye salmon.

**Speaker:** Are there any further notices of motion?

Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### Question re: Aboriginal health

**Mr. Mitchell:** Mr. Speaker, it is a fact that aboriginal Yukoners live under markedly worse health conditions than do non-aboriginal Yukoners. As a result, they can anticipate much shorter lives than average. Aboriginal men can expect to live almost nine years less and aboriginal women more than seven years less than non-aboriginal Yukoners. This is an unacceptable state of affairs. It's unacceptable for our First Nation communities and it's unacceptable for Yukon as a whole.

It's clear that this government's aboriginal health initiatives are not working and it's time for the Minister of Health to recognize that. The situation is not getting better for First Nations and now we have an entire segment of our population living under substandard health conditions.

Will the minister please inform us when this government will finally do something that works to address aboriginal health in this territory?

**Hon. Mr. Hart:** We provide health care to all Yukoners in the same manner and in an equal process throughout the Yukon. We administer the health care program on behalf of First Nations, whereupon we deliver health care services and bill Ottawa at a later date. That is something that we have always done in Yukon and will continue to do so.

**Mr. Mitchell:** This involves much more than just health. This past weekend, the Yukon Medical Association turned its attention to First Nation health. Specifically, the as-

sociation said that one of Yukon's top priorities should be addressing the underlying social problems that result in below-par health outcomes among First Nation people.

At its annual general meeting, the association passed a resolution that recognized the important role of living conditions on First Nation health. To improve aboriginal health outcomes, they said that aboriginal living conditions must first be addressed, and they think it's time for all levels of government to provide answers and improvements. When will this government be making the improvements aboriginal Yukoners need to live longer, healthier lives?

**Hon. Mr. Hart:** With regard to the proposal made by the doctors on Friday at their annual general meeting, I, too, was there with regard to this discussion. However, it does say the government is involved. The federal government is responsible for First Nations and their health care system. Yes, we will work with the federal government in improving the conditions for First Nations. We understand that particular process. As I stated, we do provide health care to all First Nations here in the Yukon as we stated, and we do it on an equal basis.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Mr. Speaker, the association was pushing for all levels of government to address this problem. If we keep saying that it is a federal responsibility, I fear we won't make the progress.

Yukon's First Nation people can expect worse health and shorter lives than their non-aboriginal neighbours. Until this government takes real action to address substandard living conditions, this isn't going to change. Mr. Speaker, fully one quarter of Yukon's population is aboriginal. Twenty-five percent of Yukoners are already subject to the living conditions that result in worse health and shorter life expectancies. Yukon's doctors have told us that underlying social conditions hold the key to the disparity between aboriginal and non-aboriginal health outcomes. The question now is this: is this government ready to listen and make the real changes our First Nation communities need? Will the Minister of Health finally make a real commitment to Yukon First Nations' health?

**Hon. Mr. Hart:** We'll make a commitment to the benefit of all Yukoners for their health. We will continue to do so. With regard to providing assistance, we will work with all the governments in place, both First Nation and municipalities, in trying to address the situation the member opposite brings up.

In fact, we intend to do so in conjunction with the stakeholders involved by starting on our social inclusion process, which we hope to get off with a general meeting early in the brand new year of 2010 to seek input on just how we're going to address the issues of affordable housing, poverty and many of the issues attributed to many people below the poverty line.

### Question re: Whitehorse Food Bank

**Mr. Mitchell:** The Whitehorse Food Bank makes a significant contribution in the fight against hunger. When five percent of our city's population is drawing on the avails of the food bank, the government has an obligation to take notice. On August 25 at the community tour meeting in Whitehorse, the executive director of the food bank asked the Premier for help.

The food bank has been overwhelmed since it opened. One in 20 people in the City of Whitehorse are now using the services of the food bank, many more than expected, and the food bank needs more support to meet the demand.

The generosity of the community and the effort of volunteers have kept the food bank going and the government should step up to the plate. The Premier was asked at the community tour if a meeting could be arranged so the food bank could present their case for government support — a simple meeting. Has this meeting happened yet?

**Hon. Mr. Hart:** This government has assisted the food bank substantially. The member might have only just listened to CBC. One of the directors of the food bank has stated on several occasions where this government has provided substantial support in enabling the food bank to continue with its services.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Mr. Speaker, we acknowledge the start-up support provided by this government, but this is about today's reality. The Food Bank Society appreciates the government's past support, as the minister says, but the food bank is feeding more than 1,000 people a month when no one should be going hungry. Now the demand is going up, not down, and the food bank needs ongoing support. The food bank has made an appeal to the government for help. The executive director of the food bank asked the Premier three months ago for a meeting; that's all — a simple meeting to present their case. The numbers have gone up to five percent of the population and the food bank is doing its best to respond. The government can and should find a way to support this worthy cause. When is the government going to help the food bank with ongoing and stable funding support?

**Hon. Mr. Hart:** We have provided the food bank with the ability to do an analysis of what's required here in the Yukon. We provided funding for that particular process. We assisted them through the Anti-Poverty Coalition, as well as the new directors who have developed the poverty food bank situation. We did also provide them money through the community development program to get them established and funding to get them underway. This government provided them one-time funding to get it going — to ensure the food bank could get off on stable footing. Also, Mr. Speaker, it was the actual food bank directors themselves who said that their objective was to be sustainable, and they felt that the money being provided by the government would assist them in doing so.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Mr. Speaker, we're talking about the government providing ongoing operational support for the food bank, not the start-up costs and not leaving it depending solely on the generosity of overworked volunteers. At the rate things are going, the food bank will quickly become unsustainable if they are forced to rely solely on volunteer support. We have a very generous community, but it has its limits. The food bank is providing the public a huge service. More than 1,000 people a month are being fed.

The food bank is doing something for the citizens of Whitehorse that the government would otherwise be faced with responsibility for — making sure that the hungry are fed. The demands on the food bank keep going up, so the food bank

needs our help. The government has a responsibility to consider this request for help and, again, this government has not even met the request made three months ago for a meeting. When is this government going to get onside with this community priority?

**Hon. Mr. Hart:** Mr. Speaker, for the member opposite, our health officials have been in contact with the food bank on several occasions with regard to their funding. At no time has the food bank specifically come out and asked us for money. Yes, the member opposite made a point about the director asking for funds earlier during the community tour; that is true. With regard to that, as I stated earlier, one of the directors has already come on record indicating how much support this government has provided in getting the food bank underway and started. We did provide funding after they got started to assist them in the process. We are continuing to look at the situation that is there.

Thank you.

#### **Question re: Land-based treatment centres**

**Mr. Cardiff:** Last Question Period I asked about land-based treatment centres and got some very confused and confusing replies, so I'd like to pursue this matter again.

The Minister of Justice said her department is working on a land-based treatment centre in the Yukon — that's singular: one treatment centre — but the Minister of Health and Social Services said his department is reviewing a couple of submissions from First Nations. Then the Premier was quoted in the press last Friday saying the government is working to have a treatment centre with a specific First Nation he named.

Will somebody please stand up and clarify which member of the government is right and tell us how many treatment centres are being considered?

**Hon. Mr. Hart:** We have been working with the First Nation for approximately two years now on a land-based system. It wasn't until just recently when we were able to make contact with a couple of the First Nations who have done some preliminary work with regard to land-based treatment centres. We are currently in the midst of reviewing the information they have obtained and will be having some discussions with them and moving forward with the possibility of a land-based treatment centre here in the Yukon.

**Mr. Cardiff:** The minister didn't really shed any light. He didn't tell us who he was talking to, which First Nations were involved in these discussions. We've still been given three widely different options to choose from. It's clear to me that this government has no clear processes to decide anything to do with treatment centres.

This initiative could end up potentially costing taxpayers millions of dollars, and confusion in the government benches is running rampant. Will the government tell us this then: who will be making the decisions on these treatment centres and who will be consulted before a final decision is made?

**Hon. Mr. Hart:** With regard to land-based treatment centres here in the Yukon, the decision will be made with the stakeholders involved, with the First Nations involved and ourselves as to how and where these land-based treatment centres will take place.

**Mr. Cardiff:** We think the Minister of Justice was right last week and that it should be up to First Nations to decide where a land-based treatment centre should go and whether or not there will only be one. However, this government is once again making decisions for First Nations without consulting them in a meaningful way, as exhibited by the Premier's comments on Friday. The Minister of Justice is fuelling the rumours and innuendos she complained about last week because she refuses to give us the basic information.

The minister said he plans to consult with First Nations. Does he plan to consult with all First Nations before making this important decision? What process will it follow to do that and when will that process start?

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** I think the only confusion here is with the opposition, as we have said many times in this House that we are consulting with First Nations. It is their decision. We want it to be driven by First Nations, for First Nation people. We are working interdepartmentally, and we are listening to First Nations, as we did in all other matters. We will have a land-based treatment centre. Whether there is one or two depends on the First Nations' proposals. Those plans are coming to fruition and they will be going forward in the very near future.

#### **Question re: Aboriginal health**

**Mr. Cardiff:** This weekend, the Yukon Medical Association unanimously passed a strongly worded resolution that said that the most pressing medical issues are the underlying social problems responsible for the gap between First Nation and non-First Nation outcomes. To put it bluntly, the doctors say that the reasons why First Nation persons die so much earlier than the rest of the population are due to social problems such as addictions.

Four years ago, the then Minister of Justice announced this government's substance abuse action plan. He called it a significant, exciting new policy direction to guide government responses to the problematic substance abuse in the territory over the next five years. The plan was to be reviewed regularly. Will the Minister of Health and Social Services or the Minister of Justice tell us when the plan was last reviewed and what the results were?

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** As we know, the largest driver of crime in the Yukon and damage to communities and individuals is substance abuse. We have put many, many initiatives in place — the substance abuse action plan — to help these individuals. We have the Community Wellness Court. We are putting new programming in at WCC. The list is endless of what we are doing. We're still working on it. We recognize that substance abuse is the largest driver of crime and ill health in Yukon.

**Mr. Cardiff:** If the list were endless, the minister would still be talking.

Although the plan doesn't go far enough and certainly isn't very detailed, we welcomed that initiative. It followed through on the four pillars initiative in B.C. and had an emphasis on harm reduction, prevention, education and treatment and enforcement. Unfortunately, several good recommendations in the plan were ignored.

We have read motions into the record about them but this government has so far failed to act on them. Most important were recommendations to expand outreach, to establish community planning, development and funding for addictions treatment and to establish a community harm-reduction fund. The minister didn't tell us about the review or what the outcome of that was. Will the minister tell us what has changed for addictions treatment and harm reduction in the four years since this plan was announced and the \$2 million that was attached to it?

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** You know, I have just been thinking here that it was before this government that the Sarah Steele addictions centre was closed right down. Where did Yukoners have to go? It was this government that opened the Sarah Steele centre again. We put in the substance abuse action plan throughout Yukon. We are working with the Women's Directorate to stop violence against women. We have new programming at WCC. We have community justice initiatives.

The list is endless and if the member opposite would like a briefing on these, he can certainly contact me because it would take up too much time in this Question Period.

**Mr. Cardiff:** This government is apparently making plans to establish land-based treatment centres. It is important to note that a vital element to addictions treatment is the follow-up for clients when they return home. This is called after-care, and it responds to concerns that are the focus of the Yukon Medical Association's resolution that we mentioned. After-care is provided in a client's home community, it addresses the underlying social problems that affect their health and well-being such as employment, housing, counselling and family violence. Some of the more far-reaching recommendations in the substance abuse action plan mention community supports.

When it has established its land-based treatment centres, what will this government provide in clients' home communities to address the underlying social problems that cause the addiction in the first place?

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** It is this government's plan to work with the communities. We are working with the communities. We have been working with the communities. We can only do so much in Whitehorse Correctional Centre. I have spoken with First Nations and I said that they have to take the ball when our inmates come out of WCC. We are working with them to build capacity within the communities, and that will be coming on-board. It is being discussed and put in place right now.

#### **Question re: Peel watershed land use plan**

**Mr. Inverarity:** I asked the Minister of Tourism last week where she stood on the issue of political interference, and the minister responded, and I quote, "I certainly pride myself in not interfering in that planning process..."

Mr. Speaker, I will not question the integrity of the government officials, nor will I question the integrity of this minister. This minister says she prides herself in not interfering with the planning process; however, she does remain silent on what the Premier does.

The chair of the tourism association said recently, “We are appalled by the blatant disregard for the ... planning process...”

I want to know what the minister is going to do about this. Why is the minister not holding the Premier accountable for his interference?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** To answer or address the member opposite’s question — I’m not too sure how many times I’ve attempted to answer this question. We will continue to adhere to chapter 11 of the land use planning process, as contained within the *Umbrella Final Agreement*. We will ensure the land use planning process continues to unfold as it is.

There is the Peel Watershed Planning Commission, which is doing good work. They are continuing to obtain their information, advice and direction from stakeholders. The recommended plan will be coming forward by the end of the year, and we certainly look forward to receiving that plan.

As well, the respective First Nations will also be receiving that plan, and we certainly will be doing due diligence of reviewing that plan, and taking some time to review it, and taking it from there. Until then, I will reiterate for the member opposite that I do respect the integrity of the process associated with land use planning.

**Mr. Inverarity:** I was wondering if the minister would like a quote from chapter 11 on the points that she’s bringing forward. I believe that they need a little bit clearer clarification.

When asked last week about the Premier’s interference on the minister’s statement, she said, “At no time did the Premier comment on specific details contained in the draft memo.” According to one of her own officials, the Premier actually quoted directly from the Department of Environment submission during that irate phone call.

The official goes on to say in his e-mail, “I am not pleased in the least that materials I wrote to faithfully reflect this department’s effort should be quoted in this fashion.”

The damage is already done and the tourism industry wants to voice its concern over the damage caused by the Premier. Why won’t the minister listen to the industry?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Again, I will quote from the letter that I tabled not long ago in reference to a letter to the editor that was signed by both the Deputy Minister of Environment and the Deputy Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. It goes on to say that at no time did the Premier comment on the specific details contained in the draft memo, nor did he direct the department to change its comments.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on to refer to all of the respective quotes within the letter to the editor but I did table it for the member opposite. I certainly respect the views put forward by the two respective deputy ministers.

The member opposite makes reference to chapter 11. Again, in chapter 11, it does make reference to the planning council: “shall make recommendations to government and each affected Yukon First Nation on the following.” I will quote and this is actually section 11.3.3. In terms of making recommendations to the respective governments on “land use planning, including policies, goals and priorities” and “the identification of

planning regions and priorities for the preparation of regional land use plans” and so forth.

Mr. Speaker, I’m sure the member opposite has within his office a copy of chapter 11, but I’d be very pleased to provide a copy of it for him.

**Mr. Inverarity:** Mr. Speaker, the minister claims that talking to the tourism industry would compromise the government’s impartiality in the planning process. Well, I’ve got news for this minister. The government’s impartiality in the planning process was compromised when the Premier picked up the phone and yelled at the Environment deputy.

Let me help the minister to understand the real issue here. The chair of the Tourism Industry Association wants to speak with the minister about the concerns with the planning process. When will this minister do that?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I’ll reiterate this government’s commitment toward growing tourism expenditures and revenue in the territory. That is why we have placed the utmost importance on and attention to the Department of Tourism and Culture. I will just remind the member opposite that it was in fact the previous Liberal administration that actually dismantled the Department of Tourism.

Mr. Speaker, we are very much committed to growing tourism and working in collaboration with industry on the implementation, the development and evaluation of all our tourism marketing programs. Likewise, we’re also very much committed to the protection and preservation of areas of pristine wilderness of significant value to all Yukoners and we have done just that.

Again I’ll reference the earlier — for the first time ever in Yukon’s history the adoption and sign off in collaboration with Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation of the first ever north Yukon land use plan. We also earlier signed off a habitat protection area for the Old Crow Flats comprised of over a million hectares of protected area. We have also signed off on the *Tombstone Territorial Park Management Plan*. The Department of Environment is also engaged on a number of planning fronts in terms of protecting further areas.

#### **Question re: Peel watershed land use plan**

**Mr. Fairclough:** It seems that the Minister of Environment has found her voice. Last week, the minister was asked about the Premier’s angry phone call to her officials that resulted in the Department of Environment gutting its submission to the Peel Watershed Planning Commission. She said that at no time did the Premier comment on specific details contained in the draft memo, nor did the Premier direct the department to change its comments. I appreciate that the minister chose to stand up and answer the question; however, before we continue on this matter, I want to be sure that I understand the minister correctly.

Does the Minister of Environment stand by her answer from last week that the minister did not comment on specific details in the draft memo?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** In fact, I stand on what the officials are stating. In fact, I tabled the letter to the editor that was signed off by the Deputy Minister of Environment and the Deputy Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Again, I can

continue to repeat what that letter contains. Again, a quote: “At no time did the Premier comment on the specific details contained in the draft 22-page memo, nor did he direct the department to change its comments.”

These are not my words, Mr. Speaker. These are the words of the two respective officials housed within the two departments associated with land use planning.

We are very much committed to land use planning in the territory. We’re very much committed to ensuring that the process does remain full of integrity and that it is independent and free of biased political interference.

**Mr. Fairclough:** The minister has said that the Premier didn’t comment on the specifics of the information the Department of Environment wanted to give to the Peel land use planning committee. Well, the minister wasn’t there for that call so if we want to know about the Premier’s interference, we should listen to the people who had to endure the angry commentary.

I have a copy of the March 6, 2009, unsolicited e-mail from the Department of Environment’s director of policy, which tells us about the Premier’s phone call. It says the DM received an irate call from the Premier, who was with the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and was quoting Environment’s response. If the minister was quoting the document, he must have been making some pretty specific comments.

Does the minister still believe the Premier didn’t get specific with her officials?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I will refer again to the letter to the editor that was signed by the deputy ministers for Environment and Energy, Mines and Resources, which stated that at no time did the Premier comment on the specific details contained in the draft 22-page memo, nor did he direct the department to change its comments.

The letter further goes on to articulate that the Premier’s direction was intended to remind departments that Yukon’s responses to the draft land use plan needed to respect the Peel watershed planning processes provided for in the *Umbrella Final Agreement*.

Earlier today, I articulated from chapter 11 land use planning provisions housed within the *Umbrella Final Agreement*, which state that the Yukon Land Use Planning Council shall make recommendations to government and each affected Yukon First Nation on the following: includes land use planning, including policies, goals and priorities in the Yukon. It also includes identification of planning regions and priorities for the preparation of regional land use plans.

We look forward to receiving the draft — or I should say, the “recommended” — land use plan for the Peel watershed. I believe that is to come before the year-end. We look forward to receiving it and we support the process.

**Mr. Fairclough:** The minister is hiding behind chapter 11. I’m hearing the minister give us her perspective on the phone call she wasn’t even part of. She was out of the loop when the Premier was directing her officials. Now, let’s return to some of the words from someone within the Department of Environment, someone who is familiar with the Premier’s way of doing business.

In the same e-mail, the official says of the Premier’s call, “I am not pleased in the least that the materials I wrote to faithfully reflect this department’s effort should be quoted in this fashion.” Once again it sounds like the Premier was very familiar with the information the Department of Environment wanted to give to the Peel Watershed Planning Commission. He was giving such specific directions on how he wanted to change that — he was quoting parts of it to his officials.

The Premier was quoting the document he wanted gutted. How could this possibly mean the Premier wasn’t providing specific comments? Could the minister answer that one?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I don’t know who should be more offended — the Government of Yukon or the Yukon First Nations who actually negotiated chapter 11, land use planning.

The member opposite just accused the Minister of Environment of hiding behind chapter 11. Unlike the members opposite, we on this side of the House are fully, 100 percent committed to adhering to our obligations as set out under the final agreements, the treaties and the *Umbrella Final Agreement*. Chapter 11 does define land use planning and certainly the role of the Yukon Land Use Planning Council and the commissions associated with doing their work. It outlines what our provisions are and what our obligations are. We are certainly following these provisions.

We look forward to receiving the recommended plan. Again, we very much support the work of the respective departments, including the Department of Environment, which has, for the last several years, been contributing to the land use planning process: providing data; completing regional, ecological land classification data; mapping; and participating in multi-stakeholder processes to develop conservation criteria and assessments.

**Speaker:** The time for Question Period has now elapsed. We will proceed to Orders of the Day.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker leaves the Chair*

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**Chair (Mr. Nordick):** Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before Committee of the Whole is Bill No. 17, *Second Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, Vote 3, Department of Education.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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



*Recess*

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

**Bill No. 17 — Second Appropriation Act, 2009-10 — continued**

**Chair:** The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 17, *Second Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, Vote 3, Department of Education.

**Department of Education — continued**

**Mr. Fairclough:** I started off by making comments to the minister's opening remarks from the Department of Education on Thursday and I would like to continue making some comments.

Hopefully, the minister will work with the Official Opposition and the questions we ask will get answered in short form and not the full 20 minutes that the minister has taken in the past. Hopefully, he would deviate from what the Yukon Party has been doing over the last years.

I raised several questions with the minister. I brought to the minister's attention again the public's thoughts about this government's direction that they have been taking over the years in the Department of Education, right back to the time when there were demonstrations outside of this Legislature because they were not happy with the way this department was taking things.

The big one regarding First Nations was with the *Education Act* and the education reform project and how the minister wanted to have the whole issue of governance as part of the overall public consultation, but the Premier said publicly that governance was off the table.

This created a lot of reaction within the education community and what we found was that the minister basically fell in line with the Premier on this. The Premier took control of this department too, where governance was off the table and that was that. It was the bottom line. He was basically saying to the public, "How do you like us now after we've made that decision?"

I could tell you there were a lot of angry people out there. When the whole issue of the *Education Act* was debated in the public with the Department of Education, it was around the *Education Act* and not the holistic approach that a lot of the communities wanted the government to go with. Expectations have been raised again. The whole issue of having the education reform project come forward did that. There was perhaps some hope that changes would be made and perhaps even some reflection of what could be seen as far as amendments to the *Education Act*.

That was the year 2000 when it was supposed to happen. It was kicked into gear — I'm talking about the review of the *Education Act* — but nothing so far. Now the minister says we're into New Horizons.

So, as we go through the details, some good things have come out of that. I'm not being totally negative about it, but I think we could have been way ahead of the game had we reacted to the public's direction in the Department of Education.

The minister also received more bad news, and maybe it has prompted the department to kick into high gear and do something, and we're still waiting for that. That was the result of the year-long findings of the Auditor General. She basically gave the Department of Education a failing grade. And we went through this time and time again. She found — let me read some of it to refresh the minister's memory on this.

She said, "We found that the department is not acting to address the critical gaps in student performance." I talked a little bit about the First Nation graduation rates when I left off on Thursday, and I know the minister will have lots to say on that. She also went on to say, "Finally, we found the department does not significantly identify and analyze the underlying cause of the gaps in the performance, nor does it develop comprehensive action plans, including targets to address these causes. We found the department does not have a plan in place to address declining enrolments or the age of schools in the territory, four of which within the last four years are at the end of their 40-year lifespan."

We went around and around with this report done by the Auditor General. It didn't look good for Yukon; it didn't look good for aboriginal people. This has prompted some First Nations to look at drawing down education, as they are entitled to under their final agreements.

Some First Nations felt that government has failed them, so they took that step. I know the minister will come back and perhaps address some of what was reported by the Auditor General. I raised a question with the minister about H1N1 and the high rate of students being absent from school. In particular I raised the community of Carmacks, which had some 80 per cent at the time — a couple weeks ago, I believe. The minister said that he had a comprehensive plan to address this issue. That was after my second supplementary question to the minister.

So I am going to start off with this one because, although we are getting over the hump or the peak of this influenza in the territory, we could be faced with a second wave and this could further set back some of the students in how much material they are going through in class. The minister said that he had a comprehensive plan in place. I would like to ask the minister whether he can share that plan with us. If he doesn't have it in front of him, have it sent over to members on this side of the House and let's start with that question.

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** Mr. Chair, I appreciate receiving a question from the member opposite. It is a bit of a challenge though to stand up and address the question that was asked because he did also raise a multitude of different issues. I would like to bring a lot of clarity to a lot of the issues that he did bring forward with regard to governance issues; with regard to *Education Act* reviews; with regard to education reform; with regard to the New Horizons project. The member opposite brought forward the Auditor General's comments — talked about missed opportunities. I am in that quandary that, whatever I answer here now, I'm sure there will be one or two or five questions that he did ask that he will then get up and say, "Well, the minister didn't answer the question."

I think I would like to take a different approach here and talk about some of the results that we're actually seeing in today's education system. There are challenges in education in the Yukon — we are all aware of that. We're aware of that from working with our own children, in our communities and in the territory. We're aware of the challenges and the action items that others have come up with in the past.

I am very proud of the work that the Department of Education is taking to address many of the situations in the territory. I'm very proud of the work the Department of Education is doing in working with others, in working with other stakeholders, including self-governing First Nations, other First Nations, school councils, with parents, with teachers, with other jurisdictions and with all those who have a concern about education.

I am very proud of how responsive the Department of Education has been in addressing the challenges before them, of coming up with new ideas and alternative approaches, of presenting these very innovative ideas. I have been very proud to provide support to our teachers, to our administrators and to our education professionals so they can implement many of them, and also the support we're providing to other educational organizations, whether they be Yukon College or the other institutions we fund — the Yukon Climate Change Research Centre of Excellence, some of the non-governmental organizations like Yukon Women in Trades and Technology, Skills Canada Yukon and other organizations — because these investments, these changes and these partnerships are paying off.

The member only has to look at this past Friday's apprentice awards dinner. Mr. Chair, this is the dinner that is held once a year to celebrate the accomplishments and the graduations of Yukon's apprentices as they go through their red seal or their trade certification. This year, we had a situation where 70 Yukoners received their trade certification. This year, Yukon and the students from the Yukon helped graduate 70 additional tradespeople. Mr. Chair, in 2003, the graduation number of apprentices was 23. In a few short years we have gone from graduating 23 apprentices a year to 70. That is three times as many graduates from trades and apprenticeship programs as we saw only a few years ago. That is an amazing accomplishment. That is as a result of the hard work of the students, their teachers, the businesses involved and different educational institutions, the non-government organizations that support them, and of the teachers and administrators in Yukon schools.

We've gone from seeing 23 people graduate a year to 70. In the 2008-09 academic year, there were 520 Yukon residents registered as apprentices. That's a huge growth. Things like that don't happen by happenstance. They happen because of innovative, creative programs. They happen because of innovative and creative people. They happen because of a positive economy. They happen because of healthy communities. They happen because people take the initiative and decide to make a commitment to their life and return to school, to enter into a trade, to make a commitment to it, to work with the private sector to practise their skills, and it happens because people have made a commitment to making Yukon a better place.

This is a tremendous indicator of the health of our economy, the health of our educational system and some of the changes that we're making, and the health of individuals in the territory — seeing this type of growth.

Also in this we're seeing a significant growth in the number of people of First Nation ancestry being involved in trades and skills training and the number of women being involved in skills and trades training. When I went through the list, I saw that 45 women were registered apprentices, including 10 carpenters, nine electricians, seven cooks, six hairstylists, three sheet metal workers, two welders, two painter/decorators, two parts people, a sprinkler system installer, a baker, a plumber, an RV service technician and others. Now that's quite a diverse group of skills and backgrounds. That's a healthy indicator of the diversification of our economy and of the options available for people and the dedication of people continuing their own education.

Mr. Chair, we looked at the number of First Nations participating in skills and apprenticeship programs. Last September there were 86 First Nation citizens who were registered apprentices, including three automotive service technicians, a baker, 40 carpenters, 10 construction electricians, two cooks, a hairstylist, nine heavy equipment and truck transportation technicians, two industrial electricians, one industrial mechanic/millwright, one motor vehicle body repairer, three oil burner mechanics, two painter/decorators, six plumbers, two power line technicians, one sheet metal worker, one truck and transport technician and one welder.

Mr. Chair, I applaud the work of all these individuals. They are indeed preparing themselves for Yukon opportunities by making a commitment to their education. They are working with our education system and all our partners and players in that system — to further themselves, to help to build a healthy economy and to build a healthy community.

I know there are challenges in our education system. Teachers know there are challenges, parents know there are challenges, members in here know there are challenges, but what we do know is that there is a strong commitment from this government and from all our partners in education to improve the outcomes for all Yukoners. We're looking at making changes in our curriculum, in the style of teaching, in the programs that are being offered, in the ways they are being delivered — all in an effort to increase the number of opportunities for Yukon students.

We are working with our partners on issues like governance. We are working with First Nations and school councils to involve them through our school growth planning processes to provide significantly more input into the operations practice, goals and the direction of their schools. We are working with our programs and partnership unit to create curriculum that reflects the cultural values of the community that engages students. We are trying different things, whether it is a gender-based classroom, whether it is First Nation-based experiential education, whether it is Wilson Reading or Reading Recovery or different techniques. We are taking a look at the international baccalaureate model of education. We are supporting these innovative and creative ways of looking at education. We

support that through the innovation in education fund. We are supporting the development of our teachers, which is key in our system. That is through our leadership programs, which is a tremendous program that has seen a huge uptake from Yukon teachers. We are working with Yukon College to provide a master of education leadership through the University of Northern British Columbia, so that teachers and educators here in the territory can learn more and expand their capacity in the classroom in order to expand their leadership role.

I'm proud to see the involvement of Yukon First Nation people in this leadership program and the growth and increased representation among our teachers, administrators and executive level of Education staff.

There are significant changes going on in the Department of Education. New Horizons is a very strong initiative that the Government of Yukon is working on with the Council of Yukon First Nations. Again, if members opposite want additional information on that, I can certainly arrange for the potential for another joint briefing. We are working with individual First Nations, such as the Champagne and Aishihik bicultural program. We're working with the northern strategy and the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation on a land-based experiential education program.

We're trying different things. We're not looking at dumbing down the system. We can all agree that we want to see high academic standards in a culturally appropriate manner and we're working with all our partners in order to provide that.

There are some significant changes going on in the department and some incredible growth has happened, and the welcoming of the Department of Education to work with all the partners in education — whether that be students, parents, teachers, First Nation organizations, self-governing First Nations, not-for-profit organizations, businesses, the college, other universities and other educational institutions. I certainly hope the members opposite are appreciating the growth and the changes that are happening in the Department of Education.

Mr. Chair, when I concluded my comments previously, I did indicate that I had only got through about half of my introductory speech and introductory comments. Unfortunately, I only got to the section on post-secondary education. I would be pleased to continue on with that. I think that will answer many of the member opposite's questions before he has to ask them on the floor. I'll take my direction from him. I can either conclude with the opening comments that would provide much more background as to what is being affected and changed by this supplementary budget, or we can go back to the list put forward of issues including H1N1 and the department's response to that. But I'll take my direction from the member opposite.

I'm looking forward to having a productive, constructive debate where we can share some ideas, where we can appreciate what is actually happening in the Department of Education. I hope we can go down that road during today's budget discussion.

**Mr. Fairclough:** I thank the minister for that and I'm hoping we can do the same thing. With H1N1, it's an issue

that's national and here right at home and it affects our students who are in school. In one particular school, there was 80-percent absenteeism. The minister said that he had a comprehensive plan in place. I would like to know what that is and whether or not he can send that comprehensive plan over to us on this side of the House.

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** In response to this national and indeed international situation of responding to H1N1, the Department of Education, as did all departments through the Government of Yukon, completed a comprehensive pandemic preparedness plan in advance of the upcoming flu season. It included a department-wide service continuity plan, steps for school administrators, a communication strategy, as well as answers to common questions from the staff and public. Much of this information can be found on the government department's website in response to H1N1 preparedness.

There are a significant number of frequently asked questions and bits of information on there. We wanted to ensure that there would be continuity in our schools. It is the Department of Education's responsibility to keep our schools open as long as possible to ensure that there are opportunities for students when they do come to school. This included looking at things like finding additional substitute teachers in the community. Additionally, the department is committed to keeping staff, school students and their families fully informed about the health and safety measures being undertaken.

The Minister of Health and Social Services, earlier today, discussed many of the different initiatives that are being undertaken — things like the "Critters" education campaign and things like the healthy social interaction practices, additional emphasis on handwashing and hand sanitization, and the additional importance of cleaning commonly touched surfaces.

The Department of Education and all schools are following all precautions recommended by the medical officer of health. We've worked very closely with the Department of Health and Social Services and the medical health officer to prepare for this situation and to take precautions to lessen its impacts. We are closely monitoring the absences of staff and students and reporting any significant changes to Yukon Communicable Disease Control.

The member opposite and I, on several occasions, have had the opportunity to discuss some of our absentee rates and some of the challenges that we face, including some of the absentee rates that might spike on particular days of the week. I'm thinking of a Monday and a Friday. There are a multitude of different reasons for why there are increased absences on those days, especially in our rural communities.

Mr. Chair, the schools will only be closed by an order from the medical officer of health. As I mentioned earlier, the department plans to keep schools open as long as it is operationally possible. We'll take considerable steps to inform parents of significant changes that happen — things like letters going home, radio announcements, announcements on our web page and school-based phone trees. That's a situation where one person calls two people; those people call two more people and so on and so forth — until the whole group is called.

We're continuing to provide additional information to parents to take precautions. In our schools we're putting in place wall-mounted hand sanitizers. An H1N1 tool kit, prepared by Health and Social Services, has been distributed to all administrators to assist them in keeping their staff, parents, students and other education partners informed about the flu.

Mr. Chair, parents of medically fragile students have been encouraged to seek advice from their own doctors. Department staff in special programs are working with these individual students and their parents and following the direction of the children's physicians, and all staff has been provided with training on proper hygiene protocols and methods. Group information sessions were held for school administrators, school secretaries and main building employees.

Mr. Chair, I know I have conducted media interviews, as has the Minister of Health and Social Services and the medical officer of health. I am confident that the departments are responding appropriately to this situation. Indeed, it is a changing situation. We are encouraging people to take best practices to prevent themselves from catching this flu. We do also have other influenzas and other bugs that are affecting students in the territory. It is not just H1N1. There is a wide variety of other bugs going around in addition to other childhood illnesses. We did see some areas of increased absenteeism. There was a spike that was close, I believe, on one day to the number the member opposite used, but that certainly was not representative of all schools or all the time.

We all know, with a small school population, a significant statistical indicator could happen because of only a few of the kids missing. I'm thinking of schools in Beaver Creek or Destruction Bay, where we might only have half a dozen or fewer children. In that case, if we have three children who are away for whatever reason, we all of a sudden see a 50-percent absentee rate. That's significantly different, although the statistic is the same, of how things react in schools like F.H. Collins or others with large populations.

We've taken many steps. We've provided much information to students, parents and teachers. We're working with the Department of Health and Social Services. We're working with others in the community to prepare in the event of absences of teachers or others.

As I have said before, I'm very proud of the work the Department of Education has undertaken. As is the Minister of Health and Social Services, I'm very proud of the work the Department of Health and Social Services has done on this issue, and I see no reason to question the action taken by the department officials.

There has been a lot of very good work done already. We do have an emerging situation that we're responding to each and every day and we will do our best as this flu situation unfolds this coming flu season.

**Mr. Fairclough:** I thank the minister for that. He said that there was a comprehensive plan in place and shared more information about having a comprehensive preparedness plan for all departments. I'm interested in ensuring that the students get the proper instructions needed to be successful in this school year. I understand precautions need to be taken —

cleaning of hands and so on. The minister said that they're looking at additional substitute teachers, but didn't elaborate too much on that.

What I'm interested in is what lies down the road and how this comprehensive plan could be followed by the Department of Education. The minister says that the information is all there for the public to see. I was hoping that perhaps the minister could table this comprehensive plan. Sometimes there is information that the minister has that we on this side of the House could use, take back and reassure parents and students about the department and the government's overall plan in addressing the issue of H1N1. I am hoping that perhaps the minister can do that.

I realize this has taken place. I have two children in the school system today and I know a lot of what goes on in the school. Sometimes, when it comes to addressing precautions, I get a bit surprised about students being sent home who may have sneezed in school, or for something that is minor, without having it proven that they have H1N1. I know that this has taken place probably not in any big numbers but it is an issue that was raised with me and I thought I would just share that with the minister, ensuring we're taking all information that is needed about the children and having parents of course notified of this.

The minister said that there were significant changes in the Department of Education. I know he has talked about the New Horizons and some of the efforts that are flowing from the New Horizons, but are these changes the public hasn't seen yet, that the department is working on? When do we expect to see these new changes take place? I haven't heard of this initiative having significant changes in the Department of Education. I think this is worthy of some public information going out to the public schools about these changes. Or is the minister talking about some of the results of what we will see under New Horizons?

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** Mr. Chair, I appreciate the member opposite's comments regarding H1N1. Indeed, it has been said many times before that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. In situations like this, people have the best impact when they act proactively. We have a responsibility to our students and to our staff to ensure our workplaces are made as safe as they can be. I didn't mention the significant immunization program that has been held throughout the territory. Immunization clinics were held in many of our schools. It was the case that they did require parental involvement for immunization to occur, that it would not happen without the involvement of a parent, because it is a personal and family decision to make.

The member opposite also went on to ask about some of the changes. Well, let's see: we've seen an increase in the number of teachers; we've seen tremendous growth in the number of education assistants and learning assistants; we've seen the establishment of the minister/student advisory council.

This is a group of students from across the territory that I meet with to discuss their perspectives on education. Their information has come to me and gone to the department in a very timely manner. Additionally, the EMAC, as it's now referred to — the Education Minister's Advisory Committee — recently

met with the Association of School Councils, Boards and Committees, the Association of School Administrators, the First Nation Education Advisory Committee and others, and was involved in their discussions, and they shared their perspectives on some of the issues in education.

The member should be aware of changes to early years transition. This year, there was \$150,000 that was provided for the development and implementation of an early years transition support to enable a holistic, integrated approach to addressing the concerns at early stages of learning. That included the articulation of an early years transition support process, which would target prekindergarten to grade 3 students. The goal is to ensure that a context-relevant, multi-sensory, multiple intelligence-based learning program is developed and implemented to help reduce the performance gap in both First Nation and non-First Nation children. So that is something going on at the early stages — so early years transitional support.

There have been additional changes made with curriculum and special programming training. \$150,000 at the beginning of this year was provided for training for counsellors, learning assistants and education assistants in specific areas related to socio-emotional well-being. Engaging students requires enabling a safe and secure environment that crosses departmental competencies. This was an additional way of providing support to vulnerable students. There were changes with the assisted technology and software-related training.

The member opposite asked how we are changing with our school facilities. The F.H. Collins Secondary School replacement is certainly a major project there. In response to the secondary-program review, the government has made the commitment to replace F.H. Collins. We have established a building advisory committee and we're working with the building advisory committee on the next steps of this project, which will include the design and construction of the project.

The member opposite asked about what changes. Well, the Government of Yukon's Department of Education has worked very closely with British Columbia to put in place an enterprise student information system. This will be called YESIS or the Yukon enterprise student information system. One of the criticisms levied by the Auditor General in her report was that the Department of Education did not have the statistical indicators necessary to demonstrate progress on many of its programs. This new data-collection model will be a very important tool for educators, teachers and administrators to use to track student progress, to track changes to systems, to be able to look at the long-term results of some of our programs so that we will be able to see the impact that things like full-day kindergarten — which is a new initiative — has made in the lives of the students.

We will be able to look at the changes in educational outcomes with the intervention of a Wilson Reading program or a Reading Recovery program. We will be able to see what long-term impact that has had on the student involved. We will be able to track the involvement of students in new programs such as the First Nation experiential education program or the other experiential education programs that we have.

We can then look at the results and make evidence-based decisions. That's a very important process to go through where we look at the information that we have and see how we can ensure that this goes from a one-off practice to a best practice.

The member asked what changes we've made. Well, we've provided the leaders in education/innovation fund. This is a fund that teachers, school councils or schools will be able to tap into in order to look at different initiatives, whether it's looking more closely at things like a gender-based classroom or a different teaching style, or a different education delivery model. This is a fund that will be peer reviewed. It will include representatives of the YTA, Yukon Association of School Administrators, Yukon Association of School Councils, Boards and Committees, Yukon Catholic Education Association, the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon, Yukon First Nation Education Advisory Committee, and the Department of Education.

So we'll look at a peer-reviewed process for identifying good ideas that we can implement in our schools and then turn into best practice among all our schools.

We've put in place a targeted initiative for older workers and increased resources and responsibilities for Yukon College. The member knows full well about the changes to the *Yukon College Act*, which will allow Yukon College to be a degree-granting institution. Additionally this year, we're seeing some changes in Yukon College's programming, including an education support worker, or educational assistant program. I mentioned the master of education that's being offered at Yukon College, as well as other initiatives going on at Yukon College, such as the bachelor of social work program.

Also in this budget we're seeing other changes. We're seeing tremendous involvement at New Horizons; the addition and allocation of resources of \$289,000 for the school growth planning process; \$163,000 for the bicultural program; funds for the resilience in transition; more funds for the leadership development program; the Yukon First Nation secondary experiential program; additional resources to encourage communications and greater interaction between the Department of Education and our partners, including an education summit and community engagement tools and techniques.

Mr. Chair, the member opposite has asked me what changes are being made. I am sorry, but the 20 minutes that I have here isn't going to allow me to go through all the details regarding additional training and support that we've provided for teachers, including increasing the number of teachers in our schools; all the while, the number of students has been decreasing. There has been an increase in the number of educational assistants, the investments in our leadership program to develop additional leaders coming through our teacher ranks. We all know that we are seeing an aging population and that we need to prepare the next group of administrators. We are taking strong steps and making changes in that.

The member opposite has heard me talk about changes in curriculum, and that includes working with the western northern curriculum protocol and creating locally developed content — things like the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations bicultural program.

We're working with the Carcross-Tagish First Nation and their curriculum pieces. As well, we're looking at some of the delivery models. Right now we have students in Mayo, for example, who are taking distance courses and doing things like drafting and law and biology by distance education. We're expanding our use of computer-based training, of video conferencing — using the high speed video conferencing network that we have — in order to provide more opportunities and different courses. We're looking at changing our teaching styles, with more experiential programs, more and different distance education programs. The member opposite has heard me talk about the changes that we're making in our facilities.

One of the other big changes is, of course, the New Horizons initiative, which is really a changing philosophy of how the department does business, of how we interact with our other partners in education, of how we can respond to the needs in our community of addressing issues like pride in our culture, looking at the education of adults, addressing the needs of the labour market, creating healthy communities, working on collaboration, consultation partnership, expanding professional growth, leadership and capacity — building a responsive information system and facilities that match the program delivery requirements. We're increasing the amount of information, assessment, research and reporting, so we know when we're doing something right and how to improve other areas where we're not quite reaching the mark.

There are significant changes being made in the Department of Education. I'm very proud of the manner in which people have responded to these and have been very supportive of the growth and evolution — or, if the member opposite wants to call it, “the reform” — of our education system. The Department of Education is changing. It's becoming more responsive to the needs in our communities and the needs of our students, our economy and our parents. There are significant additional changes happening. This could be in the area of post-secondary education with increased support for Yukon College.

Under this supplementary budget, the Department of Education is seeking \$785,000 for O&M for the college. Our support of Yukon College demonstrates the Department of Education's commitment to training, climate change, and post-secondary opportunities in the territory. \$452,000 is being requested to support the operations of the Climate Change Research Centre of Excellence. That's a significant change. This is a wonderful new asset that we will have in the territory. This investment will allow the college to create opportunities and attract researchers who can produce innovative and leading-edge research in key knowledge sectors, such as climate change, the environment, and the economy.

The targeted initiative for older workers program has been extended to March 31, 2012. \$202,000 is being requested for additional funding to support this program, bringing the total funding for 2009-10 to \$488,000. The targeted initiative for older workers is a labour force development project, targeted at workers aged 55 to 65, jointly funded by the Yukon and federal governments. It is delivered by Yukon College.

\$135,000 is being requested to support Yukon College by ensuring that a more responsive security system is in place. A risk assessment will be performed at Yukon College campuses and an emergency response plan will be developed for each location. Ongoing staffing and training costs are also being provided.

Mr. Chair, the total capital supplemental budget for 2009-10 is \$3,474,000. These capital funds are invested throughout the Department of Education. Under education support services, we are requesting \$34,000 for office furniture, equipment, systems and space. The Department of Education is requesting a number of revotes under public schools funding, including a \$61,000 revote to complete the review of secondary programs. The continuation of the review committee's strategic plan must be completed to inform the building advisory committee to allow progress on the design component of the new F.H. Collins Secondary School. \$156,000 is requested as a revote for various school facilities renovations, to complete a number of smaller projects that began in 2008-09.

The Department of Education is asking for a further \$421,000 in capital maintenance to complete a number of projects that began in 2008-09. These projects include a public-address system at St. Elias Community School, security system upgrades, emergency power feeder replacement at Porter Creek Secondary School and various smaller projects throughout the Yukon.

\$64,000 is requested as a revote for site improvement and recreation development to allow for the completion of various projects in schools throughout the Yukon. An additional \$90,000 is being requested as a revote for the fire alarm system at F.H. Collins Secondary.

In addition to various indoor air-quality projects and school painting projects, the Department of Education is asking for a further \$472,000 to support the implementation of New Horizons. The largest initiative included here is the implementation of the new student information system to support and track student achievement and attendance. The department has made excellent progress in rolling out this new system. Implementation will be phased into schools in stages as staff become trained in the system, and it is expected to be complete by June 2011 in all schools.

Another important initiative here is the expanded ability to provide video conferencing access in the four remaining rural schools — Teslin, Carcross, Beaver Creek and Destruction Bay. Funding to accommodate equipment purchases for the First Nation experiential program is also an important part of New Horizons.

Mr. Chair, these are some of the changes I'm thinking of that are right at hand. I have additional changes or areas that are being formed or evolved in education. There is an ongoing process with our school growth plans and we are working with Yukon communities, our parents and Yukon First Nations. We are really changing how we go about working with our partners in education. I am very pleased to see the growth in this area and the willingness of the department staff to really come up and take on these challenges head on.

I appreciate the member opposite's question and I can certainly provide additional information about some of the other avenues the Department of Education is heading down.

**Mr. Fairclough:** I asked the minister what significant changes are underway in the department and the minister decided to read some of the line items in the supplementary budget. Just five, 10 or 15 minutes ago, the minister said he wanted to make progress and do things a little bit differently. We have gone back — I don't know if somebody slipped him a note to chew up some time in this Legislature, but let's get back on track and see if we can do this quicker than using up time in this Legislature. If we want to go through line by line, we will.

We have that opportunity, and for us on this side of the House, I think there are initiatives in the line-by-line debate that we could be asking about. We're asking for some answers from the minister. Let's try this one. This one will be a really easy one that doesn't need a long, long answer from the minister, a drawn-out answer.

The minister said that there is an increase in the number of teachers and EAs in the school. Can he tell us what the difference is? How much of an increase are we seeing? Because this is a supplementary budget, is there a difference between the number we had in the spring, or a year ago? I'm not interested in the minister going back 10 or 15 years to see the numbers. I'd like to know the increase in number of teachers and the EAs in our school system now.

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** Mr. Chair, here we are in the debate on the supplementary budget. The member opposite asked me what was changing, and I did provide some very clear responses about what was being changed in Education. Yes, I did touch on the budget changes that are being made. That is the purpose of this debate — to debate the budget, to identify changes that are being made and to provide information to the member opposite about the changes the government is proposing in the finances.

The numbers I have at my fingertips regarding teachers indicates that from 1997 to 2009, the number of teachers in our system grew from 457 to 476; the number of education assistants grew from 83 to 121. At the same time, student enrolment declined from 6,120 to 4,956 in September 2009. We have seen an increasing number of teachers, a significantly increasing number of education assistants and, of course, a significant change in the student/teacher ratio because of the decline in the number of students in our system.

During the main budget debate earlier this year, the member opposite claimed that there were cuts to the number of teachers in our system, and that is certainly not the case. We have not reduced the number of teachers in our education system. In fact, we're seeing — by these numbers — significant growth. Additionally, we're seeing significant resources allocated to providing assistance to teachers. I did go into some detail about the leadership program, about the support for teachers, with behavioural specialists and other specialists that I mentioned earlier on in the budget address; I believe that was on Thursday.

Additionally, we're providing support for teachers to expand their own education and their own training with initiatives such as the master of education program that's being offered at Yukon College. I trust that answers the member opposite's question.

**Mr. Fairclough:** Well, the minister gave us the number of teachers and students from 1997. If there is a huge change, what we're interested in is this: what are the changes in the number of teachers from last year and, say, two years ago? Let's just only go back two years, and then the minister can tell us the changes from last year, this year, and two years ago.

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** The year, 2007-08 — from the information I have here, we had 5,064 students, with 474.8 teachers and 107.6 EAs.

In the year 2009-10, we have a slight decrease in the number of students to 4,955 and a slight increase in the number of teachers to 478; and the number of educational assistants has grown to 125.7.

I trust that answers the member opposite's question. There has been a decrease in the number of students, an increase in the number of teachers and an almost 20-percent increase in the number of educational assistants. Does the member opposite recognize that it is a significant change?

**Mr. Fairclough:** Is this part-time employment or is it full-time employment?

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** The figures that I am discussing here are the full-time equivalent, FTEs. I am sure there is a mixture of some part-time, some full-time, some three-quarter-time and some one-third-time but this is the total number of full-time equivalent positions. I realize that there are 125.7 education EAs, so that would indicate that there are some part-time positions in there.

**Mr. Fairclough:** I thank the minister for the answers to those questions. I would like to know how many more FTEs there are in the department. I'm not talking about the teachers but in the department. Is this more than a year ago and two years ago?

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** Mr. Chair, in response to many of the research projects the department has undertaken in response to requests from teachers for additional supports, in response to the school councils' requests, and in response to the Auditor General's report, there have been some increases in the number of administrative positions. I don't have the specific number at my fingertips now.

There have been increases in the number of people to support apprenticeships. As I mentioned earlier, the number of apprentices in the territory has grown to over 500. That's up from 200 some, only a couple of years ago, so there has been an increased number of staff people in that area. The department is also working on our labour market framework and increasing capacity there. That has also required additional staff people.

Members will also realize the Department of Education is responsible for immigration. With the growing requirement from some sectors in Yukon for additional support from immigration services, the department has increased its capacity there. I believe I did that as a ministerial statement several

years ago, which was favourably endorsed by different members in the Assembly.

Also, we have seen an increase in the Department of Education staff with the First Nations programs and partnerships unit. That was a new branch created a couple of years ago, designed to increase our curriculum content and our information about First Nation culture and to provide additional supports to schools in order to assist them in helping meet the needs of students of First Nation ancestry.

We've also been encouraged from the Auditor General and members of the opposition to increase how we communicate with others, to make changes to our annual report, to make changes to our data collection, to increase the number of opportunities for including others in discussions on education — for example, the education summit that will be held again this coming spring. So there has been an additional staff person in there.

I am pleased to see that we as a government have been able to be responsive to the needs of the community to provide additional resources where there were significant demands, to take some proactive steps to provide additional support for our teachers by providing them with additional information, whether it's on working with people with FASD or different curriculum specialists to provide them with additional resources, so that they can do an even better job of teaching students in the classroom.

We've also been responsive to the needs of our First Nation partners in education and have addressed that by an increase in staffing there. We've also been very responsive to the economy and the labour market in the territory by expanding our labour market areas. Members will also recognize that the labour market development agreements and the labour market agreements are being devolved or are in the process of devolution from the federal government to the territorial government. That will mean an increase in the number of staff people within the Department of Education to provide those services to Yukoners.

While I don't have an exact number for the member opposite, I have provided some significant background as to what the additional staff people do and how that's of benefit to Yukoners.

**Mr. Fairclough:** I'd like to thank the minister for that answer. We are interested in receiving that information, so I would ask the minister, once he gets hold of this information about the increase in the number of staff within the department, to flow it to this side of the House. He said it's the result of research projects, guidance from the school councils and the Auditor General. We are interested in that.

I would like to continue on, since it seems as how we're making some progress. I've had calls from my own riding about the principal's position in Pelly Crossing. It's vacant right now. I would like to know when this position will be filled and if the minister could provide any more information on that.

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** Mr. Chair, we are well ahead of the member opposite. It was staffed today.

**Mr. Fairclough:** Mr. Chair, I have talked to some of my constituents and they didn't know about this taking place at all. There was no communications to the community at all. It is unfortunate, because it should not happen that way. I do appreciate the position being filled. I thank the minister for the answer to that one. We are making a bit of progress here.

I would like to ask the minister — he said that he was working with his partners on the whole issue of governance. I know we've moved on to New Horizons. Is this something new that the government is now working on? It wasn't on the table when we were talking about the whole education reform project.

Can he update us on that and tell us if there are new initiatives that the minister has taken on the whole issue of governance and working with partners when it comes to governance?

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** I did have the pleasure of attending the community of Pelly earlier this year. I met with the chief, whom I've also met on other occasions, and with parents. We had a very good discussion of issues. I know that discussions have been ongoing with the chief and with school council. I'm not prepared to go into addressing specific personnel issues here on the floor of the Assembly, but I do want to, once again, affirm for the member opposite that the Department of Education — all our staff — will work very closely with the community in Pelly Crossing to ensure that we build the best possible education system. I know that there are additional meetings being proposed in the community to work with Education officials, to work with the school council and also to meet with the First Nation education staff.

I met with the chief and his education people, as have other members of the Department of Education. We're very willing to continue to move forward with them to address some of their ideas, concerns and thoughts.

Mr. Chair, there are certainly growing expectations of the Department of Education. There are growing expectations of our education system and the content that is included in it. The members in the Assembly are well aware of the broad range of issues that people expect from our traditional education system — and now also some of the additional expectations: things like financial literacy, media literacy or additional computer programming or additional skills programming that really weren't available back when many of us were in the education system. There are some growing challenges, too, with different issues in our communities — issues resulting from residential schools, issues resulting from substance abuse, issues related to our growing knowledge of learning disabilities and other factors that affect an individual's learning. The Department of Education is responding to this. We are responding with responsible growth in the number of positions in the Department of Education. We are bringing in additional professionals, either on contract positions or as an increase in the number of FTEs to meet the growing demands of our education system. It is also in order to provide additional support to our teachers, because we know that it is the teachers who make a significant difference in the lives of our students. The most important components are the student, the teacher and the parent. We do have to provide different resources and support in those areas



to increase the effectiveness and the outcomes of our education system.

The member opposite has brought forward the issue of governance. I'll say again for the member opposite that if you ask 10 people what governance means, you'll probably get 20 different responses. One of the important things about governance is it includes those people who are affected by the decisions; it includes the community; it includes how we can go about making changes — some of the easiest ways, the most expeditious ways, and ways that really effect positive outcomes for students.

The member opposite has heard me talk numerous times about additional information sessions we have provided, about additional information provided to people — whether it's on resiliency, transitions or the school-based growth plan. Now we are seeing some significant work being conducted in all our schools on our school growth planning process.

The school growth planning process is to ensure that Yukon schools develop learning plans in cooperation with their school councils and boards and First Nations and that these plans are reviewed on a regular basis.

The initiative encourages a process of professional dialogue to develop priorities, support inclusion of the school community and First Nations, and promote greater commitment to achieving student-centred, evidence-based goals. Various different departmental officials, school administrators, school councils, and the Yukon francophone school board have been trained to use this process.

The School Growth Planning Advisory Committee continues to meet to improve the process, to review school plans and make recommendations to the department regarding the development of the school growth planning process.

A director of student achievements and systems accountability has recently been hired to support local school growth planning teams through training, assessment, support, policy development and alignment with the new student information system.

The school planning review initiative replaces the onerous, resource-intensive accreditation models and fulfills the legislative requirements to evaluate schools.

The School Growth Planning Advisory Committee is made up of representatives of the Yukon Teachers Association, the administrators association, the school councils, boards and committees association, the Catholic Education Association, the francophone school system, the First Nation Education Advisory Committee and the Department of Education.

We're finding that these are very valuable tools that we're using in our Yukon schools to ensure that the voice of the community is heard in the plan and that it does affect the goals and objectives of the various schools. Indeed, literacy, numeracy and either social responsibility or First Nation culture are key expectations in these plans. These are a way of including the comprehensive nature of how we collaborate with others to govern the education system.

In addition to the work we do here in the Legislative Assembly to provide the budgetary oversight — which is the topic of conversation here today — we continue to work with Yukon

First Nations on different programming initiatives, or different collaborative initiatives — for example, working with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations on the bicultural program that was introduced recently in the St. Elias Community School in Haines Junction. This is an important example of how we can work with a local First Nation in order to make changes in the classroom that will affect the outcomes for their students. This was done in cooperation with the school council.

Earlier I mentioned the northern strategy funding that is being provided to the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation in order to create the land-based experiential education program. I mentioned to the member earlier about the creation of the First Nation experiential education program. Some of the other projects that were funded under the northern strategy project that was done in conjunction with either the Council of Yukon First Nations or specific First Nations themselves were the Revitalizing Culture project, the Walking Together program. Additionally, we have looked at how we can improve communications with others and encourage the input of others through the establishment of the First Nation Education Advisory Committee.

We are working very closely with other First Nations either on a formal or informal basis, whether that be through discussions between myself and the chief, or discussions between the chief and the principal, or discussions between the school council and the guaranteed representation on the school council. I should add, too, that is a floor and not a ceiling for First Nation representation in a community, that there is a guaranteed minimum number of First Nation representation on our school councils, but there are opportunities for greater participation. There are other avenues for input, whether it is through the community education liaison coordinator — or the new term for that, which is the education support worker — to provide input to the principal or to the teacher or to work with the parents.

Additionally, there are opportunities for input on broader territorial issues with FNEAC — the First Nation Education Advisory Committee — which works with senior departmental officials; also working on a school-based level with the school council and then ultimately the relationship between the parent, the teacher and the student.

So we are seeing some very structured changes; we are seeing different approaches in governance.

We have mechanisms in place where parents can work with teachers and students, where parents can work with the school community, through the school council. We're seeing ways of involving other Education officials through projects like the secondary school programming review, through the building advisory committee for F.H. Collins that has been created. We're seeing different ways of providing information to the minister's office through the Association of School Councils, Boards and Committees, through the YTA, through the Association of School Administrators, through the Education Minister's Advisory Committee. We're seeing an increased relationship between my office and a variety of different First Nations, as well as through the establishment of the Northern Forum, which creates a very structured way of working together.

I should note at this time that the department has worked very closely with the Council of Yukon First Nations on a variety of different initiatives, so there are avenues that work that way. The Council of Yukon First Nations dissolved their Chiefs Committee on Education and I anxiously await a replacement of that body.

It would create a formal relationship for me to meet with Yukon First Nation chiefs to discuss issues of education. But until a body is established to replace that, I will continue to meet with First Nation chiefs and with the Grand Chief on education issues.

I appreciate the member opposite's question. He has asked how we involve people more in the governance of education and what are the tools that are out there. We've got some very good tools. Some of them, of course, need to be refined — whether that is through additional training to the boards and committees, which is one option.

We are continuing to take steps to encourage the participation and involvement in our education system and involving Yukoners from across the territory to do that.

**Mr. Fairclough:** There is really nothing new that the minister said in regard to my question. I don't believe the minister understands the magnitude of the whole issue of governance and we get the same thing that we've gotten in the past.

I'd like to ask another question here and it's about the overcrowding in Elijah Smith Elementary School. Many kids have been turned away and I'm just wanting to know how the department, how the government, is addressing this and what we would be able to tell parents.

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** Mr. Chair, there is certainly a challenge in city planning of establishing neighbourhoods and ensuring the appropriate infrastructure is in place. We do have situations where there are growing parts of Whitehorse and other parts of Whitehorse where we're seeing declining numbers of students. In some Whitehorse schools we're seeing rates of significant vacancy where there is a tremendous amount of room. In other schools, we're seeing that they do have a significant number of students there.

When we took office, we immediately went to work with representatives from the Copper Ridge community and we went to work with the City of Whitehorse to look at their future growth projections as to how we could meet the needs in that area. Based on the research that was done and based on the advice that was given from the Copper Ridge advisory council — their firm direction was not to build a school at that time, to continue to measure the population trends and the changes in the demographics and nature of the growth in the neighbourhood — we are continuing to honour the direction that was given to us by the Copper Ridge school advisory group.

We also took steps to address and change the school catchment areas. Members will recall that change that was made awhile ago in order to encourage more students to attend schools that did have declining enrolments, where there was room, and also to meet the needs of the students in the Elijah Smith catchment area, to ensure that if you live next door to it, that you would have an opportunity to be able to walk to school rather than busing to school.

We still face some challenges in that area; we have responded through discussions with the school administrator and with the school council. Members should be aware that a portable was added to this school in order to provide additional classroom space. We did make some changes to the catchment area to provide for students to go to other schools that did have some space. We will continue to carefully monitor this issue. I know the MLA for the area — the MLA for Whitehorse West — does bring this issue to my attention on a very regular basis. I know the issue is brought forward on a very regular basis, too, with the school council and with the administrator. We will continue to measure and carefully monitor the population changes in Whitehorse and in the new areas of community growth. The Government of Yukon will take appropriate actions and respond accordingly.

**Mr. Fairclough:** Well, the minister said they are going to continue to monitor the situation and that this issue was brought to their attention by his own team. It has been brought to his attention by members on this side of the House. It has been an issue that was raised years ago. We have portables, and the minister is going to continue to monitor things and bus the children out of the area to other schools. For parents, this is a concern that they have — that their kids are going to schools that are distant from their homes. I bring it to the minister's attention again. Nothing new was added to this by the minister. It's unfortunate, but there is not much information we can take back, unless the minister can bring forward something significant to address this situation. It's not happening. We're in the middle of a school year, and one that's coming up fairly quickly.

I would like to move on. I want the minister to be able to hear the question, Mr. Chair. The minister said that there was a building advisory committee formed for the replacement of F.H. Collins and that the design of the school will be forward shortly. I was wondering if the minister could tell us more about what has taken place on F.H. Collins. I know the planning for the upcoming budget season comes very quickly, and if we are going to see monies in there for the replacement of F.H. Collins, a lot of that work has to be done now, like the architectural work and the cost of the school. I know the price tag is going to be high. With the work that has been done with the building advisory committee, are we going to be seeing a reflection of the replacement of F.H. Collins in the upcoming capital plan for next year?

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** Mr. Chair, the Yukon government is committed to replacing the aging F.H. Collins Secondary School. We announced that that would be the next major school capital project, the next construction of a new facility. As we committed to, we will be working with our partners and stakeholders in education on this. A local building advisory committee has been established, and it includes representation from many of the school stakeholder groups. I believe that many of the people who worked on the secondary school facility project are continuing in their work on this committee, and they are vested with a significant task of helping to create the vision of what the new F.H. Collins Secondary School will look like. I know that planning is well on track. The advisory

committee is working away. As you can imagine, when you do have a collection of different people, one of the strengths there is the diversity of views; it's that diversity of views that usually results in building a better product in the end.

I have a lot of confidence that the building advisory committee will be able to work very well together and provide direction to the architectural team, once they are established, so the design work for the new school can begin in January and continue through the year.

The member asked about the financial allocation: there is \$400,000 budgeted in this year, which is a significant commitment to this process, to ensure it continues along and comes to fruition. We recognize the significant importance of this high school in Whitehorse, and we recognize the significant lifespan it will have and the importance of doing the work at the beginning to ensure we will have a building that will meet the needs of the community for many years to come.

**Mr. Fairclough:** The minister basically said we will not be seeing construction dollars for the new F.H. Collins Secondary School in next year's budget but planning will continue throughout the year. In this supplementary budget, we have planning dollars for community campuses in both Dawson City and Pelly Crossing. Is that the same thing? These are smaller projects. Are we going to be looking at construction of these campuses in the upcoming year? Does it take that long to plan them, or are we also waiting for another year?

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** Mr. Chair, I do need to correct the record for the member opposite. I did indicate that there was \$400,000 in this year's budget for the F.H. Collins Secondary School replacement and the work that is ongoing for that. The member shouldn't jump to any other conclusions; he did jump to an erroneous one with his statements on the floor. I would suggest that he wait for the next main budget to see the appropriation amount that is finalized for next year's allocation for the F.H. Collins Secondary School replacement project. There are significant resources in this year's budget to address many of the front-end issues, the planning issues and the architectural issues. As we continue through the process, we will continue through with the appropriate budget allocation to get the work underway.

Mr. Chair, the member opposite mentioned the Yukon College community campus construction. This is a very exciting initiative and one that continues to demonstrate the government's support for Yukon College and the support for Yukon College community campuses.

Earlier this year, Mr. Chair, the federal government identified a pool of money referred to as the "knowledge infrastructure fund". This is a federal fund that is designed to support colleges and universities across Canada. Universities and colleges across Canada were asked to identify their needs, their capital and building infrastructure needs, and to provide submissions. Yukon College did just that. Yukon College, through the very good work of their board of directors and also through working with their community campuses, recognized the needs that they have. They recognized that their first priority was the Pelly Crossing campus and a close second then was the Daw-

son City campus. The college had been working for some time at looking at different options for Pelly Crossing.

Unfortunately, these options were not coming through to fruition so they chose to provide a submission to the federal government for knowledge infrastructure funds. The college identified the type of building that was envisioned and the budgetary amounts for both Pelly Crossing and for Dawson City and provided a submission to the federal government. I'm pleased to see that the federal government did support this initiative. It should be noted that the support of the federal government comes with matching contributions from the territorial government. We do expect to see the construction of these projects begin immediately — in fact, the projects have already begun. There are some specific timelines in the knowledge infrastructure fund, and the college committed to meeting these timelines when they put forward their submissions. The work in Dawson City, for example, has already begun on the sub-cavation of materials and the packing of materials to create the footprint for the facility, and the campus will go next to the School of Visual Arts.

There are some tight timelines that the federal government has set in place for this fund and the college has agreed to meet these. The Government of Yukon is working very closely with the college on these projects; the college will take the lead or has taken the lead on them. They are the ones that identified the priorities, identified the budget and identified that the projects could be conducted within the time frame given by the federal government.

So Yukon College will be working very closely with our property management division to provide for the design and the construction of these projects by March 31, 2011, in order to meet the terms and conditions that were put forward by the federal government.

I'll be very happy to see these facilities going into these communities. I appreciate the necessity of putting in new facilities in Pelly and I think they will be a great asset to both communities in order to provide community-based programming of a type that's important to the community, that will help people to expand their educational opportunities and to meet the economic, social and cultural needs in their communities as well. This is further evidence of this government's commitment to rural communities, to post-secondary education and to the future of Yukoners.

**Mr. Fairclough:** I thank the minister for that answer and I guess we can expect to perhaps debate the costs of F.H. Collins Secondary School in the next fiscal year's budget.

While we are talking about capital construction, I just want to ask one more quick one before we take a break here at 4:00 p.m. It is in regard to the Carmacks Tantalus School. I have been asking questions about this school for years and years and years. It has been under construction and this past summer I have seen the grounds work around the school done. I would like to know whether it is complete or whether or not the department is looking at designing, while they have an opportunity for that school to design, the grounds with more than what was there before.

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** I'm very proud to be a member of the government that was able to respond to the need in the member opposite's community and to establish the local committee that worked on the school plans and worked to provide an incredible piece of community infrastructure to the member opposite's community.

It really is a tremendous asset, and I've had the privilege of visiting the school a number of different times, whether it was for the opening ceremony or just stopping in for visits, or attending functions like this past year's ridge run, which brings cross-country running athletes from across the territory to the school in Pelly.

I did have an opportunity to be out standing in the field and to see some of the issues the member opposite is talking about. I appreciate that he acknowledged the work that was done earlier this year. There is more work that is expected to be done there. The department is planning to procure some larger play structures over this winter in order to meet some of the immediate needs in the community, but one of the other great opportunities is to see some ongoing development as time goes on for additional structures throughout the community.

For the member opposite, the department is planning to acquire a big toy — for lack of a better term — this coming winter for installation in the spring.

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

#### *Recess*

**Chair:** Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 17, *Second Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, Vote 3, Department of Education.

**Mr. Fairclough:** I do have a few more questions for the minister. I thank him for his answers. Tantalus School is given a big toy and, if the department would like to look at this in a bigger fashion, the community of Carmacks is quite close to Whitehorse here and could be hosting some big games, should they have the facility that is available there. I am talking about track and field or something done to the grounds, so that is something to think about and that is all I am asking.

While we are talking about capital projects, I would like to know whether or not there are any plans to replace the school in Destruction Bay?

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** I appreciate the comments coming from the member opposite about expanding some of the facilities in one of the schools in his riding in order to host some of the other athletic competitions in the territory. I have to tell the member opposite that his community, the school, the teachers, the administrator and the students do a great job every year of hosting the ridge run. I know it is an event that the town is very proud of.

It was great to see so many volunteers from the community coming out to make that a success and to help it move as smoothly as it did. It was a great opportunity for Yukon students to travel to the community of Pelly Crossing and to see

the community and to see life outside of Whitehorse, to experience for a brief time life in one of our communities.

So it's great to see things like that happening, whether it's the ridge run in Carmacks or the volleyball tournament in Dawson — some of the other specialty competitions that we do host in the different schools throughout the territory. There are events, too, that do happen here in Whitehorse. I'm thinking of things like the heritage fair and the science fair. We do have a science fair that's coming up that I think is being hosted at Yukon College. You know, perhaps we could look at having some of those events that don't require specific infrastructure in some of the communities. It's just something to think about.

I know the college really does appreciate hosting things like the science fair or some of the skills competitions because it provides an opportunity for Yukon students to go into Yukon College, for students to get a glimpse of the college. Then they can think about attending Yukon College when they make their decision about post-secondary education.

The member opposite also asked about Burwash Landing and whether or not there were any plans for a school there. I have to tell the member that nothing new has changed on that front. We're continuing to work with the First Nation there on the delivery of their youth and elders complex. That was identified as a priority of the Kluane First Nation a couple years ago. Perhaps the minister responsible for Community Services or the minister responsible for Highways and Public Works could provide an update on that at a later time during our debate, as that is the department that has the lead on it. Education was involved very early and provided some financial support.

That's a project that the very capable minister is seeing through to its conclusion. It is a reality in Canada and in the Yukon that we have busing to get students to and from school, that we have things like mixed-grade classrooms. These are some of the realities we have in our territory and in the country because of the challenges of the distances we travel, the style of neighbourhoods we live in, the changing demographics and the nature of a school. We have a responsibility, as a responsible government, to ensure that we utilize our assets to their full potential.

Here in Whitehorse there are schools that are running below capacity and other schools that are running at capacity, and we need to take steps to bus students to those. We have a facility in Destruction Bay that has seen some significant improvements. I've had a chance to talk to the teacher and students there and to see some of the neat work students are working on.

I do appreciate that they have to ride in a school bus or some other shuttle-type bus in order to get to school, and that's not unlike students in many other Yukon communities. In fact, I believe over 60 percent of Yukon students travel on a school bus each and every day, many of them travelling on highways throughout the territory.

So this government will continue to ensure that the school continues to meet the needs in the community. We do have a bit of a change in that community inasmuch as the school committee has changed to a school council, and we will continue to work with the school council on their expanded role

and how they can make best use of the resources they have there in the community.

The Government of Yukon will continue to work with the Kluane First Nation to address the long-standing commitment and work that has gone on to date with the Kluane First Nation on the creation of the youth and elders facility. I expect that that piece of community infrastructure will also be a strong support for residents in Burwash Landing and that it will provide a necessary resource for the community to use.

**Mr. Fairclough:** The minister said nothing has changed and there are no plans. I was just talking with the MLA for Kluane and it has been brought to his attention that the school in Destruction Bay experienced some flooding and water getting into the walls and that. Have repairs been made and is there any risk of health issues related to this?

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** I have been advised that, in September 2009, there was water detected in the basement and in another area of the school. The property management department was immediately informed of this issue and discovered that a water well pipe had just been improperly connected. I understand that it was fresh water that was coming in. The water was quickly cleaned up and apparently no mould resulted from the incident.

We have done some other work in the recent past on that school with putting in additional drainage to keep melt water and some run-off from coming in to the school. A couple of years ago there was some other plumbing pipes that were swapped out or fixed. At the time, air quality tests revealed the presence of no harmful moulds.

I understand, too, that the Department of Education and the property management division are working with the school council there to identify another air-quality expert to go in and to do some additional air-quality testing to ensure the safety and security of the school. Yes, it looks like there was a leaky pipe earlier this year. It was quickly identified and quickly fixed to ensure that it wouldn't cause any kind of long-standing damage.

**Mr. Fairclough:** I thank the minister for that answer. He says that there is no health-related mould that has been found in that school.

I do have a couple more questions for the minister. In regard to the Yukon achievement test results, I just want to know why they're not public yet. In the past these have been available in September and it's now November and we still don't have them.

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** Mr. Chair, I'm going to have to look into the member's question and find out if they've been hosted on the web site or not. I'll need an opportunity to do a little research on this issue for the member opposite.

**Mr. Fairclough:** I thank the minister for that answer; I'll leave that one alone.

I'm wondering why the department is still sitting on the B.C. departmental exam results. We still don't have the results that were released from June. How are teachers in the schools supposed to update their teaching practices if we don't know what went well and what didn't go that well in the last year?

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** Mr. Chair, I appreciate the member's question about Yukon achievement tests and the results from the BCPEs. I do want to make a comment, too, on these tests. These are one of the methods that the department, the teachers and the parents can use to gauge the progress of students, and in particular, their child or their student.

The assessment and testing, the formative and summative evaluations of students, is an important part of the whole academic process. It is important for teachers to be aware of where their students are when they start a program, and where they are when they finish a program, and where they need to do additional work to meet the educational outcomes.

I've said this before, too, that the practice of teaching to a test, I think, doesn't address all of the broader purposes or expectations of our educational system. I do get very frustrated when we judge a system based on one indicator. I think there is more to education that can be measured on a single exam.

I don't want members to get me wrong. I think that the assessment and ongoing evaluation is necessary and is healthy both from a student's perspective and also from a teacher's perspective. It is also important for the system to measure and monitor the impacts of the changes that the system is making so that we can make changes wherever possible or wherever necessary.

There are many aspects of the education system that simply aren't evaluated or aren't assessed by some of these evaluation tools. They are an important piece but that is just it: they are a piece of the broader education system. Some of the other physical, social, emotional, aesthetic, intellectual and some of the other objectives of our educational act, which does provide a very holistic view of education, aren't measured by a Fraser Institute test, for example. But that doesn't reduce their importance in raising happy, healthy and productive citizens in our community.

I am advised that the B.C. provincial exam results and also the Yukon achievement tests will form part of the Department of Education's annual report. As the member opposite and I have discussed in the past, there are changes being made this year and I expect ongoing changes to the annual report. It will be a broader, more helpful tool for members of this Assembly, for the general public, for school councils and for teachers to use to gain a greater understanding of our education system.

We've had a pretty thorough discussion about some of the metrics that the Department of Education uses. Members also had the opportunity to see the exchange between the members of the Public Accounts Committee and the Department of Education staff when asked about some of the measurement tools that were used by the department and about some of the information that will be included in the annual report.

We are going to see some changes in the Department of Education's annual report, including changes on graduation rates, which I know have been a concern to the member opposite.

I should add that the process of evaluating the graduation rate will be changed for this annual report, as well. I know the department has worked with several other governments across the country on looking at some of the best methods for report-

ing those statistics, but those statistics I just mentioned — the results from the BCPEs and the Yukon achievement tests — will be included in the Department of Education's annual report. It is expected that annual report will be printed in time to present it in this sitting of the Assembly.

**Mr. Fairclough:** Now this report — the departmental exam results — usually comes out in June so we're basically waiting for a year to have it reported out and made public through the annual report of the department. It appears that the government is not putting a very high priority or weight on those exams when it comes out a year later.

I would just like to finish up my questioning of the minister with his comments in his opening remarks on Thursday. The minister said that included under public schools is \$150,000 to cover the estimated legal fees the department will incur in relation to the court case with the francophone school board. This seems to be a common area — this government going into courts — whether it's with First Nations or not. When is the court case? Is there any effort being made to avoid court with the school board? Can the minister just fill us in on that?

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** I do need to correct the record a bit for the member opposite with regard to the BCPEs. The students write the exams in June. It does take awhile until all of the results are tabulated. There are individual results that go back to students, but then the department receives the additional information. It's another one of these situations where sometimes if we release information too early, we're criticized for not including it as part of the whole. That has happened a number of times in this Assembly, where we've provided additional information and then are asked, "Well, why didn't you provide it when we were expecting it, which would be in the annual report?"

I think that when people read the annual report, they are expecting to see a compendium of the statistical indicators of the Department of Education, and that is why the department made the decision to include the information in there.

The member also raised the issue of the suit that was filed against the Department of Education by the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon. The member should be aware of what is in this suit. I believe the documents of Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon are available publicly. I expect that he would want to take a look at those. I understand that the actual court date is set for sometime in mid-May. I think we are somewhat at the discretion of the judiciary on these issues. It would be sometime in May before the case is heard. I am sure we will be waiting patiently to receive the decision.

**Mr. Fairclough:** I don't believe this is a great use of our public money. I asked a question of the minister on whether any effort is being made to avoid court and I didn't hear an answer from the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** Has the member opposite seen the allegations or the case that has been presented by the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon? I would encourage him to do so. I think it would be important for him to have knowledge of the case before asking other questions.

I appreciate the member opposite's concern. The Department of Education continues to work with the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon. There are a significant number of operational issues that we continue to work with them on. There has been a decision by the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon to have this question answered in court and we will honour their request to go through this process.

**Mr. Fairclough:** Mr. Chair, \$150,000 is anticipated in legal fees and that's a large chunk of money to be battling it out in court. I asked the minister whether or not any effort is being made to avoid court and I didn't get an answer, so I'll have to assume that it is what the government wants to settle for.

The minister also said there was \$155,000 that has been requested to support the legal work to complete a legal review to comply with the agreement on internal trade labour mobility. I'm just wondering why this department is footing this bill.

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** The Department of Education has a broad range of responsibilities. In addition to the department being responsible for K to 12, for post-secondary education issues, we are also responsible for immigration and also labour market initiatives. This is an area that falls under the purview of the Department of Education.

It's one of the responsibilities of the government to do an assessment and review of the legislation and it was felt that this was an appropriate place to put the money. I would assume we could have gone through another process of having Justice do it or journal vouchered monies back and forth, but as this relates to labour market issues, it does fall under the purview of the Department of Education.

**Mr. Fairclough:** That seems to be where the money is coming from, Mr. Chair, and it's just over \$300,000; that's a lot of money to be spending on legal fees. I know the minister may be uncomfortable with the court case with the francophone school board, but he didn't say how they could avoid court at all but, with that, it was part of his opening remarks on Thursday. I'm going to leave it at that and turn it over to the Third Party for additional questions on this department.

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** Mr. Chair, I just want to correct the record a little bit here. The member opposite said that this money was coming out of the Department of Education's budget. The member opposite will recognize that in this supplementary budget, we're adding additional resources into the Department of Education, that there are significant increases to the Department of Education's budget and that these resources have been allocated additionally to the department's budget to address these issues.

**Mr. Cardiff:** I am pleased to be here today and to enter into the debate with the minister on supplementary budget allocations for the Department of Education. I would like to thank the officials for their attendance here today and for the briefing that they provided to our staff.

Actually, I just want to pick up — while it is still fresh — on the money in the operation and maintenance budget for the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon legal fees. So there is \$150,000 there. Is this money that is going to the commission for their legal fees or is this for the department's legal fees? Who is covering the Commission scolaire francophone du

Yukon's legal fees? Is it the department that is covering those as well?

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** The issue that has been brought forward is a very complex one and it certainly addresses issues in Canada's Constitution, Canada's *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *Yukon Act* and indeed Yukon's *Education Act*. The Department of Education is preparing for this situation and ensuring that there are appropriate resources to address the situation. These funds are for the Department of Education, and I would encourage the member opposite to find the answers to his other questions from the appropriate sources.

The Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon is the entity that he might want to direct some of his other questions or inquiries to on this matter.

**Mr. Cardiff:** That pretty much answered my question. Anyhow, the department is not covering the commission's legal fees by the sounds of it — or at least not directly.

I'd like to just begin today by talking a little bit — going back to the Auditor General's report and going over some of the recommendations and the department's responses, and getting an update on where we are. The Auditor General was critical of the way the department reported graduation rates. The report was also critical of the actual graduation rates themselves. I think the public was critical of the graduation rates and felt that 58 percent for Yukon students as a whole and 40 percent for First Nations were less than satisfactory for our education system.

There are obviously some gaps. This requires a strategy. The minister has touched on a few things in this area with regard to changing the way they are going to report graduation rates. I think what's even more important, though, is that graduation rates go up. The success of our students in schools — the education system is meeting their needs, and that they are able to shift from high school to post-secondary education with a smoother transition.

Another piece that the Auditor General touched on was absenteeism. The department's response to some of these concerns that were raised was to review a new data collection and student information system, and I understand that some of that is underway.

The department was also in the process of developing a K-to-12 assessment framework to assist in the analysis of critical trends and those performance gaps. I would like to know what we are doing and what the department is doing and what the status is on this response to the recommendations. Can the minister give us an update on where we are at with that?

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** Mr. Chair, going through an audit process is always a healthy process for an organization to go through. Having an outsider come in and take a look at how things are operating or how things are being reported is always a positive type of move to make. It should be noted that the Department of Education has been reporting all these issues for many years and that for some reason the graduation-rate calculation style was decided upon.

It was one of the first things that I looked into when I became the minister, because it is a challenging statistic to look at. The Department of Education for years was reporting a

graduation based on those with the potential to graduate — so looking at those who had entered grade 12 and then looking at those who actually completed grade 12. As I mentioned earlier, we are changing the method of calculation that will be reported in the upcoming annual report from the Department of Education. There are a multitude of different styles that are used throughout Canada on calculating graduation rates and indeed, it will be a challenge of the Council of Ministers of Education to come to a broader consensus on some of the measurement statistics and metrics that are used throughout Canada.

I'll just take a moment here to talk a bit about our statistical gathering tools as one issue. Then I'll try to address the other issue that the member was getting at of how we increase the performance.

So, what are we doing to ensure we're collecting good data and then what are we doing to ensure that we're making positive changes to increase the performance of each and every student?

There is an allocation in the budget for the Yukon student information service. I don't have that acronym right — the version that we're using is the BCeSIS, the British Columbia enterprise student information system. The British Columbia government has significant history of using their enterprise student information system — I'm sure I'll get the acronym right one of these tries here. We are working with the British Columbia model because of our strong working relationship with the British Columbia education system. They have a tool that they have been refining for a number of years now and it will be a very positive tool for our teachers, administrators and education officials to use to track attendance, to track transitions and to track performance.

There are resources that are being allocated for that, and that is in substantive response to the Auditor General calling for the collection of better data and better performance measurement tools.

I know there will be criticism from some circles that the Government of Yukon is spending resources on tracking systems, but it is very important for us to have this data in order to track the outcomes that are associated with it. The school-based information technology system will include \$322,000 to replace the current student information system, Win School — that's the current system. It is no longer being supported by the manufacturer and the recommendation for the department to implement a new student information system has been consistent in the education reform project final report, the secondary programming review report, and the report of the Auditor General.

So, those are some of the things that we're doing to increase the data that we have and to increase the reliability or statistical integrity of the data.

The member then went on to ask what we are going to do to increase the educational outcomes of the students. I think that is really the \$64,000 question.

The Department of Education has as its mandate to help each and every student to reach his or her fullest potential and to grow up to become what he or she wants to be. We also have a responsibility to the community to ensure that people are

educated in our territory with the appropriate mix of knowledge, skills, aptitude, cultural knowledge, historical knowledge — skills that are appropriate in our territory, commercially viable skills that will lead to employment situations in our territory, that will prepare people for Yukon opportunities and to lead productive lives in our society, that they participate in our democratic process and they participate culturally. They also live up to their responsibilities in our community. There is a tremendous amount that, really, every aspect of government is doing in order to address this issue.

We had questions earlier in the day regarding what we're doing to improve the health of First Nations. Well, one of the things we're doing to improve the health of First Nations is to provide additional educational opportunities. We know that all of these issues are interrelated and that with greater educational opportunities come a greater participation in economic opportunities and a greater involvement in community activities.

We also know that some of the factors that are outside of the Department of Education that affect the lives of students will also impact the students' educational outcomes. We have a significant role to play in crafting education programs, including curriculum, teaching styles, learning styles and different programs to meet the needs of all our students.

We're continuing to make changes and progress on issues from early childhood education through to advanced education and lifelong learning. There are changes being made in the education system, and I mentioned several of them earlier on in debate: the introduction of full-day kindergarten; early-intervention reading recovery programs; alternative education delivery models; different curriculum materials being produced; different culturally appropriate materials being produced; materials, courses, teaching styles that are engaging to students and engaging to teachers, because that's a very important part of it.

The education system is becoming very responsive to the needs of the communities and individual learners. We are seeing changes throughout the system that are designed to meet the needs of students so that their success rates will increase. That includes things like the Individual Learning Centre and expanding their work. The Individual Learning Centre — the ILC — is a great tool that we have in Yukon's educational toolbox to re-engage students who have disengaged from education before. For whatever reason, the students have left the school and in some cases dropped out and in other cases there were other forces that affected them. This is a great tool to help them get their education and their high school diploma.

It is things like the First Nation experiential education program, which is on the drawing board right now. It is having its curriculum crafted and all of the materials about that crafted right now. It will be another tool in addition to some of our other experiential education programs like the TEST program, or the OPES program or the MAD program, to engage students.

I know this is a very long answer to the member opposite's question but he has asked a big question — that is, what are you doing to increase the educational outcomes of students?

There is a lot we can talk about from every department in government, really — whether it is Health and Social Services,

Justice, Education or Housing. What are we doing to increase the housing opportunities so that people have a safe place to live? That is going to have payoffs in Yukon's education system.

With the creation of the single-parent transitional — someone help me out with the title of the new program.

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** The focused family unit — where people who are growing up in a single-parent household will now have a stable place to live. Having that kind of safety and security and sense of place will provide students with the foundation that they need to be successful in school. There are so many things outside of the control of the Department of Education that affect students' learning that we're going to work with all our partners to address those — the work that the Government of Yukon is doing with self-governing First Nations and the strides that self-governing First Nations are taking, with addressing things like their own housing needs, and the expenditure of the northern housing trust to build additional housing resources, the work being done on the northern strategy on some of the other intervention programs that the Government of Yukon is doing, and that self-governing First Nations are doing. That will have additional impacts on the Department of Education. The ongoing encouragement of the economy and removing road blocks to economic opportunities in the territory — we're seeing those kinds of impacts by our apprentice statistics really going through the roof.

We now have over 520 apprentices in our system, which is up from 200 a couple years ago. I mentioned earlier that at Friday's apprentice awards dinner, we had 70 individuals who received their apprentice certification. In 2003, that number was 23. From 23 to today we've seen three times as many apprentices graduating. There are lots of contributing factors to that. That's the work of Yukon Women in Trades and Technology, that's the work of Skills Canada Yukon, that's the economic opportunities that are out there, that's the work of our teachers and our programs in high school encouraging these as alternative career paths. Again, that's another example of some of the changes that are being made and some of the positive indicators that we're seeing as a result of the changes being made in our system.

There is a multitude of other different options. I fear that I'm going on too broad an area. If the member opposite would like to give me some guidance as to what he'd like me to focus on, I'll try to do that. Otherwise, I can talk for quite some time about a variety of different educational opportunities and some of the enhancements that we're making.

I've provided some information to the member opposite. If he'd like to ask me a more focused question, I'll try to be more focused in my response.

**Mr. Cardiff:** I'd like to thank the minister for that answer, and it was pretty broad. I'll try to maybe focus in on it. I'd like to actually ask him about what I think is one of the most important factors in delivering education to our children — the human resources that we use to do that.

I'm aware of the leadership program that's being used to encourage teachers to go back to school and be mentored to



become school administrators and to fill that gap. But overall it appears to me there is going to be a large gap and a hole to fill, both with teachers and with principals retiring.

I'm just wondering if maybe the minister can provide some statistics. Can the minister tell us how many new principals were hired this year? How many of them were promoted from within the Yukon school system and how many came from outside the Yukon?

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** Mr. Chair, I apologize to the member opposite. I don't have those statistics here in my budget briefing books.

I know that this year we certainly did see the effect of the aging baby-boomer generation and that there were a number of administrators who did retire. We do know that there will be more in the future and that is one of the constants of dealing with people when they do get to that level in their career.

The Department of Education, over the last couple of years, has been very proactive with that. I should say it has been proactive in that in more than just the last couple of years. One of the initiatives that we have in the territory is the Yukon native teacher education program, which is a great program to prepare Yukoners to become teachers — teachers not just here in the territory but teachers who are professionally accredited to teach across the country. We do have an excellent tool here in the territory at Yukon College to prepare Yukoners for Yukon teaching opportunities. A couple of years ago that program was, indeed, opened up to allow people of non-First Nation ancestry to participate in that program so that we could prepare other Yukoners for Yukon teaching opportunities.

We have also taken some great steps in the last year — year and a half — two years — with initiatives such as the leadership program, the Yukon educational leadership program, to reach out to our current teachers, including teachers of First Nation ancestry, and encourage them to expand and to develop their skills. In fact, I understand that about 23 percent of the total number of participants who completed level 1 are of First Nation ancestry. So, that's a pretty good indicator, too, that we're working from within to develop the skills of the people we have in the employment of the Department of Education.

We're also working very closely with Yukon College and the University of Northern British Columbia to present a master of education leadership program. This program began this past semester — or September, excuse me — with a full complement of 30 participants. That's a very strong number of Yukon teachers who are continuing their education here in the territory. That doesn't include the others who are off on education leave or pursuing their studies in other jurisdictions or through distance education programs.

It's great to see this opportunity here to prepare Yukoners for more Yukon opportunities. We will expect to see about 30 additional people within two years — when they complete their master programs — who would have the potential then to go on to further leadership opportunities in the Department of Education, because it is very important to see those types of things within Yukon's education system.

I am very gratified to see the growth of people through these types of programs and the transfer of people from teach-

ers to department staff and also from department staff back to teaching again. It's important to encourage these types of things and it's important to build the capacity of our professionals in order that they can continue to provide the excellent service that they have a long history of providing for Yukoners.

**Mr. Cardiff:** I thank the minister for that answer. I know he committed to doing some homework for the Member for Mayo-Tatchun on some issues, so I'm sure that tomorrow when we come back to talk about education, he'll have the answers to that question.

I guess one of the concerns I have is that we need a good strategy — a human resource strategy — to ensure not just that the people we are recruiting are competent and capable of teaching our children, or administering a school, but that they actually want to live here. The Member for Mayo-Tatchun brought up the situation in Pelly — and apparently I, too, was contacted about this situation. It appears that the person who was hired lasted less than three months. I'm not sure what process was used. I know we would like to see school councils and communities involved.

The minister had new information today about this situation and the Member for Mayo-Tatchun indicated that people in Pelly weren't aware that a replacement had been hired. I'm just wondering what process was used. And was the community involved in the hiring of a new principal who started today?

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** It's always a challenge to discuss issues of a policy nature in our Assembly while, at the same time, discussing a specific issue or incident. So I'll do my best to deal with it as a policy issue and hopefully I can address the member opposite's questions there.

When the department does go out looking for principals, we do very much involve the school council. In many of our situations, we do have an opportunity, whether it's through the guaranteed representation on the school council or through a direct involvement with the First Nation, to seek their input or their involvement in the hiring process.

In the majority of situations, we have a process where the school council is very involved and where they are talking about their vision for their school, the strengths, the weaknesses and the areas where they would like to see some background from their administrator, and we try to include all that information in the recruitment process. I appreciate that there are issues that do come up in the employer/employee relationship. The department must address those appropriately. In an instance where we do have to respond very quickly, the department will do its best to involve others in the process, especially the school council. The member opposite has asked about a specific issue and a specific case, and my comment on this one would be that I believe that the department acted appropriately and with expediency, that it is an emerging issue and one that did have other developments today. The department was certainly working to address the needs of all the individuals involved, and also its responsibilities as an employer, and its responsibilities with the First Nation and the school council.

**Mr. Cardiff:** I didn't hear you the first time, maybe. I thank the minister for that answer. I was using the situation that

the Member for Mayo-Tatchun brought up as an example. What I'm looking for is this: what is the government's policy on dealing with these situations, and are they able to follow through on that policy on a consistent basis? Situations like this can be very disruptive to the school, to the community, to the students, and it does affect the community and the learning outcomes of the students. So, that's the reason why I'm asking the question. It's the reason why I asked the previous question, as well, about the government's policy on hiring new school administrators from outside the territory — what that strategy is. We'll look forward to the minister's answer to that tomorrow when he has more time to deal with that and to get the information and come back to us.

The minister talked a little bit about the new Yukon student information system and I believe there's somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$200,000 to \$250,000 in the budget for this. I've got a couple of questions about this information system. This is something that we've been talking about for a long time — getting good statistical data that can be analyzed and that will provide information about our children's education. How it's implemented and how we go about doing it, what the government's policy is on that — we may differ on to some degree.

The workload on teachers, I guess, is part of it. The other part is about the collection and storage of this information. The one issue for me is that there's going to be a lot of information stored on this information system. A lot of it is going to be personal information about students and their families. Is that information protected by the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*? The information is stored on a government system permanently. I'm not sure how long it's going to be stored there after a student graduates. We're talking about tracking them into the future in their post-secondary education and into their careers to see how successful our education system is. I just want to ensure that all that information and their privacy will be protected.

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** Before I answer the question about the eSIS, I would just like to touch on the issue that the member first commented on, and that was the policy and practice of involving our partners and stakeholders in staffing key education situations. We do have it in our *Education Act* as a responsibility of the school council to be involved in the selection process for the principal, and we certainly do our very best to honour and follow that, and be as accommodating as we can in that type of human resource management practice.

Additionally, I have certainly done my best to demonstrate that to all our stakeholders and partners in education when we did have the responsibility of filling the Deputy Minister of Education position. When we were faced with that situation, we put together a committee that included a representative of the Yukon Association of School Councils, Boards and Committees, a representative of Yukon College, I contacted the Grand Chief and asked for a representative of the Council of Yukon First Nations and that group of people, along with myself and the Public Service Commissioner, did the recruitment for that position, including the identification of people to interview, including the creation of writing the interview questions

and sitting down and jointly interviewing the applicants, reaching our conclusion and then presenting our findings to the Premier.

I take my hat off to the committee because they did a heck of a job. They certainly found a very competent, capable and professional person through the process. I have to, again, take my hat off to the committee because they did a heck of a job finding a great deputy minister. I will do my best to model the behaviour, the practices and the policies that we expect the department to carry out.

I am a firm believer that the more involved we have people in the process, the better we'll understand the process, the better we'll understand the needs of the community and ultimately find the best person. There's an old saying in human resource management and that's that, "You get the staff that you deserve." If you put a lot of effort into it and you put a lot of thought into it at the beginning, then chances are you'll get good people. We will continue to do that and continue to invest within to increase the capacity of the people employed in the Department of Education so that we can meet our human resource needs. A human resource plan to define our current and future resource needs is currently underway, on track and expected to be completed by spring 2011.

The plan will also assist the department as it makes progress to a better and more equitable alignment between needs, resources and staffing. That's a bit of an update for the member opposite regarding our human resource plan and the response to recommendation 91 from the Auditor General's report.

On the issue of eSIS, the Department of Education completed a privacy impact assessment, a threat assessment, and a security audit to ensure that the new system meets all of its privacy obligations under the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Remembering that this is a replacement of a system, the department currently — and really for the entire existence of the Department of Education — has collected this type of data about students, and we have an ongoing responsibility to provide that protection of the information.

A new student registration form was developed and distributed to Yukon students in September 2009. This form was developed in consultation with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner, and Access to Information and Protection of Privacy staff to ensure the demographic data entered into the system is appropriate, current and accurate. In June 2009, the Department of Education announced that a new B.C.-based student information system would replace the Yukon schools' present information, also known as the Win School system. Locally, the system will be referred to as Yukon Student Information System, or YSIS. Several factors precipitated the move to a new student information system for Yukon schools. As I mentioned before, the vendor of the current system, Win School, announced that it would no longer support the system.

The current information system is not centralized and requires the administration of four different programs to record and archive student information. The information stored is not easily accessible by educators or department staff. The Auditor General's report released on Yukon education last spring emphasized the need for a comprehensive student information

system that could provide the data needed to support and evaluate the resources currently used in the system and to assist with identifying future programming needs to support student learning.

So we've taken a look at the different systems that are out there. We found one that really meets the needs of Yukoners. I've talked with many of the folks who are involved with that now because the data is being compiled and entered. I know that some people were skeptical when they started the process, but I did have a quick chat with the lady who is leading the switch this morning and she said that the reaction changes from a bit of concern at the beginning of the meeting, to finally, "I love this new system", before people go for lunch on the first day. So there appears to be pretty good acceptance of the program and that some of the concerns that people had at the beginning are unfounded.

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

**Chair:** It has been moved by Mr. Rouble that Committee of the Whole report progress.

*Motion agreed to*

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

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

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker resumes the Chair*

**Speaker:** I will now call the House to order.

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

### Chair's report

**Mr. Nordick:** Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 17, *Second Appropriation Act, 2009-10*, and directed me to report progress on it.

**Speaker:** You have heard the report of the Chair of Committee of the Whole. Are you agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Speaker:** I declare the report carried.

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

*The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.*

### The following documents were filed November 16, 2009:

09-1-124

Public Accounts, Standing Committee on: Letter (dated November 12, 2009) from Steve Nordick, Vice-Chair, Public Accounts Committee to Arthur Mitchell, Chair, Public Accounts Committee, regarding attendance at PAC meetings (Nordick)

09-1-125

Public Accounts, Standing Committee on: Letter (dated November 13, 2009) from Gary McRobb, MLA, Kluane, to Steve Nordick, Member, Public Accounts Committee, regarding attendance at PAC meetings (McRobb)

09-1-126

Public Accounts, Standing Committee on: Letter (dated November 16, 2009) from Arthur Mitchell, Chair, Public Accounts Committee, to Steve Nordick, Member, Public Accounts Committee, re meeting date of Friday, November 20, 2009 (McRobb)