

Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Tuesday, April 17, 2012 — 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.

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Law Day and the 30th anniversary of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I rise to recognize that today is Law Day in Yukon and across Canada. Law Day is celebrated every April 17 because it is the anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II and Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau signing the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. The *Charter* came into force as part of the patriation of the Constitution of Canada from England, and home to Canada. It was in honour of this milestone that the Canadian Bar Association introduced Law Day in 1983, as a means to commemorate the event and to educate the public about the legal system.

This year, in particular, Law Day 2012 marks the 30th anniversary of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. As I prepared for today's tribute, I recalled that it was Prime Minister Diefenbaker who first introduced the Canadian Bill of Rights in Parliament in 1960, the same year government extended voting rights to all native people. Diefenbaker was truly a great Prime Minister for the north.

Clearly, recognizing and protecting our rights and freedoms is a long-standing priority for Canada and Canadians. The patriation of the Canadian Constitution and inclusion of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* are important parts of Canadian history and our history of protecting citizens' freedoms. It is important to emphasize that our rights and freedoms were not born in or created by the *Charter* — they existed before and are in fact close to 800 years old.

Our original Constitution, the *British North America Act, 1867*, states that Canada is to have a Constitution similar in principle to that of the United Kingdom, which means it includes all the written and unwritten elements of the U.K.'s Constitution, including all the way back to the Magna Carta of 1215 and common law.

In addition to celebrating the *Charter*, a theme of Law Day has always been "access to justice". Law Day is a time for the public to learn about the legal institutions that form the cornerstones of our Canadian democracy. It's an opportunity to learn about the law and the legal profession. Organized by the Canadian Bar Association, Law Day is made possible through the efforts of hundreds of lawyers across Canada, who donate thousands of hours of volunteer time to events held across this

country. I would like to personally thank all the volunteers who take their time to make Law Day happen.

The Canadian Bar Association's contribution to constitutional debate dates back 35 years, when the CBA called for a wholly Canadian Constitution and an entrenched bill of rights. Internationally, the *Charter* has served as a model for the constitutional drafters in several countries around the world, notably South Africa and Israel.

The Canadian Bar Association, made up of some 37,000 lawyers, law teachers, and law students, is dedicated to support for the rule of law, and improvement in the law and administration of justice. Across Canada, Law Day activities include lectures on law, mock trials, courthouse tours, fun runs, open citizenship courts and more.

In the Yukon, the Canadian Bar Association, Yukon branch, is hosting the 22nd annual Law Day charity fun run/walk. It will be my honour to officially start the charity fun run/walk during the lunch hour on Friday, April 27. This year's designated charity is the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, in support of them offering two of their Connects days. The Connects days are an opportunity for those living in poverty and the working poor to come to the Old Fire Hall to receive a range of health and human services free of charge. In the past, Yukon has raised up to \$8,000 to provide the designated Law Day charity.

In addition, the Canadian Bar Association, Yukon branch, is hosting a lecture with Maddison Chair in Northern Justice to honour the *Charter's* 30th anniversary. The lecture entitled, "Will truth bring reconciliation?", will be delivered by the Hon. Justice Murray Sinclair. Justice Sinclair is a commissioner on Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The commission has been travelling across the country chronicling stories of residential school survivors. The testimonials will be collected as an archive in the history of Canada's relationship with aboriginal people. Justice Sinclair has been awarded a National Aboriginal Achievement Award in addition to many other community service awards as well as three honorary degrees for his work in the field of aboriginal justice.

The Hon. Justice was appointed Associate Chief Judge of the Provincial Court of Manitoba in March of 1988 and to the Court of Queen's Bench of Manitoba in January 2001. He was Manitoba's first aboriginal judge.

In closing, I would like to also remind Yukoners of two events: Justice Sinclair's lecture will be held at the Old Fire Hall at 7:00 p.m. this evening, April 17; and the charity fun run and walk at the lunch hour is on Friday, April 27. I invite all Yukoners to attend these two events.

Ms. Moorcroft: On behalf of the Official Opposition, I rise today to pay tribute to the 30th anniversary of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

On April 17, 1982, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II signed into law the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, forming the first part of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.

The establishment of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, did several things. It repatriated Canada's Constitution, or in other words, it brought home to Canada our sole right to govern our

own country by our own laws. Secondly, it created a document that codified the fundamental rights and freedoms that Canadians have fought and struggled for since Confederation in 1867 and entrenched the principles found in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* that followed the horrors and carnage of the Second World War. It also gave Canadians the right to seek redress through the courts for governmental violations of their civil rights and freedoms.

Prior to the establishment of the *Charter*, Canadian civil rights were protected either through the common law or through a federal law, the Canadian Bill of Rights. Because federal laws are not in themselves constitutional, the Canadian Bill of Rights was limited in its scope, powers and mechanisms for redress.

The *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* provided protection from government laws and actions. The broad range of rights covered included democratic rights, legal rights, mobility rights, language rights, equality rights and education rights. Specifically, section 2 provided the following fundamental freedoms: freedom of conscience and religion; freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press; freedom of economy and freedom of association.

The *Charter* also guarantees Canadians right to life, liberty and security of the person — section 7; freedom from unreasonable search and seizure — section 8; freedom from arbitrary detention or imprisonment — section 9; right to legal counsel and the guarantee of habeas corpus — section 10; rights in criminal and penal matters, such as the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty — section 11; the right not to be subject to cruel and unusual punishment — section 12; rights against self-incrimination — section 13; and rights to an interpreter in a court proceeding — section 14.

The equality section, section 15, which affords all Canadians equal treatment before and under the law and equal protection and benefit of the law without discrimination, was not brought into force and effect for another three years to allow governments to change their laws and processes to ensure compliance. The equality sections of the *Charter* are only 27 years old and, for some Canadians, those equality provisions are still out of reach.

Under sections 16 through 23, Canadians' language rights are protected. In general, these are the rights to use either the English or French language in communications with Canada's federal government and certain provincial governments. There are two unique elements of the *Charter*. Section 1 allows for government to place reasonable limitations on Canadians' *Charter* rights as long as they can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society. In addition, section 33, known as the "notwithstanding clause", allows for provinces, territories and the federal government to opt out of certain provisions for a period of time. The courts have, if I may say, appropriately limited the use of sections 1 and 33 by governments so as to ensure the *Charter* is not a hollow shell.

The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* is an important and vital document in the lives of ordinary Canadians. The *Charter* has protected a woman's right to choose. It has ensured that equality rights have been extended to gays and

lesbians. It has protected Canadians from overreaches of police powers. It has provided protection to many of the most marginalized people in our society by addressing the health and safety needs of sex-trade workers and of the addicted.

It has protected aboriginal women's citizenship rights. It has protected the rights of Canadians to peacefully protest. The *Charter* has also protected the homeless from arbitrary evictions from public lands where there is no affordable housing or shelters, to name just a few.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge Law Day and the Maddison lecture tonight at the Old Fire Hall, when Justice Murray Sinclair will deliver his lecture, "Will truth bring reconciliation?", based on his work with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and in the field of aboriginal justice for many years.

Mr. Silver: I rise today on behalf of the Liberal caucus to pay tribute to the 30th anniversary of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and also Law Day.

Today, April 17, 2012, marks the 30th anniversary of the patriation of the Canadian Constitution and the creation of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. The *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* was the culmination of two years of study and negotiations with the provinces and other stakeholders. It was adapted in our Canadian Constitution and the signing of this historic document in 1982, by Queen Elizabeth II and the Prime Minister of the day, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, gave Canada control over our Constitution.

This watershed moment means Canadians could henceforth amend their own Constitution. This momentous influence on our country's development opened a new chapter in Canadian democracy. The *Charter* became a model for other country's human rights documents, making Canada the envy of the world. It promises fairness, justice and opportunity, and stands as a beacon of hope that draws millions of new Canadians to our shores. Our *Charter* specifically recognizes multiculturalism as a Canadian value and opens up Canadian societies to greater diversity, in turn impacting on the very makeup of our nation's population. A profound impact on our laws, public policies, and Canadian society thrives today in our Constitution.

The *Charter* gave us the necessary tools for our rights and freedoms to be respected by government and law. Through a clear recognition and enforcement of human rights and freedoms, it acknowledges the Canadian position that all citizens, despite race, creed, colour or gender, are equal before the law. It shapes the important aspects of our identity and is a defining set of shared national values.

The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* is founded on a rule of law and entrenches into the Constitution of Canada the rights and freedoms Canadians believe are necessary in a free, democratic society.

As we reflect on the persistent human rights challenges worldwide, we as Canadians can be proud of our country, for we are a nation that believes in the rights of all our citizens. As millions of people around the world are protesting for basic freedoms, and as humanity dreams of having democratic rights

and civil liberties, we in Canada have the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* guaranteeing our fundamental human rights.

In closing, we would like to thank and recognize the hard work done by the Yukon Human Rights Commission and the Yukon Human Rights Board of Adjudication in defending the rights of many Yukoners.

In recognition of the You Make a Difference campaign

Ms. White: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Legislative Assembly to pay tribute to the You Make a Difference campaign. Be the Change teams at F.H. Collins, l'École Émilie Tremblay, Porter Creek and St. Elias schools started the You Make a Difference campaign yesterday. These groups of students promote activities throughout the year to notice, choose and act and making their schools better and more inclusive for all.

The campaign will witness members of the Yukon Circle of Change and the Be the Change team share their appreciation directly with people who make a difference in their lives and encourage these heroes to "pay it forward". This is how it works — you give someone two bracelets that say on them "You make a difference". You look them in the eyes and share how they make a difference in your life, your school or your community. You then encourage that person to keep one bracelet for themselves to remind them that they are being the change they want to see in the world.

Next, you encourage this person to "pay it forward" with this appreciation of someone else who is making a difference in their life. It is these students' hope that the ripple effects of practicing appreciation will continue throughout the Yukon.

These groups strongly believe that all individuals have the potential to make social change in their communities if they use their own personal power in a positive way. Imagine using the power of positive reflection, followed by face-to-face communication to lift people up, acknowledge them, and ending with the action of giving a gift and inviting them to "pay it forward".

Giving this gift of appreciation and thanks is an example of using our own personal power. I want to thank all the students who are involved for making our community so much richer and also reminding us that we all have the responsibility to notice, choose and act.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: With your indulgence, I would like to recognize Whitehorse's Mayor, Her Worship, Bev Buckway, who is in the gallery today. I would encourage all members of the House to welcome her.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I would like to ask everyone to join me in welcoming a constituent, Peter Wojtowicz, to the gallery. While I'm on my feet, although I don't usually introduce him as a member of the media, I would like to recognize another constituent, Brian Boyle, in the gallery today.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I would ask my colleagues to join me in welcoming the Hon. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, as well as the Minister of Transportation for Northwest Territories, David Ramsay. He is a colleague of mine from Northwest Territories, the MLA for Kam Lake, as well as the current chair of the Arctic caucus of PNWER.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Ms. Hanson: I have for tabling a poll by Environics Research commissioned by the Broadbent Institute to survey Canadians' attitudes toward income equality.

Mr. Tredger: I have for tabling a report by *Preese Hall Shale Gas Fracturing — Review and Recommendations for Induced Seismic Mitigation*.

Speaker: Are there any reports of committees?
Are there any petitions?
Are there any bills to be introduced?
Are there any notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to move toward the creation of a Yukon university by:

- (1) exploring potential models for developing Yukon College into a northern university; and
- (2) identifying which model is best suited for Yukoners' needs.

Mr. Tredger: I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to fully implement methods of experiential learning, including training of teachers, to augment learning in all classrooms and programs for students, in order to:

- (1) accommodate a variety of student learning styles and strengths;
- (2) increase personal skills of active reflection, problem solving, and independent thought;
- (3) engage students actively in their learning; and
- (4) improve the effectiveness of teaching all students.

Ms. White: M. Président, je présente un avis de motion:

QUE la Présidente du Comité Permanent Sur les Régle-ments, les Élections, et les Piviléges des membres de l'Assemblée législative programme un reunion du comité avant le fin de Mai 2012 pour considérer et recommander au chamber des amendements aux reglements de l'assemblée législative par rapport:

- (1) aux traductions demandées des comptes rendus et des procès-verbeaux de l'assemblée incluant le hansard et des autres travaux de l'Assemblée législative; et

(2) à, en general, le droit des Membres de l'Assemblée d'utiliser le français dans les débats et les travaux de l'Assemblée Législative selon la *Loi Sur Les Langues*.

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

THAT this House urges the Minister of Community Services to provide an update on the development of extended producer responsibility recover and recycle programs, as identified for follow-up under the 2009 *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan*.

Speaker: Are there any statements by ministers?
This brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Student graduation rates

Mr. Tredger: Spring is in the air and it is pretty nice out. Many Yukoners are excited about the coming graduation celebrations. Parents and students are looking forward to that day. They are buying clothes, making plans for next year, applying for jobs. Some of them may even be studying. Not everyone is included, unfortunately. I speak as a principal and as a teacher. It's a hard day indeed for parents and teachers when they realize who won't graduate, thinking of those who are no longer in school.

Will the Minister of Education tell the House how graduation rates are measured, what the results are, and what is being done to address the substantial gap between rural and urban success rates?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I'd be happy to provide the specifics to the member's questions on graduation rates and that type of information, perhaps later on today when we get into debate on the Department of Education.

However, I can speak to a number of the initiatives that have taken place to address declining graduation rates, such as the Individual Learning Centre, which was started by former member of this House and former minister, the Hon. John Edzerza. As I've said on my feet here before, it's something that I believe he was particularly proud of. I have heard great things about the centre. I haven't had the opportunity to go and visit the centre yet, but I look forward to doing so in the not-too-distant future.

Mr. Tredger: Thank you for that answer. In 2009, the Auditor General recommended that the Department of Education take action on critical performance gaps. The minister was to report on performance targets, review this data on an annual basis, and develop action plans to address the gaps.

Four out of 10 Yukon students do not graduate. Department of Education data indicates First Nation students have lower graduation rates than other Yukon students, perhaps as high as six out of every 10 students. This trend is getting worse.

Will the Minister of Education update us on the response to this recommendation in addressing critical trends, significant gaps and the results of actions — the results of actions — taken to improve on poor performance?

Hon. Mr. Kent: The Department of Education has continued to make progress on the recommendations in the January 2009 report of the Auditor General on Public Schools branch, as well as the Advanced Education branch. What that audit provided for us was a useful opportunity to look at the way we do business, and the department is taking advantage of the opportunity to change and improve the way we deliver programs and services.

A number of recommendations were made by the Auditor General, including performance targets for subgroups, tracking post-secondary student progress, coordination with Yukon College, and long-term strategic planning. There are a number of initiatives and recommendations that we're acting on, and I look forward to continued progress by the department on these initiatives as we move forward throughout this current mandate.

Mr. Tredger: The Auditor General called for specific systemic goals that are measurable, attainable and realistic and implemented department-wide. In other words, what is needed is a system-wide response to this critical trend of increasing dropout rates and decreasing graduation rates.

This is an urgent matter. Where is our sense of urgency? Can the minister clarify what his systemic response is to the crisis in student performance and unacceptable graduation rates?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Well, as I mentioned in my previous response, the department is looking at all the recommendations that were made by the Auditor General and acting upon all of them. And, again, as mentioned previously, we have seen significant success with the Individual Learning Centre allowing students that do not fit into the traditional model of high school to take on those positions.

And I did mention earlier on in the session on the floor of this House that in this fall we are expanding with one FTE in the school in the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin's riding, and one FTE in the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin's riding, in the Teslin School, to look at delivering an ILC model to those two schools as well, because, as all members of this House will know, the students in grades 10, 11 and 12 normally come to Whitehorse. Some do not adapt to education in Whitehorse and return to the communities. This gives those students options on the ground in their home communities.

Question re: Yukon College endowment lands

Ms. Moorcroft: Yukon College is a vital part of educational success for Yukon residents. It offers increasing numbers of programs, from food production skills to a bachelor of science through University of Alberta and graduate degrees in partnership with several other universities. Mr. Speaker, Canadian universities have significant parcels of land attached to their institutions. In order to become a university, something the Yukon Party government promised in its election platform, Yukon College needs room to grow. Even with the transfer of additional land for student housing and a potential mine school, Yukon College is full on the parcel of land it moved to in 1988.

In December, when I asked the minister about the government's plans to transfer endowment land to Yukon College, he said he wasn't yet prepared to make that commitment. What

steps has the minister taken now to transfer endowment lands to Yukon College?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I would also like to thank the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin for putting forward his motion today regarding the creation of a Yukon university and exploring models for that development.

As the member opposite referenced, during our platform from last fall's election, we referenced providing lands to Yukon College for a centre for northern innovation in mining and a student residence.

Since the time that we spoke previously on the floor of this House about this particular issue, we have had a number of internal multi-departmental meetings. The Department of Education, the Department of Community Services and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources have met with Yukon College. I met as recently as yesterday with the president and the chair of the board and we're making progress. There is nothing final to report yet, but as soon as that progress is complete and those options are developed, it will go through the Cabinet process and we expect to identify those lands for the college.

Ms. Moorcroft: It's all very well for the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin to file a motion. I'm looking for a commitment from the Education minister that he will advocate for Yukon College.

Yukon College leadership would like to be able to meet current and future needs for housing, expanded programming and research. Yukon College is at a stage in its growth where it needs a large enough parcel of endowment lands to grow into the future and to develop a land use plan. By including in college endowment lands the proposed area, which parallels McIntyre Creek and the college, they could support environmental monitoring and research, youth sciences programs, boreal trails, and parkland. Does the Minister of Education support the college's desire for an endowment land parcel that includes the adjacent property near McIntyre Creek and would protect existing research and trail use?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As I mentioned in my previous answer, we have three government departments — including mine, the Department of Education, the Department of Community Services and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources — senior officials from those departments working with Yukon College on coming up with an option for the endowment lands, which will include room for a new student residence and room for a centre for northern innovation and mining.

There are other partners, of course, that we will have to speak with, including the City of Whitehorse and First Nations that have identified lands adjacent to what we would expect to be the endowment lands. So I'm not prepared to comment on the floor of this Legislature yet until we have spoken with all the partners and, of course, it has gone through the Cabinet process that it has to go through.

Ms. Moorcroft: I am pleased to hear that the minister is active on the file. I must say that I would have thought the minister, by this stage, would have spoken to all the parties. He does have the ability to bring parties together and he does need

to work not only with the college community but with the City of Whitehorse and with the Kwanlin Dun Council and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council.

I would remind the minister that the Government of Yukon is the property owner. The minister, if he is willing, has the ability to bring forward a Cabinet submission to transfer endowment lands to Yukon College.

Can the Minister of Education tell us when he expects those meetings to conclude and the officials to work with the college to complete their work so he can deliver on an essential step toward establishing a northern university at Yukon College?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I believe I have already answered all the questions that the Member for Copperbelt South has identified in her second supplementary. She is over there asking, "When? When? When?" I have also answered that question, Mr. Speaker. I have said that meetings are ongoing right now with senior officials from the government with Yukon College. I have met several times with the president and the chair of the Yukon College Board of Governors on a number of issues including the endowment lands.

As I mentioned previously, we intend also to engage with First Nations and the City of Whitehorse when it comes to the transfer of those lands, and we do have that internal Cabinet process that we have to go through on this side of the House, as well. I believe that this is very similar to my previous answer, but the last supplementary was — you know, I think I have addressed everything.

Question re: Old Crow student travel

Mr. Elias: It must be Education Week, Mr. Speaker.

For as long as I can remember, high school students from Old Crow must leave their families, their culture, their traditional foods and their lifestyles every September to attend high school in Whitehorse. During the recent Easter holidays, it was once again only the students from Old Crow — and I believe one other student — who remained at the dorm. All other students drove home.

Over the past nine years, our community of Old Crow has had 24 high school students drop out of the education system. All my constituents are asking for right now is for the minister to help get the students home during Thanksgiving and Easter holidays. That is an additional 10-12 days at home with their families during the school year. Will the minister commit to support the students, their families and the community of Old Crow to ensure their children get home for Thanksgiving and Easter?

Hon. Mr. Kent: When I was going to public school in the Yukon, I was very fortunate to have lived within blocks of the school. I was able to not only go home every night but often would be home for lunch. I can certainly sympathize with the students from Old Crow who come into Whitehorse for school. But there are other students as well. There are students from Ross River and Teslin — of course there are different circumstances; they do have road access to their communities.

I was fortunate enough to attend the Yukon Forum with the Premier and my colleagues the Minister of Environment and Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources last Friday. We

had a side-bar conversation, I guess, with the new Chief of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation about a number of education initiatives. I would be pleased to discuss not only this initiative with him, but other initiatives that affect his community and perhaps even bring in the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin on specific discussions as they relate to the school in Old Crow, the students and their travel.

Mr. Elias: High school students from Old Crow have no choice — they have to leave their community every September to attend high school. They have no choice. This year, there were 27 students from Old Crow attending high schools in our capital city. Old Crow students spend a total of nine and one-half months away from home during the school year. This is a substantial amount of time for a teenager to be away from home.

The Auditor General of Canada pointed out that only 40 percent of Yukon First Nation kids graduate from high school. Has the new minister taken a closer look at this specific issue that I'm bringing forward to the House today? What can he tell my constituents and the parents who care for their children?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Just with respect to the travel for students who are coming to Whitehorse, I believe the latest information that I have is that there are eight students from Old Crow currently in Whitehorse. Five are residing at the Gadzoosdaa residence and three are in private accommodations. In 2010-11, there has been \$32,000 spent on student travel to and from Old Crow so far. Again, these are the latest figures, so I don't have the exact 2011-12 figures yet, but \$18,000 has been spent.

What that does is provide those Old Crow students with one flight to Whitehorse at the beginning of the school year, a return flight at Christmas, a return flight at spring break, and a flight from Whitehorse to Old Crow at the end of the school year. Now I agree that this is a long time to be spending away from one's family, and we are seeing some poor results and some results in Old Crow, I think, with students who aren't achieving success here in Whitehorse at the high school level. Through the work of the rural strategy and engaging with the new Chief of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, and working, of course, with the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, I think we will be able to address a number of these concerns, including the travel. I don't think it's going to add a significant amount to the budget and I think it's something we can deal with rather quickly.

Mr. Elias: That was encouraging, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad that I asked this question today on behalf of my constituents because it seems that there's a level of detail that we can't handle here in 60 seconds in Question Period. But I appreciate the Minister of Education's invitation to discuss these matters in greater detail.

The minister can ease the pressure on my constituents and on the students. That's all we're asking for. We want all these students to succeed in their education. I presented a couple of solutions to the previous minister to consider. One was to arrange for an annual financial contribution agreement, so that the Yukon government travel budget for the students from Old Crow can be managed directly by the Vuntut Gwitchin educa-

tion department. That's one solution. The other solution was to develop a grade 10 curriculum in Old Crow.

Will the minister commit to ensuring that funding is available every year and provide the opportunity for the students from Old Crow who are attending school in Whitehorse to travel home during these two specific holidays?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Again, what I would like to do is commit to sit down with the new Chief of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, as well as the MLA for Vuntut Gwitchin. I know that both of those gentlemen know their community an awful lot better than I do, as Minister of Education. Again, I'm open to discussions on what the member spoke about with respect to funding. I can say, though, again, that I believe the department does do a good job of funding travel at existing levels and finding housing for those students here in Whitehorse. I did mention, of course, the one FTE that will be assigned to the community of Old Crow and the school there for an Individual Learning Centre-type model to address those students in grades 10, 11 and 12 who have gone home. We also have other communities, though, in the Yukon, such as Ross River and Teslin, that have to send their students into Whitehorse for high school, so we can't forget about them when we're discussing this as well.

I should also mention that I have started discussions with officials in my department to offer options for students from Old Crow to possibly attend high school in Dawson City, and those students in Ross River to possibly attend high school in Faro, where those programs are offered. So there are a number of options I think we can consider. Again, what I am committed to as Minister of Education is student success, and that's what I want to see happen.

Question re: Skills training

Ms. Stick: A high level of mineral exploration and development has given the Yukon an economic boost that is welcomed. The demand for trained workers is exciting. In the Minister of Education's annual report it states, "Yukon has an inclusive, adaptable and productive workforce that contributes to and strengthens the economy". There is, however, a rising concern about the fly-in/fly-out workers that mining companies are using to fill their skilled worker needs.

Can the Minister of Education tell us how he is monitoring labour market needs and how will Yukoners begin to meet those needs with local, skilled workers?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I was anticipating being on my feet for a better part of the afternoon, but it is also exciting to be on my feet during Question Period as well.

With respect to the Member for Riverdale South's question, I think that there are a number of different ways the Yukon government is responding to Yukon's labour market needs, including comprehensive skills and trades training, immigration recruitment, employee retention and labour market information. Those are what will guide us over the next number of years, when it comes to meeting the significant labour market needs for Yukon residents and, of course, those new Yukoners and Canadians who come to us via the three immigration programs offered by the Yukon government.

Ms. Stick: Research tells us that the Yukon has the highest rate of literacy in Canada. Though true, this is not the case in rural communities, where literacy rates are below acceptable levels. The annual report from Education further indicates that the Education department has a goal to “deliver courses for skill enhancement as required” for the labour market.

The Yukon literacy strategy, written back in 2001, states that the Yukon government will design training programs that include a literacy and life skills upgrading component consistent with needs, employment training and requirements of the job.

Can the minister tell us what training and literacy programs this government provides to potential Yukon workers who are in need of these literacy and essential skills?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I think there are a number of programs with respect to literacy that are being offered currently, not only by the Department of Education, but also through a number of our NGOs and Yukon College. As mentioned, the department is, along with our partners in the college, committed to monitoring literacy levels and providing support, especially in rural Yukon. It includes identifying and removing barriers to lifelong learning and providing supports where necessary to those adults who need and want to improve their literary skills.

Members in this House will remember just around the time of the Arctic Winter Games that the federal government made a commitment to adult basic education. That will include literacy levels, and a significant portion of those dollars will flow to Yukon College so that we can meet those needs. We also have the community training funds that can be used to address this basic education outside of Whitehorse.

I should also mention that the literacy strategy that was referenced by the member opposite is getting on in years. It was 2001 when it was approved. I have also had discussions with the department on how best to work with the NGOs to renew that literacy strategy.

I’m looking forward to that work. I should also mention quickly the support that this government just announced for the Family Literacy Centre here in Whitehorse. I was fortunate to be at their anniversary in January, and I’ll get back to it, perhaps, in the next question.

Ms. Stick: There are employees who are now working on the job, as well as potential workers who are in need of workplace literacy training. There are skill gaps experienced in mining and tourism, as well as other workplace venues. These gaps mean low productivity, increased error rates, lack of communication, high turnover, and worse, accidents. Statistics Canada says that lifting literacy rates by only one percent could lift labour productivity by half. More essential skills, such as reading documents, computer skills, critical thinking and problem solving are demanded of workers. Is the minister planning to implement workplace literacy programs and training to assist employers and workers in the Yukon to become more productive?

Hon. Mr. Kent: The Government of Yukon has a number of projects that we fund for literacy. Of course, I have

mentioned Yukon College and the money that goes to adult education programs — approximately \$500,000. Yukon Learn Society receives \$275,000; Kwanlin Dun House of Learning, \$175,000; Learning Disabilities Association of Yukon, \$82,000; Yukon Literacy Coalition, \$25,000 for the Pan Northern Gathering; and Linking Essential Skills to Life with the Yukon Literacy Coalition, \$30,000. As I mentioned in my previous answer, a significant amount of investment has been made to the Family Literacy Centre — \$200,000 that we made to follow up on funding through the northern strategy that we’ve identified.

I’ve also had meetings with the producers group, which includes the producing mines here in the Yukon and have talked about the training needs that they experience and the fact that they, along with us, along with all Yukoners, want to ensure that we minimize the number of workers who are coming in from outside the territory. The work continues on a number of fronts and I can assure the House that literacy is something that is very important, not only to this government, but to me personally.

Question re: CBC Radio

Mr. Barr: Yesterday the Member for Watson Lake introduced the motion that spoke to the importance of CBC TV and AM radio services for Yukoners. The NDP certainly agrees with the importance of the CBC and its vital role in connecting us and telling our Canadian stories.

It’s extremely important to the little guy, the Yukoner on the trapline who has no other way to connect with the outside world, and many neighbours of mine in rural Yukon who can’t afford the \$1,000-a-year for satellite TV and who may not receive the FM transmission.

In order to keep the AM signal going, will this government be extending the CBC’s lease for the Whitehorse tower in Porter Creek which runs out in July of this year?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I thank the member for the question. In fact, I would like to recap the history of this and remind the member that the issue of the need to relocate CBC’s AM transmitter in Whitehorse is one that has been in development for quite some time. It has been part of the Whistle Bend subdivision development. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has had quite a number of years to consider where they might wish to relocate a tower. Three years ago, in 2009, the lease for the existing site was lapsing. CBC had indicated a desire to end AM service in 2009. At that point in time, the City of Whitehorse and Community Services, in partnership with me, as Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, were able to come to an agreement that the lease could be extended for a further three years to give the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation time to relocate the tower in advance of the Whistle Bend subdivision development.

Again, unfortunately, CBC did not take that opportunity to pursue a plan to develop an alternative site. At this point in time, we would certainly work them to keep the tower at its location as long as possible and to find another site, if they are willing to do what they should do and continue AM service to Yukon citizens.

Mr. Barr: In a ruling issued Monday, the CRTC said the north, with its isolated communities and small population, presents an exception. So they can continue broadcasting with analog. This is good news. However, the federal government has singled out the CBC for major cuts to the tune of \$115 million over three years. To absorb the cuts, the CBC is cutting 650 jobs, including some in the north, and is looking at cutting analog services to deal with the cuts — talk about a rock and a hard place. Does this government agree that the federal government should reverse its cuts to the CBC that negatively impact access to radio and television in the north?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Again, I would reiterate to the member that we have in the past, when CBC did not take steps to acquire an alternative site for the CBC AM tower located where the Whistle Bend subdivision is being developed, we gave them a three-year extension to the lease. We also offered our assistance to find a suitable alternative location. CBC has had three years to take steps to pursue an alternative location and they have not done so. Instead, they have indicated that they wish to cease AM service.

Through the motion that has been tabled by my colleague, the Member for Watson Lake, we have taken action to urge the federal government to ensure that CBC is required to continue to provide this service. We will offer our services to help them keep the tower on the site for as long as possible. We will also help them acquire an alternative land location, if they are interested in relocating the tower.

We do not deal with the budgeting for the CBC. I would point out that, in fact, some of the services provided by the CBC, like Portuguese language service to Brazil through Radio Canada International are a lot less important than continuing to provide a service to Yukon citizens that has been provided for roughly 60 years. So, again, we will continue to urge the federal government to make CBC keep that AM service in place.

Mr. Barr: The Member for Watson Lake's motion basically calls on the federal government to force CBC to relocate the AM tower. We want to see this service continue.

It is unclear about whether this government actually supports the CBC or not. On the one hand, they permit the CBC to use the land where the AM transmitter tower is located. On the other hand, they want the CBC to move the tower to make way for Whistle Bend and continue the analog services on the CBC dime from a shrinking budget. On the other hand, they are silent about the federal cuts coming down, including those dumped on the public broadcaster. I'm looking toward this government to give us some clarity. Is this government actually going to do something to stand up for our public broadcaster and the little guy who depends on CBC services?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: This government will continue to support the provision of CBC services to Yukon citizens and across the north. We believe that it is an important part of why they receive roughly \$1 billion in taxpayers' money for the CBC operation in Canada — it's to provide that regional service, which is not economically attractive for the private sector to provide. We believe that they should provide that service and continue to do so. We will take our steps — whatever steps

we can, I should say — to assist them in acquiring an alternative location for the tower.

As far as the issue of the federal budget goes, we will leave that to the federal government to determine appropriate resources. Whether or not relocating the tower requires additional resources in continuing CBC AM and CBC TV in both English and French, we will leave to them. I will emphasize that providing service to Yukon citizens is a lot more important than providing Portuguese language services to the people of Brazil.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice of government private members' business

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(7), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of the government private members to be called for debate on Wednesday, April 18, 2012: Motion No. 162, standing in the name of the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin; and Motion No. 163, standing in the name of the Member for Watson Lake.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Mr. Cathers: 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 (Ms. McLeod): Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 6, *First Appropriation Act, 2012-13*. We are going into general debate on Vote 3, Department of Education.

Would the members like 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. 6: *First Appropriation Act, 2012-13* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 6, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2012-13*. We are beginning debate on Vote 3, Department of Education.

Department of Education

Hon. Mr. Kent: It's indeed my pleasure to rise in the House today to present the 2012-13 budget for the Department

of Education. Before I begin my opening remarks, I'd like members to join me in welcoming the Deputy Minister of Education, Ms. Pam Hine, and the director of finance for the Department of Education, Ms. Cyndy Dekuysscher, to the House today.

Perhaps further congratulations for the deputy minister — she is getting married this summer, which is very exciting, and it's always exciting for me to be able to mention that on the floor here too.

I'm pleased to say that with this budget — the first budget in the Yukon Party's third mandate — we are continuing our good work in creating a better quality of life for Yukoners by educating tomorrow's citizens so they can contribute to the community and its economy. To that end, we aim to: (1) create a more responsive education system that enables all learners to succeed; (2) enhance transitions between different levels of education, training and the world of work, and; (3) further develop and maintain meaningful relationships with all partners in education and training.

We are very pleased this year to continue with the delivery of a very comprehensive strategic plan that outlines the goals and priorities that have been identified through the education reform process and that also respond to the requirements of the Auditor General's report of January 2009.

Madam Chair, before we start to speak about the budget, I would also like to thank and congratulate my Yukon Party predecessors, the ministers of education Mr. Patrick Rouble and Mr. John Edzerza. They did fantastic work and did a great job at setting the stage for me to be successful during this, our third mandate of a Yukon Party government.

The total budget for the Department of Education this year is \$145,815,000. Before I speak to the numbers behind the 2012-13 budget, I would like to thank all Yukoners for their continuing commitment to education. The Department of Education's main objective is to deliver accessible and quality education so learners of all ages can become productive, responsible and self-reliant members of society.

Our vision is for all Yukon people to possess a desire for, and appreciation of, lifelong learning, a strong commitment to their communities and the knowledge and skills needed to live meaningful, productive and rewarding lives. We will see this vision reflected in the department's programs and in the budget. Education plays a vital role in building Yukon's workforce and economy by developing and enhancing programs and/or resources to meet changing educational and labour market needs.

Now I would like to speak directly to what the departmental plan means in terms of the 2012-13 capital and O&M budget for the Department of Education.

First, I'd like to begin with the capital budget. The capital budget for 2012-13 is \$6,107,000. This budget reflects a decrease of approximately 35 percent from our 2011-12 capital main estimates. The capital budget is based on cash flow requirements for each project, and, as such, the funding requested each year can change substantially and is based on need. In pursuit of the department's vision, we are committed to ensur-

ing the educational facilities meet the needs of Yukoners, and that commitment is very much reflected in this budget.

The single largest component of this budget on the capital side is \$1.293 million for the F.H. Collins Secondary School replacement. As I have said many times on the floor here, this government is firmly committed to replacing the F.H. Collins Secondary School. The updated construction schedule that was announced prior to Christmas allows the Yukon government adequate time to review the design and ensure that it takes into account all the objectives and input received from the education community since the beginning of the consultation process in 2009. This funding reflects the cash flow requirements of the updated construction schedule, and no further delays in the project schedule are anticipated.

In 2009, the roof over the library in the old wing of Johnson Elementary School experienced structural failure. Since then the old wing has been closed. The newer section of the school has more than enough capacity to accommodate the students. A business case analysis was completed in January 2012 by an independent consultant with a recommendation to demolish the old wing. In response to the recommendation, we are requesting \$500,000 for the demolition of the old wing section of Johnson Elementary School.

Watson Lake was the first community I visited after Christmas upon having the opportunity to get out and meet educators, students and parents in the schools. To this end, in response to the demolition of the old wing at Johnson Elementary School, I want to assure the Member for Watson Lake's constituents that we do plan on having officials come down to Watson Lake and work on space allocation. When I did the tour of the school, I noticed that the library, which was the major component of the old wing, has been relocated to a classroom. We want to ensure that the school works and functions and that we address all of the concerns of the people of Watson Lake in providing that quality education at not only the elementary school level with this physical space, but at the high school where Yukon College's Watson Lake campus is located.

The Department of Education is developing a Yukon public schools long-term facilities plan to address capacity issues and an aging infrastructure. Student enrolment projections and reports are used to alert the department to possible school capacity issues and to help the future needs of the public school system,

Future school planning must also take into account growth in the Hamilton Boulevard corridor and Whistle Bend. A request for \$250,000 to begin this planning is also being requested in this budget. The department is also seeking funding for other capital projects to help maintain other public school facilities. For general site improvement, recreation development, soccer field repairs throughout Yukon's schools, the department is requesting \$130,000. For ongoing routine projects, such as school-initiated renovations, various school facility renovations, roof repairs and capital maintenance repairs, the department is requesting \$1.75 million.

Also under our capital budget, the Department of Education is requesting funds to support our instructional programs. \$1.064 million is requested to support the school-based infor-

mation technology program. This funding will be used to purchase computer hardware, software, network infrastructure upgrades and associated curriculum software upgrades for various Yukon schools.

\$435,000 is requested to purchase school-based equipment and \$25,000 is requested to continue support for distance education. Where our school populations are small, distance education and technology-assisted learning can help to ensure that students are able to enrol in the courses they need to make their desired transitions to post-secondary education. Video conferencing access is available in schools in all communities. The importance of information and communication technologies or ICTs in education is increasing and video conferencing ensures equity of access for all of our communities.

Yesterday, during my tribute to Education Week, members will recall that I mentioned that there are two rural students who are taking Physics 12 via video conference along with students at F.H. Collins. So that's a real hands-on way of explaining what that distance education means and why it's so important, especially in our communities.

This government is also committed to continuing support for labour market development throughout the Yukon. That support is expressed in capital expenditures for the development of an information system required to administer the Canada-Yukon labour market agreement. Since 2009, under the Canada-Yukon labour market development agreement, the Government of Yukon is now overseeing assistance programs that help prepare EI clients for new jobs. By assuming responsibility for these programs, Government of Yukon is well-positioned to work with our stakeholders and match our skills development programs with our economic agenda and prepare Yukoners for Yukon jobs.

The department is requesting \$500,000 for the Advanced Education branch to complete the development of that information system. The most significant benefit of the information system is that it will allow Yukon to comply with the information exchange, as outlined in the agreement. It will also allow Yukon to analyze the effectiveness of the employment benefits and support measures being implemented under this agreement. The 2012-13 operations and maintenance budget will see continuing support for several initiatives, as well as support for labour market activities in the Yukon.

Our most important work at the department is to ensure that all Yukoners have the skills and education they need to support their families and to participate fully in their communities and workplaces. The \$139,708,000 dedicated to the Department of Education under this year's operations and maintenance budget will help us to support Yukoners on their journey of lifelong learning.

First, I would like to address the funds the department is seeking on behalf of education support services. For the environmental stewardship program that was established in 2011-12, we are requesting \$176,000. This program will improve the environmental performance of departmental operations and increase environmental education in the classroom. A waste-diversion pilot was initiated in two schools in May 2011: Whitehorse Elementary and Vanier Catholic Sec-

ondary. Approximately 50 percent of the waste from these two schools is now being diverted from the landfill. The program has been expanded to Gadzoosdaa student residence and will be established at Selkirk Street Elementary School, Christ the King Elementary School and Jack Hulland Elementary School in the coming weeks.

Also, \$3.13 million is requested to continue offering bus-ing services for our students.

I'd also like to address the funds the department is seeking on behalf of Advanced Education. As I mentioned earlier, Yukon government signed both the labour market agreement and the labour market development agreement with the Government of Canada on July 8, 2009. These two agreements reflect the Yukon government's cooperation with the Government of Canada to enable education, training and skill development for Yukoners to help Yukoners respond to opportunities and meet Yukon's labour market needs. With these agreements, Yukon employers will enjoy greater flexibility to respond to changes in the local economy and labour markets, because these agreements help train Yukoners to do the work those Yukon businesses need to get done. The labour market development agreement gives the Yukon government the authority to provide support services that help eligible Yukoners to upgrade their skills, get on-the-job experience, find a job or become self-employed.

The labour market agreement, the second agreement, is aimed at helping Yukoners find jobs or obtain better jobs. What's exciting about this agreement is that it helps Yukoners who are not necessarily eligible for employment insurance. Over five years, the labour market agreement is bringing \$5.896 million from the Government of Canada to help Yukon create new career opportunities for our residents.

For businesses to prosper, employers must have staff with the necessary skills. This government is proud to be part of the solution to the skilled labour shortages. Implementation of the labour market framework that began during 2011-12 will continue through 2012-13. For this we are requesting \$233,000. This funding is provided through the community development trust. The funding will be used for the development of labour market information materials and for a staff person to coordinate the implementation of the labour market strategies with our many partners. We are also requesting an additional \$180,000 to continue with the two positions that were previously funded under the community development trust, which support the Yukon nominee program and the immigration strategy.

In addition to supporting programs under these agreements, the Department of Education works in other ways to expand every available labour pool to assist employers in fulfilling their labour market needs.

Government of Yukon is also requesting \$200,000 in funding for the immigration portal. This amount is fully recoverable from the Government of Canada. The immigration portal provides Yukon-specific information on-line for anyone interesting in immigrating to Canada and living in our territory. The government is committed to reducing immigration red tape and fast-tracking immigration applications so that Yukon employ-

ers can have access to the workers they need to have their businesses and organizations flourish.

We are also requesting \$163,000 for the foreign credential recognition program. This amount, too, is fully recoverable from the Government of Canada. This program will be used to recognize the qualifications of foreign professionals so they can practise in Canada. This funding also supports one term position to coordinate Yukon's role in this national initiative. The department also supports learners as they transition from school to the workplace with programs such as the student training and employment program, better known as the STEP program, and the summer career placement program. These programs pay students a good wage for summer work and provide them with skills and experience they need to enter the workforce.

This government also continues to support Yukon College. The total support for Yukon College is approximately \$22 million for 2012-13. The Department of Education works with the college in promoting the skilled trades as a smart career option.

The department also works with Yukon employers as they develop skilled trades training opportunities in the workplace. Enrolment in apprenticeship programs has grown over the last four years and levelled off after its peak last year. We are pleased to continue to support growth in trades training.

An important part in ensuring the long-term health of our economy involves providing opportunities for Yukoners to gain access to careers in skilled trades. We also work with Yukon College to ensure that they have the support they need to provide the best educational facilities possible for our apprentices. Yukon College is a leader in trades education in the territory and it also offers certificate and diploma programs. It delivers degree programs through articulation agreements with other post-secondary institutions in Canada and Alaska.

\$18.176 million is requested to support Yukon College for their base operational funding. This increase supports their request for one-time funding for IT and security upgrades, additional ongoing funding of \$175,000 to address day-to-day funding pressures and collective agreement impact.

\$474,000 will be provided to Yukon College to continue operation of the School of Visual Arts in Dawson City. I am also pleased to announce that the licensed practical nurse program has been extended for another four years. This extension will allow up to 30 more practical nurse students to graduate and find work in the Yukon.

\$463,000 is being requested for the LPN program to begin the first year of a four-year extension. The targeted initiative for older workers provides an opportunity for workers between ages 55 to 64 to develop skills to find and retain employment. This program was initiated in 2007, and it has been so successful that it is extended to 2013-14, and for 2012-13, in this current budget, \$240,000 is being requested to continue this initiative. Again, that amount is fully recoverable from the Government of Canada.

As of January 2012, a total of 202 participants have enrolled in that program, and 85 percent of past participants were employed or enrolled in either training or college.

In addition, \$1.088 million will be provided to Yukon College to support the Research Centre.

The Research Centre is a focal point for research programs that address climate change challenges and opportunities in the north. It supports northerners to work together to facilitate and coordinate national and international expertise, while they work on issues having not only a northern, but also a global impact. This amount, of course, is this year's commitment to the \$5 million that the ministers of environment and economic development and I were able to announce prior to the commencement of this spring sitting.

\$377,000 is also being requested for the Northern Institute of Social Justice. This institute, housed at Yukon College, provides training and education to Yukon residents in a wide variety of social justice fields. It also undertakes research. It was created to address challenges in recruitment, development and retention of a qualified workforce to deliver programs and services with a social justice component.

Now, I'd like to speak to a number of initiatives that will support the work of public schools. Perhaps I'll sit down at this point before I get into the public schools part and beg indulgence from members opposite to allow me to conclude my remarks in my next 20-minute block. Thank you.

Mr. Tredger: I've been involved in education much of my life, and it has been a very rewarding time. It's interesting to look through the budget — to experience it from a different perspective, and it's one I'm enjoying very much.

I would like to recognize and thank the members from the department, Deputy Minister Hine and Ms. Dekuysscher, for their attendance and I would like to welcome them to the Legislature.

I will keep my opening remarks relatively brief in order that we may have a bit more time later to more thoroughly examine the details of the budget. I would like to congratulate the minister for visiting the schools and work places and for his willingness to listen and the time he has taken to talk to teachers and students and to attend events. His willingness has raised expectations and created hopes that local schools, students, parents and staff and their ideas will be heard. I encourage him to continue regular visits. His active involvement and attention can and will make a difference. I can tell him from my experience in the field of education that the people involved in education are passionate. They're caring and they give their hearts and their souls to their kids to help them succeed.

I've also enjoyed my conversations with the minister and look forward to working with the minister over the next few years. I also appreciate his quick responses to my queries.

I'd like to recognize and thank school staff, educators, principals, teachers, learning assistants, tutors, janitors, school secretaries and the bus drivers for their constant and many positive interactions with children each and every day. I will talk to them in more depth later, but the relationships are what drive the system. What happens each day between people — whether they are young or old — in our schools drives the system. Most of us can point to a significant adult who has made a difference in our lives, someone who has inspired us or guided us to be the most that we can be, someone who has believed in us.

More often than not, that significant adult is a teacher or other adult in our school system.

I would also like to recognize and thank the parents who work closely with their school to support their child. Sometimes this is easy; sometimes it's difficult. But I want to thank them for having the perseverance to be, and to continue to be, involved. Sometimes their experiences may be difficult because of cultural differences or personal experiences. We as a system must do everything we can to let them know our schools are their schools.

I'd like to thank the governments — the First Nation governments, the community governments — and the communities themselves who have welcomed teachers and educators from across Canada into their communities and made them their homes. It's one thing that makes the Yukon a special and wonderful place to work.

As I was going through the budget, I realized that I had a number of themes and a number of ideas that guided my thinking and that brought about my perusal of the budget, so they will guide my questions as we go into more detail.

But first, I would like to set the stage by quoting from the preamble to the *Education Act*: "... Yukon people agree that the goal of the Yukon education system is to work in co-operation with parents to develop the whole child including the intellectual, physical, social, emotional, cultural, and aesthetic potential of all students to the extent of their abilities so that they may become productive, responsible, and self-reliant members of society while leading personally rewarding lives in a changing world; and recognizing that the Yukon education system will provide a right to an education appropriate to the individual learner based on equality of educational opportunity; prepare students for life and work in the Yukon, Canada, and the world; instill respect for family and community; and promote a love of learning; and recognizing that meaningful partnerships with greater parental and public participation are encouraged for a high quality Yukon education system; and recognizing that the Yukon curriculum must include the cultural and linguistic heritage of Yukon aboriginal people and the multicultural heritage of Canada; and recognizing that rights and privileges enjoyed by minorities as enshrined in the law shall be respected." That's asking a lot, and it's a challenge.

The vision, the wisdom and the example of our First Nations in *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* and the people of the Yukon who collaborated to create the *Education Act* must guide us. Their visions and examples have set high standards and expectations. We can, and indeed we must, all work together, learn together and explore together for all the children of the Yukon. First and foremost, education is about kids. Everything we do should be to ensure each child in our care has the opportunity to learn in a safe, respectful manner to the best of their ability and, according to the act, in the least restrictive manner.

Each child comes with a unique set of skills, expectations and requirements. The most efficient way — and perhaps the only effective way — to deal with those unique skills is to provide the homeroom teacher with the support and opportunity to meet these needs. Teachers build relationships — formal and informal — and those relationships are at the heart of education.

Teachers are critical. To make a difference, we must focus on the classroom instruction. That is where the pedal hits the metal. Supports must be focused on the students in the classroom. This does not mean that all activity and all teaching must occur in the classroom. Indeed, there are times when it is to the most benefit that it doesn't — when instruction or support occurs away from the classroom. A child learning to read might be better accommodated without the distraction of his or her classmates. Classroom teachers know their students and situations and must have the support and flexibility to provide instruction in the most effective manner.

We need parents and local involvement. The school must be a community school. Parents and communities must come to see a school as theirs. We need to involve communities in a meaningful way. What happens in school must be meaningful and relevant to the students, meaningful and relevant to their parents, and meaningful and relevant to the teachers in the school. All of those connections must be evident. We need to make those connections visible.

In order to achieve that, we need to ensure that all have knowledge, that the situation is open and transparent. Interactions with the principal, school council and any other parties involved must be done respectfully, must be done openly, and they must be done honestly. Our educators need time to do that.

Relationships, then, must be nurtured. From a local level, they must be nurtured with time, support and commitment on the part of the department to nurture those relationships. We have all seen a lot of the data and experienced children who aren't succeeding in our school system as well as those who are. We do have a wonderful system. Students who graduate from our schools go to universities across Canada where they do extremely well. Kids who go through our sports programs, as we heard, are in the Olympics and represent Canada internationally. At the same time, our statistics are telling us that we are losing many of our children, especially our First Nation children and our rural children. Indeed, the performance gap is widening. The most recent data of Yukon schools indicate the achievement gap is growing.

This is a crisis. The teachers in our schools know this. They're watching the kids in front of them. We need to be able to support them. It won't be done by the school system alone. It won't be done by a quick fix. It will take all of us — all Yukoners working together — to ensure that no child is left behind. Too many children have fallen by the wayside. The time for talk is past. We must ensure that all our children have an equal opportunity. Yukon territory-wide literacy is critical. We're finding people in the workplace who can't advance because they don't have the literacy skills. We're finding people who can't do their math 10 or math 12 because they don't have the literacy skills. They can't get into apprenticeship programs because of their literacy skills. Again, we need to make a territory-wide commitment to literacy.

I challenge all the members in this Legislature to make it a priority in each of our departments, in each of our communities, and in each of our homes.

One time I was fortunate enough to represent Yukon principals at a Canadian conference. One of the things the princi-

pals decided, as we grappled with this, was that every time we went to a meeting in a school or every time we went to a meeting in a community we would take a book. It wasn't a lot, didn't do a lot, but it made everyone aware. It made the community aware, it made the students aware, it made the teachers aware, and it made us aware, so that we started to look. Literacy is important and each and every one of us can do something about it.

Strategies that we develop in education — because education tends to be a rather woolly subject and doesn't always work the same way each time so we tend to shy away from strategies and measurable outcomes.

The more I've been in education, the more I realize the necessity for that. We need to develop strategies that have clear, measurable goals. We need to evaluate these goals and reset. Our goals must be specific, they must be measurable, they must be achievable, they must be realistic, and they must be time-specific. We need to keep going back to them and saying, "If our literacy rate is 60 percent, let's make a goal and make it 65 percent. If our achievement scores are X, let's look at it and go X plus 1. Let's put the resources in there and let's go with it."

Those are the things that are going to guide my questions as we go through. I'll turn it back over to the minister so he can finish his opening remarks and then we can get into some questions.

Hon. Mr. Kent: There were a few notes that I jotted down during the Member for Mayo-Tatchun's opening remarks and I'll respond to them. I do thank him for allowing me the time to conclude my opening remarks.

When I left off, I was speaking, of course, to the operations and maintenance budget. There are a number of initiatives that will support the work of public schools that are in the 2012-13 budget. I am pleased to say that the operations and maintenance budget for 2012-13 will continue to support and maintain all public school initiatives introduced by this government during its previous mandates.

The department is committed to continuing its work on New Horizons, which is the department's follow-up to the education reform project and the Auditor General of Canada's report in January 2009. Leadership was a primary theme emerging from the education reform document in 2008. For leadership and other professional development support, we are seeking \$346,000. School leaders are critical to school improvement and systems accountability. In addition to these initiatives, the Department of Education continues with its commitment to ensuring student needs and priorities are met. Ongoing funding has been established to maintain our paraprofessional staff at the current level. If you will recall — and I've spoken about this on the floor of this House previously — we increased the level of support during 2011-12. Our total paraprofessional staff, which includes remedial tutors and educational assistants, has increased from 106.16 FTEs in 2002-03, which was the first year of the Yukon Party government, to 159.15 FTEs beginning April 1, 2011.

The school growth process has been designed by a stakeholder advisory committee to encourage and monitor a school improvement process to support individual student success and

to ensure system accountability. To support the school growth process, the department requests \$337,000. This process is an important means to ensure that First Nations, school councils and community members participate in a collaborative process to identify and address school priorities. The funding we request is supporting capacity development to ensure that the school growth process best supports student learning. It also supports the \$75,000 leaders in education and innovation fund. Also, \$80,000 is being requested for community engagement. The community engagement process has been designed as part of New Horizons to support communities in more broadly identifying and addressing local needs to support lifelong learning and to facilitate the sharing of responsibility to support the academic, physical, social and emotional development of healthy students, as it is becoming increasingly apparent that our schools cannot address some of these issues in isolation from the rest of the community.

This funding is intended to provide facilitation skills and training to build capacity for developing healthy communities. The department relies on its stakeholders to provide input to ensure the education system works in the best interests of students, and this budget reflects our work to ensure our stakeholders are engaged at the territorial and the local community levels.

As part of the department's work on community engagement, the department is committed to ensuring that rural students grow, learn and achieve as much as their urban counterparts. The department has begun work on an action plan to identify and address issues unique to rural communities.

The department has other stellar public schools programs to promote successful learning. The Individual Learning Centre was launched in February 2005 and continues to be successful in providing the flexibility required by some students so they can continue to engage in their lifelong journey of learning. Our data is demonstrating that more students are staying in school than in the past.

The full day kindergarten and the home tutor program will continue to receive support under this year's budget. These initiatives have proven to be very important and meaningful for people throughout the Yukon. Also, \$80,000 is being requested to continue the early years transition learning program. This program targets prekindergarten to grade 3 students and will help to improve performance in both First Nation and other Yukon children.

Funding for initiatives to support the increasing number of vulnerable students will also continue in 2012-13, and \$85,000 is also being requested to continue an assisted technology software and related training program. This will provide support for students with special needs enabling an inclusive model for individual education plans, or IEPs, so that those goals and objectives can be met.

We continue to receive positive feedback on all of these programs. The experiential education initiative continues in 2012-13 with \$385,000. This money provides more flexibility for schools to access experiential and outdoor education activities with this funding. The Department of Education is also requesting \$98,000 to continue and expand their support of the

Whole Child project. In May 2011, it was agreed that Yukon would host the Western and Northern Canadian Protocol Secretariat for the period September 2011 to August 2013. This initiative is jointly funded by Nunavut, Yukon and the Northwest Territories. The mandate of the secretariat is to lead and direct all facets of work in support of WNCP — \$192,000 is requested for the staffing and operational costs associated with this very exciting initiative.

The Department of Education is committed to improving the outcomes and experiences of First Nation learners. The department is requesting \$575,000 to support the Council of Yukon First Nations in their delivery of education support services. This line of funding represents \$405,000 to support the operating costs of the Yukon Native Language Centre and \$170,000 to provide salaries for support staff for education. We continue to have a very good working relationship with CYFN as they collaborate with our department through the education reform project and the New Horizons initiative.

This year, we are requesting approximately \$1.75 million in funding to support the First Nations Programs and Partnerships unit at the department. This unit is responsible for facilitating the development of appropriate Yukon First Nation curriculum and supporting resource materials. Using Yukon-based materials is essential to ensuring all students learn about the history, cultural traditions and the important role of Yukon First Nations. Most recently, a First People's English 10 class is being piloted at Porter Creek Secondary and at F.H. Collins Secondary School here in Whitehorse. The course was developed in partnership with the B.C. Ministry of Education and First Nation Education Advisory Committee. In addition, the staff is currently working on the development of a grade 12 Yukon First Nations studies integrated resource package course.

The Yukon First Nations Programs and Partnerships unit has also produced 18 books that are used as part of a guided reading program reflecting the life and experiences of Yukon First Nation people.

Included in the \$1.75 million is funding for two specific initiatives approved under New Horizons — the Southern Tutchone bicultural program at St. Elias Community School in Haines Junction has been budgeted at \$262,000. This three-year pilot program began in 2009. As a pilot project, it will be reviewed and evaluated, and if the project proves successful, the foundation and framework may be expanded to incorporate more grade levels and used as a model for other Yukon communities. This pilot program is an important milestone for the Department of Education, the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and the school. It brings local wisdom, language and culture to the school's kindergarten and grade 1 classrooms. It supports preservation of the Southern Tutchone language and culture by integrating it into the classroom. It promotes students' intellectual development and improves their motivation. The Yukon First Nations experiential program is budgeted at \$54,000 for 2012-13 with funding also provided at the site-based management level of \$90,000.

At the Wood Street Centre, the community, heritage, adventure, outdoors and skills program, more commonly known

as CHAOS, is designed to enhance opportunities for First Nation students in the secondary school system. The program is an opportunity for the department to integrate subject areas and develop the understanding in connections to First Nation knowledge, traditions, skills, values and beliefs, and is part of the plan to meet the recommendations we received in the *Education Reform Final Report*, the *One Vision, Multiple Pathways: Secondary School Programming Process Final Report* and the Yukon First Nation Education Advisory Committee's strategic plan. To ensure Yukon students have access to the best possible opportunities to learn aboriginal languages, the government is seeking \$3.25 million to cover the salaries of aboriginal language teachers in Yukon schools and at the Yukon Native Language Centre.

I had the opportunity to visit the Yukon Native Language Centre this morning where there was training being offered to First Nation language teachers throughout the Yukon. The greetings that they gave me in their specific dialect were indeed — it was very interesting to listen to and reminded me of a commitment that I made at the recent First Nation teachers in-service that was held here in Whitehorse. That was to deliver my remarks next year in a Yukon First Nation language. I have to go back to school here over the next year and learn, but I have some very willing teachers whom I was able to speak to this morning, so it was great.

We're also continuing funding to the First Nation Elders in the School program for \$50,000. This program provides elders with the opportunity to share their cultural experiences, knowledge, skills and perspectives with the school staff and the students. It is jointly sponsored by the Department of Education and participating First Nations. This program is integral to bringing the model of traditional learning into the Yukon classroom and making the classroom a more relevant place for all Yukon students.

To develop and expand First Nation curriculum and resources development, including First Voices, we have committed \$264,000 in this budget. The First Nations Programs and Partnership unit releases annually a teacher resource handbook of Yukon First Nation education resources in public schools to help teachers include a First Nation perspective throughout the curriculum. This is an annual project and is distributed to all new teachers to the Yukon every year.

In addition, \$19,000 is dedicated to train all new Yukon teachers in Yukon First Nation culture during our new teacher orientations in August every year. To provide cultural-enhancement programming for Yukon schools, we continue to provide \$255,000 a year in funding. This funding supports a wide range of cultural activities, including everything from making mukluks, to our very popular bison hunts.

Promoting and supporting French language and culture is also very important at the Department of Education. French first language and French second language education is an important option available to Yukon students. The Department of Education remains committed to supporting French programs in our schools. French language programs such as the early and late immersion programs at Whitehorse Elementary School have consistently high enrolment rates, and enrolment in

French first language education at l'École Émilie Tremblay is showing an increase as well.

In recognition of the value of being fluent in Canada's two official languages, the department completed a comprehensive review of French second language programs to identify how to better support and coordinate programs throughout the territory to ensure equity. A stakeholder advisory committee and working groups have reviewed the recommendations and will work on finalizing an implementation plan as the next step.

Madam Chair, I would like to recognize the hard work of department officials and teachers and others, who were referenced by the Member for Mayo-Tatchun in his opening remarks for their work in crafting this blueprint for learning in the Yukon Territory. I would also like to thank all the Yukoners who are contributing to the evolution of the education system, with their participation as school council members, committee members and individuals who have provided comments about their needs and aspirations for education in the territory.

I am definitely listening to the feedback on education. We as a government and department are consistently making improvements and changes to ensure that the education system reflects the values and goals of all Yukoners.

That does conclude my opening remarks and — if I have a little bit more time? I do have a little bit more time — just an opportunity, perhaps, to respond to some of the comments made by the Member for Mayo-Tatchun in his opening remarks.

First of all, let me say that I appreciate not only the experience in the education system of the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, as a long-time teacher, administrator, and past president, I believe, of the Yukon Teachers Association, but also the experience of the Member for Klondike. Previous to coming to this Assembly, he was a long-time math teacher at Robert Service School in Dawson, and I was very interested to read in *North of Ordinary*, a magazine, on a recent trip on Air North, that he was voted number 3 favorite teacher in the Yukon. So, congratulations to the Member for Klondike on receiving that honour in *North of Ordinary*.

Again, when we talk about effecting change — and something that is happening with my many visits to schools and school councils and those types of meetings — what we'll see here tomorrow is debate on a motion that urges the Yukon government to establish a tax credit for parents who have children involved in music, arts and tutoring.

I'm very pleased to announce today that that was an idea that came to me just last week at a meeting of the Whitehorse Elementary School Council. I will, in my remarks tomorrow during debate on that motion, thank that particular individual for bringing that to my attention. But that's the kind of difference that our school councils are making, and hopefully with the passing of that motion tomorrow, we're able to establish that tax credit and recognize the expenses for programs — music programs, arts programs — highlighted, of course, by the Rotary Music Festival that's going on this week — and the important work of the various tutoring programs that are available to Yukon parents for their children.

Now, I'll just read a brief list of individuals — and it's really in response to something that the Member for Mayo-Tatchun said. All these individuals are former teachers of mine in the Yukon public school system.

They are, indeed, people who — although it has been a number of years since I was in the Yukon public school system and approximately 40 years since I started grade 1 with Mrs. Churchill as my grade 1 teacher; or Brian Hunt, teaching grade 6; or Ted Garland from grade 10 and 11 English; Sandra Gabb, of course, grade 3 teacher; Al Loewen, who many in this House will know, was my grade 5 teacher; Pam Makarewich, a grade 4 teacher — all retired teachers, many of whom I believe are still residing in Whitehorse. I recently had the pleasure of attending one of their breakfasts to just really get a good sense of their skills set and the experiences that they had as teachers back — I guess not all that long ago, but when I started school approximately 40 years ago.

Again, I know the member spoke about this, but we have — I know that we also have some very successful and tremendous students who are leaving our public school system and participating in communities not only here in the Yukon, but perhaps have moved on. I think back to last summer when we had our 25th F.H. Collins Secondary School reunion and the people who attended and the people with whom I graduated — two of us are members in this Legislative Assembly. We had a number of people who are in the skilled trades; there are a number of accountants; and there are business people.

Our valedictorian is now a petroleum geologist in Dubai. As you can see, there are those tremendous success stories. I recognize that, of course, we have work to do to eliminate that gap between those successes and the students who are struggling. I look forward to the challenge of the coming years as Minister of Education. I certainly know the department is up to the challenge, and I am up to the challenge to close that gap with the eventual goal of eliminating the gap that exists so that all Yukon students can realize success after they leave our public school system or, indeed, leave post-secondary learning here in the Yukon.

Mr. Tredger: Thank you to the minister for his remarks.

I talked a little bit about relationships. Superintendents are a relationship that must develop between the department and the local schools. The superintendents are a window from the department into the schools and from the schools into the department.

What I am hearing is — both privately and publicly from the schools and talking — that the superintendents are extremely busy now and they're not getting out to the schools. When they do, it's a fly-through occasion. They may have an hour to spend in the principal's office, but they don't have time to spend in the schools and in the communities. We're missing an opportunity here.

In the day, superintendents would sit down and discuss things with teachers. They would have time to go and meet community members. They did exit surveys with teachers when they were leaving a community, finding out what worked

and what didn't work. They had time to talk to the parents. In short, superintendents got to know the community.

One of the things that has happened in rural schools is that staff changes quite regularly. In the past, that superintendent was a bridge. One principal survey asked: What could superintendents do more for schools? The answer: Spend more time there.

Does the department keep stats on the number of visits per month to each school that a superintendent has and the length of time they spend in schools and in communities?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Of course, the responsibility for superintendents is an operational responsibility and is run by officials — just to make that clear off the top.

I understand we have a former principal on contract as well who travels around to mentor new principals — a very well-respected former educator and one of your predecessors at the Yukon Teachers' Association. So there is that work that is being undertaken as well. I do not believe that we keep stats on the number of visits there. We do have three superintendents on staff and, of course, the demands are increasing. Again, I look to the experience and capability of the department to deploy the resources available to the department in the most effective manner.

I should say also that in the schools that I have visited so far in Teslin, Watson Lake, Carmacks, Faro, Ross River, Dawson City, Mayo, Pelly Crossing, as well as a number of schools in and around the Whitehorse area that the superintendents were also spoken of in the highest regard. That is something that I was able to relay to department officials who weren't in attendance with me when those comments were made. I do greatly respect the work of the superintendents and agree with the member opposite that their work is key.

Mr. Tredger: A second aspect is not only linking to the communities and getting to know their communities — it helps in a transition, it helps in having principals get into the community, but it is also a way for the schools to be heard in the department. It is critical that the superintendent have the experience in the schools to talk to the people in the schools and in their local schools so that they can convey their stories directly to the department.

Is there an opportunity for superintendents in the department to carry forth schools' concerns on a regular basis? Is there a regular meeting where superintendents would have the authority or would be able to meet with a body that has the authority to make real and tangible differences in the local community?

Hon. Mr. Kent: In response to the member opposite: I think it was the first Monday after we were sworn into Cabinet that I had the opportunity to go over and do a tour of the department and meet a number of other officials. The superintendents were in a meeting at that time with senior management of public schools, including the assistant deputy minister. From that meeting and subsequent discussions, I know that that they meet every week to discuss important issues. They meet every Monday afternoon. It's my understanding that the school-growth process is really the venue and the forum to ensure that any changes that need to be addressed by the schools, the

school councils or the teachers — that's the table where those are addressed. Of course, the superintendents are important coaches and mentors of all the administrators throughout the Yukon. When in my travels I've seen some particular challenges in a school with interfacing between school councils or parents and the school, the deputy minister and I often talked between communities about how we could get the superintendent involved to engage and coach and mentor that particular administrator along so that they can continue to operate the school community in the best way possible.

Mr. Tredger: Thank you for that answer. The minister mentioned a person who had been hired on contract to work with the principals and I commend the department for that. It is a necessary occasion, partly because the superintendents aren't getting the time to get out to the schools. That addresses one aspect of it. But I think each school is unique and often the relationship between the department or even between Whitehorse and the local community suffers for lack of communication. Superintendents can and should be an important link in that. In order to be that communication link, they need to be in the communities to build up the relationships. Relationships develop over time and the trust that drives those relationships builds up over time. So coming to a community three or four times a year would be a bare minimum. Just to reiterate my point, and then I'll go on to something else: I think it's critical to the system that superintendents have the time and the place and the support to be in the communities and in the community schools.

One of the things, in terms of schools, is allocating time. A lot of things are going on. When I look at the number of committees that are in the annual report, I get some idea of where the superintendents are spending their time, and I'm just wondering if each of these committees — and I'll just read through them. There is the Yukon First Nation Education Advisory Committee, with representatives from Yukon's 14 First Nations sitting on this committee; a School Growth Planning Advisory Committee; a secondary school advisory committee; a building advisory committee, F.H. Collins replacement — I guess they're not meeting any more; they're done — a leadership advisory committee; a special education advisory committee; a French-as-a-second-language review advisory committee and four working groups; a staffing allocation advisory committee; an urban-to-rural transitions advisory committee; a policy advisory committee, and I think the minister talked about an attendance advisory committee and a rural strategies advisory committee.

Do these committees meet regularly? Do they issue reports? How is the effectiveness of the committee determined? Are some of them no longer operating, or are they all operating? I guess I'm looking for how that fits into the system as a whole because that takes up a lot of personnel and a lot of time. Some of the committees, I suspect, have teachers or principals on them. Some of them may have superintendents or department personnel. Many of them would have parents. We talk about capacity in the communities and stuff. Are people sitting on them — just a little bit of background on that, if I could, Madam Chair?

Hon. Mr. Kent: The meeting frequency, I guess, would depend on the committee, obviously.

Although that committee has not been disbanded, they are right now just in a period when the departments of Education and Highways and Public Works work on detailed design. We anticipate a meeting of that committee sometime before the fall when the tender documents go out to just show them the final detailed design and costing estimates for F.H. Collins.

Of course, I would be happy to — the reports that are provided are provided to the assistant deputy minister of public schools, and when the deputy minister and I were travelling to some of the rural schools, we talked about perhaps better ways to engage rural Yukon on these meetings, because not only is there the time committed to the meeting but also the travel time on either side. We would like to investigate video conferencing or using other technology to hold the meetings so that we can minimize the amount of time that members of these various committees are out of the schools or out of their communities.

Again, this infrastructure of advisory committees is something that was developed by the Public Schools branch in response to the education reform document, where Yukoners wanted more meaningful input into education. These committees help to support our learning communities, both locally and throughout the Yukon, and are focused on improving what I know the member spoke about in his initial remarks as the number one issue that I think we all have to focus on, which is, of course, student achievement.

Mr. Tredger: So would the minister be receiving reports on a regular basis from these committees and some way of measuring their success in meeting the goals or how they direct the allocation of resources so we know it's effective? Are these evaluated? Are they working? How would we know if they were?

Hon. Mr. Kent: With the reports I think I mentioned — perhaps I didn't; if not, forgive me — in my previous answer that those reports go to the ADM of Public Schools who, of course, reports to the deputy minister, who, of course, I meet with very frequently.

If there are specific issues that come up with any one of these committees, that's the direct link or the link between the committees and me as minister. Each committee has terms of reference and that's how they're evaluated, against those terms of reference. That's how we manage the performance and ensure that what these committees were intended to do when they were set up is what they are actually accomplishing.

Mr. Tredger: There has been a bit of a controversy around YSIS of late, whether or not it is —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Mr. Tredger: Yukon student information system, thank you. I apologize for using an acronym. Apparently, the company that was working has sold it. Can you tell me where the department is and what their thinking is around YSIS?

What can parents, teachers and students expect in the next two or three years in terms of the reporting?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I guess with respect to YSIS, when we received the recommendations from the Auditor General in, I believe, 2009, one of the recommendations was performance

targets. Subsequent to that, the department invested in the new Yukon student information system, or YSIS, as the member opposite reflected, with implementation completed on schedule and within budget. All Yukon schools are now using YSIS for student demographics, attendance, report cards and to track credit details for secondary students, grades 10 to 12. That is sort of the background on what precipitated the change. Now there are a number of other factors that are important to consider as well.

The vendor of the product that was used previously — Win School — announced it would no longer support that product. It had been used for close to 20 years and was not a web-based program such as YSIS is. It was not centralized and required four separate programs to record and archive student information. The information stored was not easily accessible. Now through YSIS, data can be entered on-line through the web. Again, the Auditor General in 2009, through her report at the time, emphasized the need for a comprehensive student information system.

Upon becoming the Minister of Education and with having heard a little bit about it during the election campaign from teachers who live in my riding and following up really during my initial time as minister with the president of the Yukon Teachers Association and actually talking to the people on the ground who have to work with this system, that's where it became evident to me that there were obviously some challenges with this system. As I think I've relayed to the member opposite, some of the teachers who are there were sort of halfway across the creek on this one. We can't turn back. As mentioned, Win School wasn't an effective tool for us, and it wasn't doing the job that we needed it to do.

Now, the Pearson School Systems acquired, in November of 2010, a company called Administrative Assistants Limited, which was the vendor of YSIS, and they've let us know that they'll be retiring the system. Right now the department is working with the B.C. Ministry of Education to transition to a new system. Of course, we need to partner with the B.C. Ministry of Education because of the costs associated with YSIS. In the meantime, that bridging — it could take two or three years before we're there. I want to make sure that during that time we continue to provide support to the teachers who are using this, and particularly the teachers in rural Yukon. That's where I heard a lot of the concerns during my travels. Although some of that is probably due to how the system operates, a lot of that is also lent to the Internet speeds that exist in Yukon communities. I'm sure I could probably inform members of the House about some of the stories that have been relayed to me by teachers.

But, again, I think what's important going forward is to get to a new system that works and works for teachers, but also gives the department the data that we need on a day-to-day basis to help inform our decisions as we come up with new curriculum or new programs — or look at where problems exist in a particular school with respect to attendance, or performance, or other things.

Chair: Before the member speaks, would the members like a recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

Chair: Order. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. We're continuing with debate on Bill No. 6, *First Appropriation Act, 2012-13*, on Vote 3, Department of Education.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister opposite for his comments on YSIS. I guess my concern is that we've jumped into YSIS without — and I have the benefit of hindsight — but without due diligence. I'm not sure that it measures a lot that we didn't already have before. We had spent some time and effort developing a made-in-Yukon report card and it certainly worked through to grade 10. It may have needed some tweaking and stuff, but report card time and reporting is, as you can well imagine, a time of — teachers are very busy. They're trying to accomplish a lot; they're trying to get it right; they're under a great deal of stress, and when a reporting system doesn't work, it adds to the frustration immensely.

I know there has been trouble on the Internet and with the Internet connection. There has been trouble with putting in data and it refusing or rejecting data. Have any studies been done, or have we done a more formal survey of teachers at all grade levels to see — what if the system was accomplishing what it was supposed to, if after all the hoops they needed to jump through, whether they were getting important information, and whether that information was of value to them and their classrooms.

Hon. Mr. Kent: In May 2011, there was a survey that provided feedback on the first year of preparing report cards with YSIS. The survey was co-sponsored by the department and the Yukon Teachers Association. One hundred sixty-six of 470 teachers were invited to complete the survey. It was distributed during the first year of YSIS's implementation in May 2011. At this time, teachers had completed two terms of report cards. Three common themes emerged as concerns among teachers: entering comments on reports, accessing YSIS or logging in — probably a lot — and, of course, the third one is the Internet speed and the connectivity. So there were a number of trends reported and I can provide detail on these to the member outside of the House, but just a couple of the highlights: 74 percent of teachers reported that they appreciated the flexibility of accessing the report card module from home; 67 reported that they do save comments for future use; 60 percent reported the time to log into YSIS was poor or very poor. Again, these are the results of the survey, but the work and the discussions that I've had in the community suggest that most of the teachers are looking forward to a new system.

That is exactly what we are embarking on: replacing YSIS. Again, the tracking that we were doing, as identified by the Auditor General, was not sufficient through the old program, so that is why we moved to a new on-line program that gives a little more flexibility and does give information. I speak to officials regularly in the department and, once this data is entered, we are able to track data better and make sound decisions

on programming, and where we need to go with attendance, and where there are problem areas based on a lot of the data that YSIS is producing.

Mr. Tredger: I guess we know that we need to change the system, and I am wondering whether we are doing any study or any work with the teachers to find out what might be of more benefit. I understand that the mechanics of it are not working, but I think that it would be important to make sure — of course, that in the next system — but also to make sure that the information that we get or that we are looking for is important and of value. A teacher's time is very valuable, and we talk about time to build relationships. Sometimes, especially when we see a system that is not working, you wonder how much time you are spending weighing the pig, and how much of your time feeding the pig, and it is important that the weighing aspect doesn't override how much time teachers have to spend with the children.

I guess, before we get into another system, it would be nice to look at whether we can replicate one made-in-the-Yukon system with the new technology, or whether we are going to a larger system and giving up some control, but ensuring that it does give us the information we need in a timely fashion that not only benefits the systemic needs, but also the parents' and the teachers' needs.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Work is going to begin this fall on identifying the replacement system and, of course, we'll involve and engage teachers at that time. The department certainly appreciates that the transition to this new electronic system has proved frustrating for some, but remains committed to providing training and support to all our staff throughout this transition that is currently happening, as we move from the old system to YSIS, and then, as we identify and adopt a new system, that training will continue to be offered to our staff.

Mr. Tredger: The Auditor General's report called for better identification, analysis and reporting of student performance results. Part of the answer was YSIS. My concern is that the department was also expected from that information to establish goals, to set targets and benchmark the results. Has the information from YSIS contributed to this, and can you give me a specific example showing the progression from the collection of data to the implementation and evaluation? How is that measured and what did we learn from it? Was there something we learned from it?

Hon. Mr. Kent: The performance measures — the performance targets that are identified, of course, in the five-year strategic plan, will then be transferred and set out in our annual report. I guess one of the specific examples I can give the member opposite with respect to what we're seeing — we're getting better data on attendance because of YSIS.

Unfortunately — and I know we've spoken on it a number of times here in the Legislature — attendance is a challenge. What YSIS has given us has been better and more consistent data to deal with attendance, as teachers are now required to enter that data twice a day or in each class for high schools students, for instance, as they move throughout the day. So we are getting much better attendance data as a result of implementing this new system.

Mr. Tredger: It has always been a legal obligation for teachers to take attendance on a regular basis every day — a daily obligation. In the past, we would sign a register, but that would be one small aspect. I would look for a lot more from the system.

How much has the department spent on YSIS over the last four years?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I can get that information for the member opposite. Perhaps we have it with us here today, but if not, I will commit to getting back to him with that information shortly. Certainly, with the documents I have in front of me and when we get into line-by-line debate, we'll see in Support Services what exactly has been spent on YSIS, but as for that previous number of years' commitment, that's information I'll commit to get back to the member.

Mr. Tredger: Could you also include the number of personnel who were involved in the implementation and delivery of the system? I thank you for that.

I'd like to move on a little bit to rural education. We've had a number of reports: *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*, the Kwiya report, the *Education Act* review and the education reform project. Prior to those — he may not like me to mention it because it sort of ages him, but the Sharpe report on rural education was very well done and directed thinking for awhile.

The minister has mentioned a rural education action plan a couple of times, and I just wonder what that entails. What kind of data are we collecting that's supporting that? How are we measuring it? How will we know when it's successful? What are the goals? How are they measurable? What data will support that?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Many of those studies that the member opposite mentioned — *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*, the *Education Act* review of 2002-03, the Auditor General's report in 2009 and the education reform project final report in 2008, among others, were really key in contributing to the development of the Department of Education's strategic plan for 2011 to 2016. As part of that plan, there is identification of the need for a rural strategy that recognizes the unique needs and challenges in Yukon rural communities.

What the department will do is work with partners to develop strategies to address the needs of rural learners to ensure that they are supported throughout their educational career, specifically examining the diversity and flexibility of program offerings, course delivery and scheduling — that is directly out of the New Horizons report — and learning to also explore models of career planning, as well as the best practices around effective transition to work and post-secondary school and effective community business and First Nation partnerships.

In the process, we hope to increase completion rates and provide improved access to post-secondary training and career opportunities for rural students. I think the main performance indicators at the end of the day will be increased programming in rural schools and increased offerings of courses, again referencing the example from yesterday of the two rural students who are taking physics 12 via video conference. I think that is a perfect example of how we can use technology and innovation,

during this Education Week of "Celebrating Innovation", to deliver programming to our rural students. I know we have spoken about it here before, but that bottom line is student success and student achievement. Those will be the ultimate performance indicators as we move through and track the performance of our students in rural Yukon and move to close, and eventually eliminate, the gap that exists in student success between students getting education in Whitehorse and those outside of Whitehorse.

Mr. Tredger: I recognize and appreciate what the minister is saying. My concern is that we have been talking about it for many, many years, and I guess it is time to come up with some specific strategies that we can measure, that we can attain, that make realistic sense, so that people — my concern right now, Mr. Minister, is that a lot of people are losing faith in the system. They have watched their kids walk through the system; communities are saying that it is not working. We need to find some specific goals that we can measure, that we can put our support behind, so that we can say, "Yes, we have achieved this. Let's move on here. That is realistic and we will do it within this time frame."

Hon. Mr. Kent: There is a team at the department that is reviewing all evidence related to rural student performance so that work can be targeted to the most critical areas of need.

Following the rural strategy discussions at last year's education summit and from other subsequent discussions, there have been five pillars or working groups for the rural action planning process that have been identified. I did, I think, speak to them during a recent Question Period, but I'll highlight them again: one is trades and apprenticeships; HR practices to support rural schools; First Nation languages and culture — although it wasn't widely reported in the media from the Yukon Forum, this was something that was identified by a number of First Nation chiefs during their community reports. The fourth one is community partnerships and the fifth is programming. So an example of that is 20 percent locally developed curriculum, distributed learning; and use of technology, et cetera.

I should also point to some of the programs that the department has put in place, such as the bicultural program, Champagne Aishihik — and the First Nations land-based learning program that's taking place in the community of Old Crow. So those are some real examples of that experiential learning and that real land-based education — the recent bison hunt. I know the celebration was last week at Elijah Smith Elementary School. That's another example of how we're looking and continually trying to find different ways to engage students through the curriculum and keep them interested and engaged at the school level, so that our attendance numbers pick up and our student success picks up.

Mr. Tredger: I deal with many of those pillars later in my questions, but the human relations aspect of it I hadn't considered. Can you tell me how that is playing out in the rural communities and what the minister means by human relations in the rural community? What measures are being taken to support the action plan there?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I guess part of the work that has been done with the human resource practices to support rural schools

is done through the staffing allocation formula. I know that recently we received a detailed briefing from the director of human resources at the department and we're seeing student to adult ratios that are approximately half, I guess, so the student/adult ratio in rural communities would be half of what they are in Whitehorse. That's what we're using on human resources to really put an emphasis on rural schools.

The second piece to that answer is the comprehensive HR plan that the department is working on and the four aspects of that are HR management, the recruitment and retention of staff in the communities, learning and development, and creating a positive work environment. So this, too, is part of the Auditor General's 2009 recommendations. The department will complete that comprehensive HR plan and the plan will complement the corporate Yukon government HR management plan led by the Public Service Commission. This is really a partnership and the objective is with the vision of success for each learner. We are addressing some of the rural needs through the number of adults who are in the school. Of course, that includes teachers and educational assistants, learning assistants and the paraprofessional people who are delivering education in our schools as well. But again, although it differs from school to school, on average, in rural schools, there are one-half as many students per adult as there are in schools that are located within and on the perimeter or periphery of Whitehorse.

Mr. Tredger: With the number of teachers and the student/teacher ratio — while it may appear at first glance that it is half, indeed, many of the rural schools have multi-grade classrooms. So, a teacher, while they may not have a lot of students in the class, has to cover three or four grade levels in a curriculum and, most likely, all subjects in that. It is quite challenging.

A couple of aspects about that, that I might suggest to the minister to look at: Because community schools are built on relationships, I think the human resource component would be wise to ensure that superintendents have time allocated to spend in each school, and that principals have time to go out into the community and to meet with the community. I know often a rural community doesn't run on a school schedule. A principal is very busy within the school, and one of the critical factors when I go from community to community is being able to meet with and see the principal.

If the principal can have extra time in his day allocated through a human resource policy to allow them to go over and meet with the village council in the evenings, or with a chief and council, to be able to — for teachers, recognizing the fact that they are an important professional in the community, the teachers would have extra time allocated so that they can become involved in the community and work with extracurricular activities. Often, they are the people who look to run Girl Guide clubs or work in the swimming pool — or to help with the swimming pool — or to coach the volleyball or basketball team. I understand this happens for teachers and I recognize the fact that teachers devote a lot of that kind of time in a community. When there are not very many teachers, it becomes quite demanding. So attention to that through human resources I think would help there.

The other aspect to that is janitorial and secretarial time. Many of our schools are operating with half-time secretaries or part-time secretaries. That again increases the load on the principal and teaching staff, because the secretary is the link to the community and builds that relationship, so full-time secretaries in our rural schools — any effort that way might be considered. Just a couple of ideas for the minister.

Hon. Mr. Kent: There are, of course, a number of focus groups that are addressing some of the issues the member opposite talked about in our rural communities. Through the staffing allocation process, we did add additional FTEs as far as administrative and secretarial support in our rural schools. It hasn't made all of them full-time, but it has increased hours in a number of schools.

I guess with respect to the janitorial or the custodial time in the schools, that is the responsibility of the Department of Highways and Public Works. I don't think we have cleared that department yet, so perhaps if we're able to get back to it in the 14 and a little bit days that we have left here, perhaps it could be addressed with him at that time.

Mr. Tredger: In rural schools, the school becomes more than just a school in the community. In order for a school to be — it becomes a centrepiece and is the focus for much activity in the community.

What steps are being taken to make schools central to the communities? Are there building arrangements whereby the community club can use it in the evenings? What types of strategies are taken to host potlatches and to involve communities and make them feel that the school is theirs? I know that happens occasionally — some schools are able to do it more than others. Has there been any overall evaluation of how schools are doing that — developing a systemic approach to it so that it becomes an expectation in the school, not just up to circumstances, be it the principal or be it the community, but it becomes more of a standard expectation that, say, the principal of the school does involve different things and that the school has ways to reach out and that it becomes an expectation, both on the part of the community and of the school.

Hon. Mr. Kent: There are a couple of different aspects that will hopefully address this question for the member opposite. Through the school growth process, one of the goals of that is to use evidence and work collaboratively with staff and community to improve the success of each Yukon student. When it comes to schools being centrepieces of communities, I couldn't agree more. They're often the hub of a number of activities, from after-school and extracurricular activities to lunchtime and preschool activities as well — by preschool, I mean in the morning.

One of the many important roles for us is to encourage the community use of school facilities. Department staff in rural Yukon and in Whitehorse are putting in place the necessary processes and policies to enable that to happen. We know that in Whitehorse, through the joint use agreement with the City of Whitehorse, schools host a wide range of activities every night of the week, from badminton to soccer to Cubs, boxing and beading classes, and a number of First Nation activities that I

was able to see at Elijah Smith Elementary School, when visiting the school council there a number of weeks ago.

What we recognize and realize is that making the school facilities available, particularly in rural Yukon, will assist in meeting a number of priorities, including priorities for active living and addressing child and youth in activity and increasing levels of unhealthy weight gain. What we can expect with easier access to school facilities will also lead to more programming for adults, children and youth and will assist Yukon in meeting our active living targets.

I certainly recognize the importance of schools for a number of functions and meeting the needs across a wide spectrum for all members of a community — again, whether those people reside in Whitehorse or outside.

Mr. Tredger: Each year some schools are able to — especially in rural communities — put on an orientation for new — not only school teachers and principals, but new RCMP, new nurses, people who are in the community, and it works both ways. It is a wonderful chance for everyone to get to know one another and to start to make relationships.

Has the department looked at funding such a thing — of working with each school or each school community when new people come into the area? Is there some type of — and it would probably have to be interdepartmental — an annual thing, where new people, whether with the Department of Justice or Department of Health and Social Services, are welcomed and become part of the community quite often? I'll leave it at that and see what the minister thinks.

Hon. Mr. Kent: In the budget that we're currently debating — I think I mentioned it earlier in my introductory remarks — there is \$19,000 for new teacher orientation outside of Whitehorse. The aspect that the member talks about — I'd have to take it under advisement and talk to department staff about it, but it's something I think is worth exploring.

Mr. Tredger: I'll go back to relationships: I think anything we can do to help people feel part of the community and the community to be part of the school will pay many benefits down the road. You mentioned the Elders in the School program and \$50,000. How would schools access that? How much are the elders paid per visit? How is it working? Have there been any evaluations done of the program? Are the elders happy with the way it works? Are the schools happy with the way it works? Are the communities happy?

Hon. Mr. Kent: That program works based on proposals. It is a school-by-school proposal-driven initiative. Again, there are a number of successes that we have seen with First Nations, such as the Old Crow experiential and the Champagne and Aishihik bicultural program — the experiential program, CHAOS 9, that we have spoken about. Again, with respect to the Elders in the School program, it is a proposal-driven exercise and I do not believe that it has been evaluated in some time. It is something that each school will request on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Tredger: I guess the number of students who are leaving school and not participating is quite alarming in rural schools.

Has there been any effort to do exit surveys or to start a survey perhaps at a younger age — and if students are surveyed as they go along — to see any changes in the way they are relating to school, and perhaps also to survey their parents so that we can come up with more data that would allow us to make some informed decisions on what's working and what's not; why some of the students are staying longer and others not — that type of information. A student survey on a regular basis would be very valuable.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Again, coming out of the Auditor General's report was a recommendation to track post-secondary student progress, so there was a student exit survey designed and the Yukon Bureau of Statistics has implemented the first phase of the survey. It's referred to as the Yukon youth secondary school transitions survey. It's a six-year longitudinal survey, which began in spring 2010 with the 2008 cohort of students, or those who would have graduated in 2008. It will carry on two more times over six years and the survey will include a student satisfaction survey and will track graduates from Yukon College, again, to monitor program success.

The final draft report of this survey provides the background objective and purpose of the research and the methods and results from the first year's baseline data. It also summarizes Yukon youth experiences in school and their transitions from high school.

It contains descriptive stats and summaries of students' high school experiences, as well as what their education and career goals were during and after leaving or finishing high school. Progress and completion of people enrolled in the apprenticeship program, as well as students funded through the Yukon grant and the student training allowance, are now able to be tracked through YSIS.

I don't believe I have a copy of the draft reports here with me, but if available, I'm willing to provide it to members opposite.

Mr. Tredger: I wasn't really clear. Would those exit surveys be of students who leave high school or just those who complete successfully and go on to higher learning? Would it deal with people who are dropping out in grade 6, grade 7 and grade 8?

Hon. Mr. Kent: It began in 2010 with a 2008 cohort. So it's whether students graduate or go through post-secondary or don't complete school. So it's anyone along those lines.

Mr. Tredger: In terms of rural education — communities like to share what they have and living in a community is different from living in the city. I know I mentioned it before, but there used to be a regional superintendent who lived in Dawson City and was able to have a feel and an understanding for communities. He — and, later on, she — had more time to stop on the way, when she was being called to Whitehorse and had a bit more time and communication with the rural schools. Has there been any thought to reinstating that position?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Again, those types of decisions — on how to allocate and best allocate department resources — are left to the deputy minister and the good people who report to her. So, again, it is not something that I would get involved in, and my understanding is that the current allocation of those

human resources at the superintendent level — there hasn't been any thought to re-establishing positions in rural Yukon at this time by those people.

Again, my preference when we have HR issues or we're able to speak to adding positions in the Yukon — again, budgeting, of course, is all about making choices on that corporate level. But if we were able to add people, such as the paraprofessionals we added before Christmas, that's where I like to see the dollars spent on HR — at the classroom level. Taking those I think it was approximately 22 positions and turning them from term positions and adding them to the base, which, I think I mentioned earlier in my remarks, has increased significantly since the Yukon Party took office in 2002 is where I like to see those dollars expended — where they can help the students on the ground. Again, obviously, deploying resources is primarily the responsibility of the deputy minister and her ADMs.

Mr. Tredger: I guess I would see this as not being in addition to current staff deployment, but just a redeployment of them. So, in a sense, they would be more connected with the schools.

The minister mentioned joint use agreements and developing them in rural schools. The joint use agreement in Whitehorse ended up, at one point, charging user groups, and I know a number of user groups were concerned and talked about leaving school and looking for alternative places to go.

I guess this question is going to have two parts. First, do we have any studies to determine how many of our user groups ended up using the schools? What did they need to do to be able to maintain their presence in school? I know from some of the organizations I was with, it was a concern. Second, would we be looking at charging community organizations equivalently for use of community facilities?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Again, through the joint use agreement with the City of Whitehorse, schools host a wide range of activities every night of the week, as I mentioned before. A yearly damage deposit of \$500 payable to the City of Whitehorse is required of all user groups.

Cheques are cashed and deposited into a holding account with funds returned if there is no damage to the facility directly linked to the user group. The joint use agreement uses a benefits-based approach to recreation planning for public facilities. There are no charges for the use of public facilities for adult or senior activities, child or youth activities, city recreation programs, educational activities and public safety programs. A fee structure for other events such as commercial events, community public events, fundraising activities, private meetings and summer camps is outlined in the joint use agreement. I think this has proven to be a successful program in Whitehorse and we'll look to expand it to the communities. I know there was an interest in Dawson City when I was there recently that was expressed by the mayor at a meeting I attended with the mayor and council to help engage the use of that community school.

Mr. Tredger: I appreciate that. I think it's in the interest of all and in the interest of community schools to ensure that everybody has inexpensive and easy access to our buildings and they truly do become community buildings. I applaud

the efforts and some of the policies that have been made around that.

I'd like to move on to trades and skills training in our schools. It has been my experience that many of our shop and kitchen facilities are either underused or not used at all. Has there been a recent survey of the number of facilities in rural and in urban schools that are not being used? Are there any reasons for why not? Is there something to do about that?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I guess, as we identified previously, the trades and skills training is one of the pillars identified in the rural action plan, and we can get into some detail on that. A recent survey was conducted, I believe, with the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, where they visited the shops in all the schools throughout the territory to address safety concerns there.

With respect to what programming is offered, it's often subject to the skill sets of the teachers. I know that in communities such as Dawson City and Watson Lake, I visited very active shop programs. But then in a community like Faro there wasn't as active a shop program — or Mayo, for that matter.

What we are seeing, as well, is engagement through Skills Canada Yukon, an NGO that is doing a tremendous job of delivering skills and trades training to the Yukon. Perhaps I could just take this opportunity on the floor to quickly congratulate Ms. Stephanie Churchill, a Whitehorse resident, who has recently been named Canada's delegate at the WorldSkills table. I know she is off to South Korea for a WorldSkills meeting, while the Deputy Minister of Education, the president of Yukon College and I will be in Edmonton for the Skills Canada National Competition, in support of Skills Canada. So, a particular shout out to Dan Curtis, the executive director and his team and the volunteer board that currently operates Skills Canada Yukon, for all the great work they do.

I was able to witness it as well first-hand in Ross River at the school there where there are a number of skills clubs that are active, including welding. They had some great barbecue grills that the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin and I were able to see as completed projects in that school.

Mr. Tredger: One of the goals of reporting and tracking systems is to observe critical trends over time. Everyone in the Legislature is aware of the importance of skills training and the importance of training at a young age. Can the minister tell me the number of students participating in trades, classes or skills classes five years ago and the number today — the number today of courses being offered and how well people are taking them?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Thank you. I do not have that information here with me today, but we will review the Blues and get the specific questions that the member asked in that question and get that information back to him.

Mr. Tredger: I ask for a reason, because I think we need some hard data on that and my impressions are that, indeed, the number of classes being offered and the number of students taking them at a very time when we're trying to emphasize the need for it — that number is dropping. It starts a ball rolling.

I know that trades classes are more expensive; cooking classes are more expensive. The materials required cost more. But when we talk about human resources and allocation of human resources, I think it is not much money to spend to look for ways through the staffing formula or through extra formula to ensure that each community and each school has people who are trained who can point kids — whether they're in grade 6, grade 7, grade 8 or in grade 12 — toward some of the trades and give them some experience in that way. So would the minister consider working with human resources to ensure that the remote communities like Faro, Mayo, Haines Junction and Dawson have access, at least on an interim basis, to qualified trades instructors?

Hon. Mr. Kent: That is, of course, one of the pillars that we previously identified in the rural action plan and we'll certainly take that into consideration as we're developing the comprehensive HR strategy and moving forward. Although I don't have those numbers with me as far as the number of students who are currently enrolled, some of the numbers I do have with me are results from some of the Skills Canada competitions that have taken place. What we're going to see here in the next while is the skills qualifier. I know when the WorldSkills Competition was recently held in Calgary, we had a Yukon resident rank 11th best in the world for computer- and numerical-controlled machining. That young gentleman is the son of the owner of Quantum Machine Works here in Whitehorse — a tremendously successful business and a success story.

I will commit to get those numbers back to the member opposite and let him know that as part of one of those pillars in the rural action plan, we'll look to address the trades and technology end.

Of course, a couple of weeks ago here there was unanimous support given to a motion the Member for Klondike introduced on addressing the skilled trades and technology and looking for not only implementing some of the stuff that we're currently doing with respect to Public Schools or Advanced Education, but also looking to explore some new models to deliver that type of training in the schools. As we move forward on a number of these processes, I'll look forward to identifying some new models that we can look to in trying to bring success for students who see skilled trades as what they would like to accomplish.

Mr. Tredger: I would applaud Skills Canada and commend Dan Curtis too and the work that they're doing in many of our communities. They are not central to the school curriculum. They are extracurricular and they augment what's happening, or what should be happening in our schools. What we need in our schools, in terms of skills training, are some specific and measurable objectives that will guide our thinking.

Right now, my understanding is that a number of classes even in the city schools are not operating. The number of courses being offered is diminishing, and the amount of money that the teachers have for buying things — say in a welding class, they do not have enough money to buy the materials necessary. I know a number of teachers trying to be innovative and schools trying to be innovative have come up with things like “sled-ed” and different ways to address it and involve students

in trades-like courses. I commend those teachers, but we need a systemic plan; otherwise, what happens is that it becomes, as you mentioned, dependent on who happens to be hired. So we hire an English teacher who might also be able to work on his car and all of a sudden they are running a shop class without proper training or skills, but they have the interest and schools recognize that need.

So we need to fund the courses that exist and ensure that the teachers who are teaching them have the training and the funds to buy materials; and we need to ensure that they are available to students in every school on a regular basis so it doesn't become a hit-or-miss thing.

My concern is that what's happening is we are not meeting the needs of the students. Not every student who goes through takes part in — when I went through, most people took a shop class or a home ec class, and those have evolved to a certain extent. But our kids aren't being exposed to that. I'll come back to that in a minute.

The other aspect of it is that many of our new schools are being built without shop facilities. I was quite appalled when I got to Pelly and the new school had no shop, and even more so when the college didn't have one. So we have a community beside an operating mine with a tremendously high unemployment rate and no facilities for teaching and training. Now, perhaps we can bring the mobile shop down from Dawson once in a while to do a quick course or something, but it isn't the same as having it in the building. So, when we start down that road, it's going to cost a lot of money and a lot of effort to go back.

What I am saying to the minister is, in this situation we need to do more than talk about making skills a pillar of our platform; we need to make it the pillar of our platform and ensure that every student has an opportunity to be exposed to the trades, to have the opportunity to be in a home-ec type situation or food science or those exposures.

Will the minister assure me that indeed trades will become a pillar of the educational component and that they will be funded accordingly?

Hon. Mr. Kent: First of all, when we speak about resources in the classroom, again I visited a number of schools and talked to a number of administrators in particular, especially those who are coming into the Yukon from outside jurisdictions. They are all very appreciative of the amount of resources that they have at their disposal. When we look at the annual report that I tabled during this sitting, the 2010-11 annual report by the Department of Education, expenditures by student is a very, very telling graph.

Expenditures per student include all direct operation and maintenance costs of operating the schools, including the cost of all school-based staff, materials, supplies, maintenance, security, groundskeeping and utilities. What we see from this graph that's here is that expenditures have gone in 1998-99 from \$8,362 per student to \$16,197 per student in 2010-11. When the Yukon Party government took over for 2002-03, they were at \$11,157. So there has been a substantial increase in those student expenditures. I don't think resources are necessarily the issue here.

When it comes to trades and skilled trades, the member does bring up a good point with respect to the school in Pelly Crossing, the Eliza Van Bibber School. I don't have the history with respect to that project to talk about why there is no shop facility. It may have to do with the number of students who are actually in attendance at the school; I'm not sure. When I was there visiting the college recently, there was a plumbing course being offered at the college.

I think there were 13, or possibly 15, students taking that introductory plumbing course. So they are able to deliver that, and it was delivered, I believe, through one of our community training funds. Again, when it comes to addressing that pillar that's in the rural action plan on trades training, we're right now in the final phase of our comprehensive human resource plan, which is engagement with all staff to identify goals, objectives and strategies.

That committee is currently meeting with all interested school staff to identify key themes and issues under the four pillars of this human resources strategy that I mentioned earlier. This data will aid the committee in identifying short-, medium- and long-term objectives and outcomes that will comprise the final plan. Again, I know we've spoken at length, not only here today, but also in previous days of this current sitting, about the importance of identifying students who have an aptitude that would gear them toward skilled trades and training. That's what we intend to do through the rural action strategy and development of the plan and the comprehensive human resource plan and, of course, the continued, upward trend in our expenditures per student.

There is, of course, in this budget that we are debating right now, \$385,000 in experiential funding, which includes skills and trades also introduced by this government. It is controlled at site.

So, as members can see, there is a substantial amount of programming that exists. That is why in the motion that we debated a couple of weeks ago — or three weeks ago — there was the friendly amendment introduced by me and supported by the mover of the motion, the Member for Klondike, to not only look at exploring new models, but implement strategies that are already being undertaken. So, I certainly agree that the time is now to move forward on the skills, trades and technology training. That is what we are doing and that is what is evidenced by the expenditures per student where we are moving forward on a number of initiatives for all Yukon students.

Mr. Tredger: Thank you. I realize that our schools are quite well-resourced and I guess it is not a question of how much we spend; it is where we spend it and how well we spend it. My understanding from many of the instructors is that the materials and the support is sometimes lacking and ask that the minister look into that.

One of the things that work well especially in small communities would be partnerships in terms of skills training. The minister mentioned the plumbing course in Pelly Crossing. One of the things that could happen to that is that we could look at dual credit courses, so that high school students could also take part in that. When the minister and the Yukon College announced the dual credit courses and the possibility of doing

that, I immediately thought of trades. However, I found what is happening and the way it is working is that it's for people in Whitehorse who are going on a graduation course — probably to university. They are able to take some first year university courses at the college. I would ask the minister to expand those dual course initiatives to allow schools to participate with colleges, share resources and share courses that way, as well as look to the industry in the areas to perhaps put on some of the courses — to involve high school students in the industry and work with them.

There is a lot of opportunity there. It will take some ingenuity, some flexibility and some support from the minister and his department in order to make it happen. As well, it should come up with some overall goals and how it can fit into overall objectives — how these can be measured and how we can learn from what happens now so that we can repeat the successes in the future and fix the failures at the same time.

Hon. Mr. Kent: As part of that rural action plan, I've identified the five pillars for the member opposite in earlier debate, but I should also mention that the Department of Education and Yukon College are in conversation with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in to develop a pilot for a new rural school model that is based on those five pillars above, including of course, trades and apprenticeships. I believe I have an opportunity to meet next week with education representatives from Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in where I hope to get a bit of an update, and I have invited the Member for Klondike to join me in those discussions as a former educator at Robert Service School and someone who knows his community very well.

When it comes to the dual credit program, I was very pleased to be able to make that announcement prior to Christmas with respect to those courses that are being offered at Yukon College. It will certainly save students a little bit of tuition as they move on to higher learning in those particular fields. But I do agree with the Member for Mayo-Tatchun that I'm looking forward to dual credit in trades. It's something that, as soon as it was announced, I thought to trades and the significance of being able to offer that.

Something of an undertaking that's going on right now is the centre for northern innovation in mining. It's a two-phased approach to identify the labour market needs for mining and how we can engage the communities on training. I've had the opportunity, along with the Minister of Economic Development, to be briefed by the college and the advisory group that is looking after that. That advisory group includes representatives from the Yukon Mine Training Association, Yukon College, industries and First Nations. It has a very broad spectrum of representation.

I know that we're not in debate on Energy, Mines and Resources, but I should commend the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources for bridge funding the Yukon Mine Training Association while we look for a new funding model that has been raised at the highest levels in government.

I know the Premier spoke to the Prime Minister about mining trades, and we're fortunate in the Yukon to have the Yukon Mine Training Association, Yukon College and industry all working together, as we speak, on a strategy that will address

our concerns when it comes to training for those opportunities and ensuring that Yukoners can have those opportunities going forward.

Mr. Tredger: Thank you to the minister. Just a couple more questions on skills training and introduction of it. I mentioned earlier — almost universally — students would get some background in industrial arts or in a kitchen/home economics kind of facility and that accomplished a couple of things that I think need to be accomplished today more than anything else — or, more than ever before. Many of our students aren't growing up on the farm, or in a house in a small community, where a lot of repairs are done, where you "make do" with things, where people — by way of their lifestyle — fix their cars or change their tires or replace windows — those types of maintenance things — because the adults are out working more, people are spending more time in front of televisions — for a variety of reasons.

Our students are coming through schools without that kind of basic knowledge. It also extends to what we used to learn in home economics, in terms of sewing, cooking, preparing menus and being aware of how to run a household.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Mr. Tredger: I was just wondering if you wanted to share it with everyone.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Mr. Tredger: Yeah.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Chair: Mr. Tredger, you have the floor.

Mr. Tredger: Okay. I'll get back to my senses here. That would accomplish two things: it would help make people more independent in terms of a household, and it would introduce the students to the skills and to the trades.

If all students in grades 6 to 8 were exposed that way, who knows what opportunities they would have and where they would go with that; how many more of them would choose skills and be able to work in our industries and stuff like that; or become interested in school and stay in school longer.

Is there any thought in terms of one of the pillars as to introducing universal courses like those?

Hon. Mr. Kent: There is not, at this time, just in response to the member opposite's question. But, you know, we look for those types of initiatives and possible programs to come out of our discussions about the five pillars that are in that rural action plan. Maybe those are the types of things that we can offer in Whitehorse schools.

I think to the member's earlier comments about not really having any people who grow up on a farm, again, placer miners are a perfect example. I know that there are some tremendously talented children who are coming out of the placer mines — a very innovative industry — particularly in Dawson City. My time working for the Klondike Placer Miners Association — I'll just share a quick story about one of the young children. I think he is probably a third or fourth generation placer miner, but when they were in discussions a couple of years ago to relocate the Gold Rush show to Dawson City, he was the one who was at the meeting with his parents telling the producers of the show all the things that the particular family did wrong

the previous season. So, hopefully, it looks like they maybe took him up on that advice and did find some better ground to work in the Klondike. Again, that young gentleman also did very well at the recent bridge building contest in Whitehorse that was here this past weekend. The Robert Service School from Dawson took top prize in the youngest category and the Carcross school took top prize in all three other categories, including the open category.

It's a tremendous way that we are delivering on that experiential learning, whereas when I was going to school, we didn't have that particular program or the types of activities like the bison hunt and land-based experiential learning that's happening in Old Crow. In biology class — I mentioned on the weekend to one of the organizers — I think we had, like everybody else at that time, that dirty old cow eyeball to dissect or the frog or the perch. But now students are being able to get out on the land and work on the bison hunt.

Speaking to the principal of Elijah Smith Elementary School on the weekend, he said that it was quite something to see the meat being carved by the students and the different cuts. So it's that type of programming and innovative learning that the department is engaged in that I think is really setting the stage to help us make a difference and work toward seeing these numbers improve in the short-term and of course, over the medium- and long-term.

Mr. Tredger: Yes, we do have some very innovative people and people who are living on the land — placer miners, trappers — people who are involved in many different areas.

My concern is that a lot of children aren't getting that exposure. When you were talking about the placer miners and people involved in placer mining, those are the kinds of opportunities that we should be encouraging for our schools and our schoolchildren to get involved in. If we have the facilities then they can come in and share their knowledge and it brings the community into the school and the school into the community. I look forward to more of that in our schools and more support for that.

The minister was talking about experiential learning and I do have a few comments on experiential learning and where we're going with that. We have some wonderful examples in our territory. Wood Street Centre works fabulously. The bison hunt works great. Many of our local communities do take children out on the land and to work with the elders, to work with various people. I assume they also go visit local placer mines and see how they work, to see them in a different way. What I think we need to do, or what I look for, is some way of ensuring that all students have that opportunity, that teachers are supported in the development of experiential opportunities and have the training to do that.

Experiential learning is not only about events; it's about a way of teaching, a way of allowing the students to experience as they learn so that we can use all the ways that a mind engages in order to learn. In order to teach experientially, it's not just taking them out once or twice, but it's integrating it into the classroom so that it occurs all the time, in the classroom and on the land. That type of teaching requires that people are familiar with the area that they're living in. It also requires that

they have a particular mindset and they're looking for those experiential opportunities so that they can make those opportunities available to their children. A number of years ago we had talked about building, and the Department of Education considered building an outdoor training facility or an experiential learning centre where teachers could bring their students for a weeklong experience or an overnight experience or an afternoon experience — for whatever age and whatever was appropriate.

But there would be trained people there — people who could train the teaching staff; who could help them do risk assessments and all that is involved with that; who could encourage them and act as a resource to them. Is this minister considering revisiting the outdoor experiential learning opportunities? Is it something that is on the radar and, if it is not, would the minister consider putting it on there?

Hon. Mr. Kent: When it comes to experiential learning or projects such as the one that is offered in Old Crow, much of the materials developed include a teacher's guide for culture camps; student culture camp booklets; location guide to on-the-land activities; the school in Old Crow has published two newsletters featuring stories from the culture camp. These materials will be launched by the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation in June 2012. Consultants have presented at a school-wide teachers conference, education summit and national education ministers conferences to share these best practices.

There are a number of other programs, such as the CHAOS program — the community, heritage, arts, outdoors and skills program. Although it is a Whitehorse-based program, there will be field trips to Yukon communities and the possibilities of outreach programming offered to rural schools. When it comes to the Old Crow program, I was reviewing some old *Hansard* documents and noted that my predecessor spoke to the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin about that programming in 2009. It has certainly become a very successful program and one that has gained national recognition. The teacher who was involved in that program in Old Crow has since relocated to Saskatchewan; however, we have retained her services to help us develop that curriculum so that we can share it on a Yukon-wide basis.

I guess I would agree with the member opposite that this type of experiential learning is extremely important. Again, I'll just revisit the event that I attended this past weekend, which was the 19th annual bridge building competition. It really, for me, brought to light how important this experiential learning can be. It involves not only the students, but the teachers are engaged, the parents are engaged and often the grandparents are engaged.

A teacher referred to earlier on the floor of this House, Mr. Al Loewen, had entries in the open class with two of his grandchildren and I think he placed third and fourth in the bridge-building competition. I know the member opposite will agree with me, it's an extremely important way to deliver learning. Programs such as CHAOS and the Old Crow model are the ones that I would like to focus on going forward and move those programs around the Yukon.

Also, in my community visits, we did speak in Faro to parents and the school council there. They've offered options for

us to look at some environmental experiential learning models that would work in their community. So I'm always receptive to ideas coming from the communities and working on them on behalf of the students, the teachers and the entire school community, no matter where they reside.

Mr. Tredger: Experiential learning has been proven, researched and proven again. It does work and we have some wonderful examples of it working in the Yukon. The minister referenced what was happening in Old Crow.

I know the bison hunts are in many schools throughout the Yukon. I think it would be important to bring a structure to that and allow all teachers to have the training and the experience of that. Not all teachers are trained in it so we end up with an ad hoc approach where there is a fortuitous mix of personnel and situations to develop that and to incubate that. What I would look for from the department is leadership and development of — I suggest a camp, but certainly, at the very least, a very active experiential learning group that could be going out and working with teachers and with communities to make sure that proper risk assessment is done, that the rigour of the courses is being met, and that lessons learned are passed on. So that is what I'm looking for.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Again, what I would like to focus on during my time as minister is some of those programs that we've seen that are successful, such as CHAOS, such as the Champagne and Aishihik bicultural program. I know we need to evaluate and review that program after this year, as it is a pilot project. The Old Crow experiential program is another thing where I think we can take something that has shown some proven success, build on it, build the curriculum, adapt that curriculum to other communities, but then again listen to the great ideas that are coming from places like Faro and Dawson City. I'm looking forward to those discussions with the education representatives from Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in next week with the Member for Klondike.

Again, I think there's some great opportunities to move forward with the experiential learning and you know, not to be repetitive, but the bison hunt and the bridge building — building on those types of successes that not only engage the school community, but the private sector. The private sector involvement at the bridge building competition through sponsorships was tremendous and I understand that the program in Dawson City that is being offered there through the high school is receiving private sector interest, not only from the substantial hardrock mining exploration activity and companies that are involved in that area, but also from the placer miners who are looking to build a workforce for their industry on a go-forward basis, and recognize that there is no better place to get those workers than the people who are currently living in Dawson City.

Mr. Tredger: A number of years ago there was a new field trip policy put into place. Has an evaluation been done of that? Are the numbers of field trips that classes take increasing or decreasing?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Although I don't have the exact data with me, it's my understanding that the number of field trips have been increasing. We've seen the experiential learning

aspects — again, I know there was a photo on the front page of one of the local newspapers a few weeks ago of some kids out ice fishing. We have, based on past experience, reviewed the policy with respect to field trips and I know that that information is on our website.

Mr. Tredger: Thank you. I will check it to see.

The Individual Learning Centre is a tremendous success reaching a lot of students, and I know that the minister has mentioned repeating it in a couple of rural schools. Can you tell me in terms of evaluating the ILC, what the reasons for the success are, and how those results will be replicated in the pilot projects?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I guess why we are seeing success with that program in Whitehorse and have looked to identify FTEs to move to communities of Old Crow and Teslin is that it really individualizes the type of learning for each student for flexibility and time. I think that is why we are seeing tremendous success for students who do not, I guess, fit the mold of students who are in our regular stream high schools at this time.

Mr. Tredger: I know a large part of the success is due to the teachers and the relationships that they have developed, and I would give hats off to Mr. Bennett for the work that he has done with that group. I think it is important to replicate those relationships.

Actually, I'm quite interested in the ILC model as perhaps replacing some of the regular high school courses in rural schools. The classes, as the minister mentioned earlier, are very small. Is there any appetite to put together a curriculum based on the ILC that teachers in rural schools could then use and, that way, combat some of the side effects of attendance, as well as ensure that students are working at their individual pace and are able to move through the curriculum in an appropriate fashion? It would mean a number of adjustments and a teacher may move more to a coaching model than to a teaching model. But to me, it makes a lot of sense and it might be quite doable. Has the department considered that?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Well, I think we're looking at a number of options, obviously, to address success of rural students. Again, I mentioned — and the member opposite brought it up — the FTEs in Old Crow and Teslin who will look to deliver this ILC-type of model.

I think the success is in the flexibility that it offers each student. All students are unique in terms of what it takes to contribute to their success. I did mention earlier today during Question Period that I think, from a rural perspective, we also need to look at a number of different options, including options of allowing or giving students in Old Crow and Ross River the options of attending high school, perhaps in Dawson City or Faro, if that's a better fit for their success — if adapting to life in those communities is easier for them than coming to Whitehorse.

Of course, one of the challenges around that will be student accommodations, as we do have Gadzoosdaa here in Whitehorse. However, there are three students currently from Old Crow — I believe I mentioned earlier today — who are taking advantage of our private residence subsidy and using that.

I'm hopeful that we're able to move on those types of initiatives — whether students have to return to their home communities, we have that ILC option there for them or, if adapting to life in Dawson City or Faro is easier for them than coming to Whitehorse and the distractions that exist in the city here for them that contribute to them not succeeding here.

I think there are a number of options we have to look at when we're exploring the success of students who don't fit the mainstream of a Yukon high school.

Mr. Tredger: Thank you for that answer. The minister mentioned CHAOS a couple of times. Is it in its first or second year of programming? Have any evaluations been done of it? What of it is working and what lessons are being learned?

Hon. Mr. Kent: It is something that has just started, so there hasn't been an evaluation completed; however, it has expanded from grade 10 to also include students in grade 9.

Mr. Tredger: At one point it was to include — or, at least attend rural schools and include rural students. Can you tell me the number of rural students who are involved in the program?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I don't have those numbers with me here today. I would be happy to look into providing them for the member opposite. CHAOS 9 was housed at Porter Creek Secondary School in the spring of 2011, but has now moved into Wood Street Centre School. The enrolment for CHAOS 9 at Porter Creek Secondary School in the spring of 2011 was three students and CHAOS 10 in the fall of 2011 was seven. The enrolment in CHAOS 9 for spring of 2012 is five students. These numbers are similar to other programs at Wood Street when they first started. We are expecting increased enrolments in CHAOS for 2012-13 as the popularity of this program continues to grow. I know there is one student at least from the community of Teslin who is attending CHAOS 9 here in Whitehorse.

Mr. Tredger: Gadzoosdaa residence — is it running full and is there an opportunity for people who want to take part in programs like CHAOS or other Wood Street programs, or who want to move to town to partake of different types of programming? Is there room for that?

Hon. Mr. Kent: My understanding is that there is currently no wait-list at the Gadzoosdaa student residence, and current policies are that it's open for students in grades 10, 11 or 12.

Mr. Tredger: Okay. The minister mentioned that there is \$250,000 for a study to determine schools and school needs in Whitehorse. Will that study also look at needs in rural communities or is there going to be another study to do that?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Those dollars are earmarked specifically for Whitehorse-area schools.

However, the long-term facilities plan that the department is currently working on — and we expect to have available for some public comment in the very near future — will address the needs of all schools. But the money that is specifically located in this budget is really to address the five-year cooling off, I guess, or whatever period existed since the last Copper Ridge school study, and then future needs in and around the City of Whitehorse, particularly in the Whistle Bend as we

move forward with housing options for Yukoners in that development.

Mr. Tredger: There has been some interest expressed in an aboriginal choice school or a First Nations school. Will that interest be addressed or will that be looked at in the study?

Hon. Mr. Kent: My personal opinion and I think the opinion of a number of Yukoners who are exposed to the Elijah Smith Elementary School is that it is a tremendously well-functioning community school that is about 50-percent First Nation and 50-percent non-First Nation enrolment. It is my thought on this on a going forward basis that when it comes to the school in Copper Ridge, that it not be considered as a First Nations only school.

I think the success of Elijah Smith speaks for itself and having spoken to a number of individuals, including the very well-respected principal of the Elijah Smith Elementary School, I've come to the conclusion that that should not be one of the options that is considered.

Mr. Tredger: A couple of points — I must have misheard you at one point. The study — we've already determined that the school will be built in Copper Ridge? It's not an assessment of the schooling needs for the whole city?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Just to clarify for the member opposite, I believe about five years ago a consultant was retained to look at the need for a community school in Copper Ridge. The recommendations that came from that consultant, based on public input, was that we should wait five years. Now five years is up, so we've identified \$250,000 in this budget. It was also in our platform last fall — to look at the need for a Copper Ridge area school. However, as part of the overall Whitehorse area school planning, we have decided to extend this planning to also include Whistle Bend and to look at some of the other programs that are offered, whether or not they would be a good fit for this Copper Ridge school, including, of course, French immersion, where we're seeing some particularly high demands, and the Catholic school system also has particularly high demands, given the influx of immigrants from predominantly Catholic countries that we have seen over the past number of years.

Mr. Tredger: So the \$250,000 is to study what kind of school will be built in Copper Ridge?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Part of the \$250,000 would be used to retain a consultant to look at the type of school that should be built in Copper Ridge and look at the overall needs of Whitehorse. We expect them to engage with a number of the different school committees that are in the Whitehorse area, including, of course, Whitehorse Elementary School, Elijah Smith Elementary School and, of course, the Catholic school system as well, as I mentioned earlier.

I had a meeting recently with the principal of the Elijah Smith Elementary School and our department's director of human resources to really talk about what we would like the consultant to look at. We are looking first at the Copper Ridge school, but really with an eye to what is occurring within the entire city as far as the long-term and short-term facility needs for Whitehorse.

Mr. Tredger: I'll go back to my original question. When we are looking at a Copper Ridge school and we are going to look at it from a French immersion perspective, from a Whistle Bend perspective and from a Catholic perspective, could we be also including looking at it from an aboriginal, first-choice school which would not necessarily mean it is only for aboriginal students, it is open to everyone, but it may have an aboriginal component or it may be based on aboriginal thought?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I think that in previous answers perhaps I wasn't as clear as I could have been with respect to that. My thoughts on this are for the Copper Ridge school — the options that need to be presented to those who are being consulted on this are for either a community school of some type — whether it's K to 7 or a primary school, a Catholic school or French immersion. We see, I think, approximately 40 percent of the students who attend Whitehorse Elementary School come from that Hamilton Boulevard corridor. That's where we're seeing a lot of pressure for facilities, in that area of the city. There is some overflow that's attending Takhini school, as well. Now we have the new development of Whistle Bend. The initial phases — the student population will be able to be absorbed into the surrounding schools, but we want to make sure that in the long-term planning of subdivisions in the city that we also include long-term planning for schools. That's what I've asked the department to move forward on by engaging this consultant. Those are the parameters that I have asked them to consult the community on.

Mr. Tredger: One of the five pillars that the minister opposite mentioned was First Nation languages and culture. We have had a First Nation language program in many of our schools for a number of years now. Have we developed a way to measure success? How successful are they being? Before we get to there, can the minister tell me how much instruction time students receive in First Nation languages in each school and how effective that is? And when we are looking at that, how are the classes working? How are we determining what is a successful course? Have we surveyed the First Nations? Have we talked to local First Nation instructors? Have we developed a way of ascertaining whether or not we are being effective?

Seeing the time, I move that you report progress.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Tredger that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Chair: It has been moved by the Government House Leader 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

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 6, *First Appropriation Act, 2012-13*, and directed me to report progress on it.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to

Speaker: This House stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 5:26 p.m.