

Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Tuesday, November 20, 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 the 2012 Leckie awards

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I rise today on behalf of the Assembly to pay tribute to the annual Robert E. Leckie awards and their recipients in recognition of outstanding environmental stewardship in mining and exploration.

The awards were created as a tribute to Robert E. Leckie, who worked as a mining inspector in Mayo from 1987 until 1999. The awards reflect Bob's dedication to environmental stewardship in innovative mining practices by acknowledging members of the industry for their exceptional efforts in this field. A selection committee composed of representatives from industry and the Yukon government reviews nominations and selects the winners.

I was pleased to present the 2012 Leckie awards last night at the Yukon Chamber of Mines banquet beginning with the outstanding placer mining environmental stewardship award to Barduson Placers Ltd. This father-son operation is next to Alexco's Bellekeno mine in the Mayo mining district and has been in operation since 1967.

The Bardusons — through systematic mining practices and long term planning — have utilized a unique buried drain to transport water to their settling ponds.

This innovative method is conducive to noise abatement, less use of fuel, creation of fewer settling ponds and lends itself to timely and systematic reclamation. These techniques show that the Bardusons have been true stewards of the environment.

The second Leckie award is the award for outstanding quartz environmental stewardship, which went to Pitchblack Resources Ltd. Pitchblack Resources undertook an aggressive and comprehensive two-year reclamation plan going well above the call of duty and the requirements of legislation by reclaiming areas impacted from several other historical users of the area prior to their use. This included decommissioning and removing three historical camps and cleanup at three airstrips on their claims in the Peel region. Buckets of drill fluids, 900 fuel drums, propane tanks, appliances, helicopter and drill parts and miscellaneous equipment were removed and sold, recycled or otherwise disposed of. Contaminated soil at the airstrips as the result of previous users in the area was removed for treatment by this company.

The third Leckie award is the inaugural Leckie award for outstanding innovation in mining. This award went to Yukon

Zinc Corporation. Yukon Zinc operates a polymetal mine just off the Robert Campbell Highway, midway between Ross River and Watson Lake. Successes this year include a functioning biochemical water treatment system, enlargement of a lined tailings facility and raising the dam by seven metres to accommodate it — all done with minimal impact.

The pre-treatment steps in inventive metal recovery methods employed during mill processing enable the recycling of water from the tailings pond. This practice, along with the use of various storage facilities and progressive water treatment, allows Yukon Zinc to conserve well over 100,000 cubic metres of fresh water every month.

The company's on-site heavy equipment operation/training saw six Yukon First Nation citizens receive certification at a graduation ceremony attended by their families and other guests. It is thought to be the first remote site training of this kind.

Other practices, such as the system lined ditches, a fully lined waste-rock facility, a waste-heat recovery system, an anaerobic bacterial sewage treatment plant, a passive water treatment system and progressive reclamation done by the company, contribute to lessening the footprint of the project.

The ongoing relationship with the Ross River Dena Council and Liard First Nation through employment, training and traditional ceremonies at the site shows a high commitment to social responsibility.

Yukon Zinc is excelling in all areas of environmental stewardship, including social responsibility and innovation in their overall operation.

In recognition of Prospector of the Year Alex McMillan

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I also wish to pay tribute today to the Prospector of the Year. That award was given last night by the Chamber of Commerce to Alex McMillan, who was selected as 2012 Prospector of the Year by the Yukon Prospectors Association. Mr. McMillan's discovery of high grade gold at the 3Ace minerals property was recognized last evening at the Geoscience Forum awards banquet.

Mr. McMillan's work is just the latest achievement in a long and successful career. He began as a prospector back in 1964, and his early work contributed to what has become the Cassiar mine. In the decades since, he has used his experience in several grassroots exploration projects of his own. In 1999, Alex McMillan discovered the 3Ace property, which has proved to be the most significant discovery of his career so far. He staked the area — which sits on the Nahanni mountain range — on snowshoes, and did so by himself and managed to outdo other companies that were using helicopters and large crews in the area at the same time. After many years of hard work, he knew he had a potentially good property and his optimism was confirmed one day in 2010. Taking a lunch break near a quartz vein, Mr. McMillan had a good look at the rock, which contained a staggering amount of gold.

Further analysis indicated he had made the highest grade gold discovery in the Yukon. Mr. McMillan optioned the 3Ace property to Northern Tiger Resources and continues to work with the company while also setting his sights on a new discovery.

Mr. McMillan's Kaska First Nation ancestry and upbringing on the land have prepared him well for a successful life as a Yukon prospector. Everyone who has worked with him says the same thing: his strength, his fitness and his knowledge, not only of the land but also of Yukon geology, has provided him with the talents to succeed in the prospecting industry. At the awards banquet last night, Alex McMillan paid particular thanks to his friends and family and noted specifically his wife and son, Chief Liard McMillan, as encouraging him in his work throughout the years.

Alex McMillan's award as Prospector of the Year is about more than his incredible discovery at 3Ace — it is recognition of a lifetime of sustained effort and, when he received the award, he was given a standing ovation by the crowd at the Geoscience dinner last night.

In recognition of National Addictions Awareness Week

Hon. Mr. Graham: I rise in the House today to pay tribute to National Addictions Awareness Week, which runs from November 19 to 25 this year. This is an ideal time to raise awareness about the effects of alcoholism and drug abuse on the individual, the family and society.

All over the country, communities are talking about addictions. Yukon has the dubious distinction of being among the highest alcohol-consuming jurisdictions in a country, Canada, which is among the highest alcohol-consuming countries in the world. We recognize the toll that alcohol can take on individuals, their families and communities, which is why Alcohol and Drug Services works year-round to educate, treat and help prevent alcohol and drug misuse.

Recently, Health and Social Services worked with national partners on the national low-risk drinking guidelines, which provide the best evidence on the related risks of alcohol consumption. Tying in with these new guidelines, Yukoners will soon be hearing radio spots and seeing print advertising highlighting the idea of "What Is Your Normal?". This campaign invites Yukoners to think about their alcohol consumption and its related harms. As well, the prevention unit of Alcohol and Drug Services is distributing a booklet through local newspapers this week on how alcohol affects women. This is not to single out women, but to point out that alcohol can have a more intense and devastating impact on women than it does on men. I encourage everyone — men and women — to read this booklet.

Most importantly, National Addictions Awareness Week is an appropriate time to also pay tribute to all of those individuals and organizations that support people in recovery and help to reduce the devastating effects of drug and alcohol abuse in our communities. Allow me to list just a few: Alcoholics Anonymous; Narcotics Anonymous; Al-Anon; the Salvation Army; First Nation health programs; the Skookum Jim Friendship Centre; FASSY; and the Canadian prenatal nutrition programs and pregnant teen programs connect women to resources and healthy relationships. The elders and seniors should also be acknowledged for sharing their personal struggles to help others to understand. There is also the gym teacher, the youth worker and community volunteer, who keep the facility open just a little while longer so the kids can have a safer place to be

after school; the neighbour who lets our kids know they are noticed and valued in the neighbourhood; the girlfriend who supports the pregnant mom not to drink while she's pregnant; the coworker who offers his buddy a ride home from the bar because he knows he has had too much to drink; the citizen who volunteers her time to figure out how to find spaces for the hard-to-house. I would like to list them all individually, Mr. Speaker — all the unsung heroes who contribute to a person's recovery, to a family's resilience, to the prevention of harmful substance use — but we would quickly run out of time here today.

So it's not just about one agency or government department. It's about how we all fit together in working toward a healthier society. It's about our role in the community as citizens, parents and friends.

Mr. Barr: I rise on behalf of the Official Opposition and the Independent member in recognition of National Addictions Awareness Week, November 19 to 25.

It is to the credit of aboriginal people that National Addictions Awareness Week began in the early 1980s with an initiative of the Nechi Institute in Alberta. The idea quickly caught on across Canada and in the Yukon. Yukoners continue to consume much more alcohol per capita than the average Canadian. The harm to health and our economy that comes from this is obvious. Statistics show that hospital emergency room visits and admissions are often related to injuries and illnesses associated with alcohol use.

The numbers of people affected by fetal alcohol spectrum disorder are significant in the Yukon. Crimes that involve victims, particularly in family violence, are most often related to the abuse of alcohol.

The Yukon does not only have problems with alcohol. Reports show that about 16 percent of Yukoners have tried cocaine as compared to four percent nationally. About half of Whitehorse residents have smoked marijuana compared to about one-quarter of Canadians overall. There has been a 25-percent increase in the use of prescription drugs in the Yukon. Tylenol 3 alone counts for a 70-percent increase. Cigarette smoking is gradually decreasing but it is still at an intolerable rate in the Yukon.

We are now aware that gambling can also become addictive. We must be cognizant of the devastating impact that gambling has on families and communities when we look at our economy and disruptions in families.

Education is one of the most powerful preventive tools in reaching the objective of being addiction-free, and the National Addictions Awareness Week is an important move for this.

This week points to the celebration of the joy of being addiction-free, reinforcing a healthy attitude and lifestyle that will assist family, friends and the community as a whole. We salute all those professionals and volunteers who work so diligently in assisting Yukoners to become addiction-free.

I also wish to salute all those in recovery from addictions. This is a daily endeavour that we — myself included — undertake. I personally know doctors, lawyers, social workers, truck drivers, sales clerks, other politicians, musicians, actors, home-

less, seniors, men and women, and teens at various stages in their personal journey with addictions. So you see, all races, all genders, middle-class, rich and poor alike suffer or move on in recovery.

We in government must do our part to provide options and opportunities for whomever to recognize that recovery is possible from their addictions. I ask all here: please let others know that there is help and it is okay to ask for it.

Mr. Silver: I rise today on behalf of the Liberal caucus to pay tribute to National Addictions Awareness Week. This week is a time to highlight the importance of addictions awareness and how addictions affect our communities. All northern communities have a stake in addressing addictions. It is about coming together to speak in one voice. Can a life be changed simply by becoming aware of an issue? The answer is yes.

While some people find it easier to judge or to blame, we know that addiction is a disease; substance abuse is a problem. While we struggle to prevent and treat addictions, our awareness efforts need to be backed up by solid evidence and facts.

We need to send a strong and clear message to people about addictions and help them understand what addictions are and what they do to us and what we can do about them. Better yet, we need to be able to offer solutions. We need to build more support in our communities for those reaching out. Healthy lifestyles are created from healthy families and healthy communities and we must do our part to encourage and support healthy lifestyles.

While most people with substance addictions may be wary of opening up about their struggles, their stories can be a source of inspiration and strength to others. I would like to share with you a few words spoken by the keynote speaker at the Issues of Substance 2011 conference, which was held last year in Vancouver. Skid Row CEO Joe Roberts shared his story of recovery and his amazing ascent from heroin junkie to millionaire CEO: "For people stuck in that addiction, it's so much easier to continue in the hell of that existence than to step into the fear of the unknown, which is recovery." And also: "I really believe that the problem cannot be solved by the same mind that created it, and there has to be that step in to surrender and face that 'I need help from outside.'"

I believe these profound words apply to all addictions and that the fear of the unknown and admitting that you can't do it on your own and that you need help is a major part of people perpetuating the cycle. We all can reach out to the ones in our communities who are struggling, dealing with their own addictions. We must make the addict know that support and help is available and that they don't have to do it alone. We must reassure the addict that we are here for them and they just need to reach out.

It will not be an easy road to recovery. The journey may be long and there may be struggles. There may be setbacks, but it will be rewarding in the end, not only for the addict, but also for their families and their communities. I would like to acknowledge and thank the many front-line addiction workers, mental health staff, counsellors, and community health workers

for being there to help those suffering from substance abuse addictions by offering hope and strength. Thank you.

In recognition of Universal Children's Day and National Child Day

Mr. Elias: Thank you. I rise on behalf of the Assembly today to pay tribute to Universal Children's Day, November 20. More than 100 countries around the world join Canada today in observing Universal Children's Day, which was established by the United Nations in 1954.

National Child Day has been nationally celebrated since 1993 to commemorate the United Nations' adoption of two documents centred on children's rights: the United Nations' *Declaration of the Rights of the Child* on November 20, 1959, and the United Nations' *Convention on the Rights of the Child* on November 20, 1989.

The overall objectives of National Child Day are to pay tribute to Canada's commitment to children outlined in the convention and *A Canada Fit for Children* to promote children's initiatives across the country and encourage child-related organizations to raise awareness of child rights.

Since its adoption, the convention has been ratified by more countries than any other international treaty. The adoption of these two landmark documents reflects the growing recognition that children are important and valued members of society. The convention addresses the rights of children under age 18 and outlines their right to be free from exploitation and the right to survival, health care, education, protection and participation in all matters affecting them.

Children are our most vulnerable asset, and it's to them that we bear the greatest responsibility. Despite ongoing efforts and consistent progress, the number of children in the world who suffer unduly is still staggering. Millions of children everywhere are still mistreated, exploited and abused at unacceptable rates.

According to UNICEF, 25,000 children die every day from poverty; 2.2 million die every year because they are not immunized; 1.4 million die annually because they lack access to clean drinking water. Over 25 million children are displaced or live as refugees usually as a result of war. In fact, war is one of the principal causes of strife for children.

Over 100 million children do not have access to education. Even when education is available, it is sometimes only available to boys. Economic difficulties, religious beliefs and cultural practices often work to keep girls from learning.

Around the world, children are often forced into labour for a variety of reasons that might include being pledged against debts, or as a result of being kidnapped. Perhaps most shocking is the military use of children. In some regions, recruitment begins with children younger than age 10. Overall, it is estimated that there are over 250,000 children under the age of 18 fighting in armed conflicts. Often to enforce conformance to doctrine, children are required to commit the gravest of atrocities.

We like to believe that the challenges children face are limited to the developing world and far-off lands, and by and large most are, but while there are over 1.8 billion children in the world, there are still over 7,500 right here in the Yukon on

whom we have a direct influence in their day-to-day lives in some way.

We can't forget that some of our own children continue to suffer from the effects of poverty, abuse, mistreatment and malnutrition. There is a lot of work to be done, not only around the world in improving the lives of children, but also in our territory. However, there are so many good things happening in our territory. We have a Yukon Child and Youth Advocate office; we have several Yukon child tax credits; we have the youth climate change forum; we have the Youth Directorate; and the Executive Council Office that administers the youth investment fund which provides financial support to short-term projects aimed at youth. The program promotes self-esteem, encourages development of positive lifestyle choices, and creates social or recreational opportunities. We also have youth music programs; the conservation action team; Bringing Youth Towards Equality and www.yukonyouth.com. We have the spectacular sporting event geared toward youth in the Arctic Winter Games. We have Women in Trades, and the list goes on and on, Mr. Speaker. We have a tremendous positive impact on our territory and we salute and congratulate all the excellent youth programs around the territory.

I would like to invite everyone to join me in observing Universal Children's Day in events around our territory. Let's agree to redouble our efforts to work in the very best interests of the most important aspect of our future: our children.

In 1954, the day was first suggested by the General Assembly of the United Nations, which recommended countries celebrate children with a day marking "worldwide fraternity and understanding". Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling a letter in response to a letter that I received from Marie-Claude Morin, the Member of Parliament from Saint-Hyacinthe-Bagot. The original letter was received in October, and I want to table my response to that.

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

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION

Mr. Barr: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to build on the substantive work and good-faith efforts by First Nations, non-government organizations, Yukon citizens and Yukon government departments and agencies, to develop a comprehensive addictions treatment strategy that includes:

(1) training personnel to meet national standards of treatment and current practices;

(2) ensuring that prevention and innovative after-care components are essential parts of all centres and programs;

(3) adequately financing land-based centres and programs;

(4) allowing flexible long-term programs beyond 28 days; and

(5) treatment programs specifically for children, youth, seniors, and families.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to brush the section of the North Klondike Highway between Fisherville and Hunker Road to improve visibility and address safety concerns raised by community members.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

Prior to proceeding to Question Period, the Chair will make a statement.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: On October 31, the Chair ruled on a point of order regarding unparliamentary language. During the course of that ruling, the Chair warned all members about using language that may not be unparliamentary in and of itself, but contributes to raising the rhetorical temperature in the House. The Chair feels that now is an opportune time to revisit this issue.

In the October 31 ruling, the Chair also said that one of the fundamental principles of parliamentary procedure is that members are to treat one another as honourable, no matter how strongly they disagree with one another about matters of public policy.

Recently, however, the Chair has noticed members from both sides of this House making comments about other members that are increasingly personal and disrespectful. Yesterday, for example, we heard comments that a member is pursuing conflict with First Nations, that a member chooses not to accurately reflect certain facts and that certain members do not pay attention to the proceedings. We also heard a comment about the manner in which a member pronounced a word and that members take "cheap shots". The Chair could, but will not, cite similar examples from previous days.

Members may feel justified in making these kinds of remarks about other members. That does not concern the Chair. What concerns the Chair is that some members are personalizing the issues or treating some other members with disrespect. In reviewing these remarks the Chair also believes that members could have made their point without personalizing their comments.

The Chair would prefer not to intervene in Question Period and debates. However, if members continue to disrespect one another they will find the Chair intervening.

Finally, the Chair would like to reiterate a point he has made previously: The Chair recognizes that members are here to debate important issues — issues about which they and their constituents hold strong views. Strongly held views often lead to strongly worded statements. All members will have to accept that. However, Yukoners have a right to expect that in debating issues of public importance, members will focus on those issues and not on getting the better of one another.

The Chair thanks all members for their attention. We will proceed at this time with Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Economic outlook

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, Canadian premiers are meeting in Halifax later this week to discuss important economic issues. There are many economic challenges that require strong leadership, including the increasing gap between rich and poor, getting a fair deal on our natural resources, making trade and investment agreements that work for Canadians. With the federal fall economic update showing slowing economic growth and a larger federal deficit, Canada's financial position is weakening. This has led to a call for a reversal in priorities from federal deficit reduction to unveiling a new economic stimulus plan.

How does the Premier intend to insert himself in this important national debate that has major implications for the Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Certainly the economy in the world is a concern to all leaders of this country and in fact, to all financial leaders around the world. We have not been able, nor will we ever be able, to control some of the outcomes that occur across this country — for example, in the United States or in Europe. As such, we will do our best. We do our planning to ensure that we are able to best meet those needs should these things occur.

What we can talk about is the responsibility — the fiscal responsibility — this Yukon government has had over the last 10 years that has taken us from a position where the previous government was actually borrowing money to pay wages to a position now where we do have a surplus, and we do have net financial resources. This government has been able to deliver on programs and services for Yukoners while continuing to encourage responsible development here in the Yukon. As a result, we've increased our tax revenues by over 100 percent. We have increased our own-source revenues by over 100 percent, and we are in a great position to be able to continue to move forward.

Ms. Hanson: For someone who has announced that he has chaired discussions with the premiers on infrastructure — that's the issue here — that's quite noncommittal. It's really focused on the Yukon.

Last week, in fact, my colleague from Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes raised a significant infrastructure gap that exists in Canadian municipalities. The infrastructure gap between what we have and what we need is significant in the north and is an impediment to economic development and improved quality of life. To avoid recession, the federal government reversed direction and unveiled an economic action plan in 2008, and through the Building Canada fund and other means necessary infrastructure was built across the country, including the Yukon.

These funds are all but used up. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities has called for a new, long-term federal infrastructure action plan, which would cost \$5.7 billion a year for the next two decades.

Does the Premier support the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' call for action on infrastructure, and will he seek the support of the other premiers this week in Halifax?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: This government recognizes the tremendous role the Building Canada infrastructure program had in the territory. The program was designed on a base-plus formula, which meant there was a base amount and, when you look at territories that have very small populations, it's critical that there would be a base amount, and on top of that a formula based on population.

It's through that investment between the Yukon government and Canada of a quarter of a billion dollars in the last few years on strategic investments on water, on waste water, on bridges, on roads. It's not only building infrastructure, but also creating jobs, creating training opportunities for Yukon residents, creating business opportunities and ultimately, as a result of that, creating more competition, which ensured that Yukoners were able to receive even more value for every dollar invested.

I had the honour of chairing the discussion on infrastructure. This government believes that infrastructure is a continuing need here in the territory. We'll continue to work with our partners in Canada to come up with new programs to hopefully be able to continue on from the Building Canada program that did exist.

Ms. Hanson: I'm not quite sure if the Premier answered my question. What the public is looking for is a Premier who shows leadership in addressing the serious infrastructure gap that exists in our communities and throughout the north. The Premier will know that the Association of Yukon Communities fully supports the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' call for a long-term plan to address aging infrastructure that threatens Canada's economic development. The AYC chair has said, and I quote: "We believe that in order to address the current and future infrastructure needs both locally and across the country, there is a need to act now by establishing a longer term infrastructure plan that involves all levels of government." I'm looking for an unequivocal answer here this time. Does the Premier support AYC's position and will he show leadership on this critical economic issue for the good of municipalities, for the Yukon and all of the north?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: As I have reiterated, this government continues to work with its partners, looking at not only the relationship with Canada but also how we work together on a pan-northern approach to meet the needs of the "Northern Vision" document, which clearly identifies infrastructure as a very important part of the needs we have. Mr. Speaker, infrastructure investment has helped get us to where we are today.

Just announced were the latest numbers on the GDP, and I am very proud to say that Yukon had a GDP last year of 6.5 percent — the highest in Canada, more than double the national average. Yukon exports jumped 22 percent, more than double from 2010. Consumer spending increased 4.5 percent — the fastest pace in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, our investment in the private sector economy, our investment in the resource sector, our investment in infrastructure has put Yukon at the top of the list, continuing to

drive jobs and create opportunities for this government to create more wealth through our own-source revenues, which will help us reinvest in more capital and program delivery for Yukoners.

Question re: Electrical rate increases

Mr. Tredger: Yesterday, when I raised concerns about the possibility of electrical rates going up and the impact on Yukoners, the minister, instead of answering the question, made wild accusations about the Official Opposition. It's the old deflection game and Yukoners are wise to it. The minister knows full well that the government has a full suite of powers at its disposal to determine fair electrical rates. It can issue directives to specify how the interests of the customer and the utility are to be balanced. The minister provides direction to the corporation through a letter of expectation and, through order-in-council, the minister has every right to influence the cost of service to various customer classes.

Will the minister cease the deflections and answer the question he didn't answer yesterday? Is a 13-percent electrical rate hike acceptable to the minister?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: It appears that the Member for Mayo-Tatchun wasn't listening to the Speaker earlier. Again, as I pointed out to the member yesterday, the Yukon Utilities Board is a quasi-judicial board. The Member for Mayo-Tatchun — the member for the NDP — called on me yesterday to step into the process while the board is currently in the midst of reviewing an application by the Yukon Energy Corporation. The member for the NDP asked me to express an opinion that would interfere with them doing their work independent of the corporations, since I am minister responsible for Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation.

For the member to call on the minister to step into the process and then not understand what the problem was with his question, I would again point out to the member: When we have boards like the Yukon Utilities Board that have a quasi-judicial role and are currently in the process of reviewing an application, we have to let them do the work and that's exactly what this government is going to do.

Mr. Tredger: Yukon Development Corporation's annual report details the regulatory hearing process used to establish or change rates. It says, "The Yukon Utilities Board ("YUB") must ensure that its decision, which fixes electricity rates, complies with..." the appropriate principles of rate making "...all relevant legislation, including the *Public Utilities Act* and directives issued by the Yukon government through Orders-in-Council that specify how the interests of the customer and the utility are to be balanced."

The minister's assertions are wrong. The government has the right and the power to set direction and by doing nothing, it has been a silent witness to millions of dollars spent on research like the Gladstone diversion. It has been a silent witness as wind power plans were shelved and now it is very likely that Yukoners will be paying more out of their pockets. Why does this minister continue to deflect?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Why does the NDP Member for Mayo-Tatchun continue to stand up and demand the government interfere with a quasi-judicial board that is doing its work

right now? Direction can be issued through order-in-council, but it would be grossly inappropriate to do so while the board is in the middle of a rate review.

As the member will know — if he recalls previous Question Periods — I've indicated since taking on this role a little over a year ago that my emphasis upon taking office, on behalf of my Cabinet and caucus colleagues, was to emphasize that we were very concerned about the rates. We were very concerned about ensuring that financial risk to taxpayers and ratepayers was minimized and all of the studies to which the member is referring — or, I should say, almost all of the studies, with the exception of a little bit of expenditure in this fiscal year, were done prior to my time taking office as minister, and the Member for Mayo-Tatchun knows it, or he should know it, if he has done his research.

Question re: Independent power producer policy

Mr. Silver: One of the main concerns of the mining industry is access to reliable electricity. It came up again and again at the mining summit I attended on Saturday.

As far back as 2007, the Yukon Liberal Party has been advocating for the government to adopt an independent power producer policy. An independent power producer policy would enable businesses to generate and sell electricity to Yukon Energy Corporation. This is something a number of mining companies are interested in doing; they see it as a way to power their own projects. The holdup is the Yukon government, which has talked about putting a policy in place to allow this since January 2009. Almost four years later, and there is still no policy. Why has it taken four years to produce this policy?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: As I mentioned earlier today, I point out that I took on this role as minister responsible for Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation a little over a year ago. Since that time, we focused on steps, including creating a more structured relationship with the corporations on clearly defining government's expectations, including the fact that, going forward, we want the corporations to be very much focused on minimizing the financial risk to ratepayers and taxpayers, while ensuring that we also take the right steps to support the development of the Yukon economy and to ensure that the growth of the grid meets the needs of the system.

Work is ongoing right now on the independent power producer policy, as it has been for the last year. We are focused on getting it right. I do appreciate it when the Liberals jump on board with our platform commitments and urge us to complete our commitments. We are focused, of course, on completing all those commitments within the course of this mandate.

Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, I think the member opposite is confused. This isn't necessarily coming from the Liberal caucus; this is coming from the industry. Mining companies are looking for power. It has been identified by mining companies as a top priority for a number of years. In the government's own January 2009 energy strategy, it was identified as a priority action. I will quote: "Facilitate the purchase of electricity from independent power producers." Yes, that is from his platform, yet almost four years have gone by, and there is still no policy in place to allow this to happen.

It's the government's job to get the policy in place and allow the industry to get on with opening mines and creating jobs and creating wealth. Why has the government been unable to get this independent power policy in place? It has been working on it for four years.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Once again, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Liberal Party is incorrect in his assertions. We're working on some other policy matters — the first steps after the energy strategy, to clarify my statement. In fact, the significant focus on the independent power producer policy has been much more recent.

As I indicated to the member, the first priorities for me and for this government upon taking office just over a year ago were to focus on creating a more structured relationship with the corporations, getting a clear handle on the financial situation and working with them on identifying and talking about the opportunities and the pressures within the system. That's what we have done. The independent power producer policy is something that there has been significant work on, and the member will see more work on that, including public discussion about the structure of this. What the member is very casually referring to should be recognized as having much broader implications than the Member for Klondike is reflecting, because the decision around an independent power producer policy typically comes with a long-term obligation to purchase power. So there is a long-term commitment involved in this for taxpayers and ratepayers, and it's very important that we get it right. That's what we intend to do.

Mr. Silver: I don't know how much more time they need to get it right. One of the presenters at the mining summit identified concerns the industry has about investment in the Yukon. He urged the government to focus on things it can control, such as the regulatory affairs, roads and access to power. When comparing the Yukon to the rest of the world, our biggest deterrent is infrastructure.

Over 65 percent of the world's mineral investors have a problem investing in the Yukon. Almost 25 percent of the investors have a strong deterrent to invest in the Yukon due to infrastructure issues like access roads and power availability. Getting an independent power producer policy in place is one way the government could address parts of this problem. It is something industry has been asking for; it's something that the Liberal caucus supports and has been asking for over a number of years. When is this policy going to be complete?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The member is diminishing the importance of this policy and what's involved in it. As I pointed out to the member, if the independent power producer policy is put in place to be attractive to industry, that typically comes with a long-term commitment to purchase that power. Therefore, there is a very long-term financial commitment for the ratepayers and the taxpayers. We are very focused on making sure that all the angles are addressed and that we get it right to both take advantage of the opportunity and support the growth of mines, but ensure we don't end up with another boondoggle like what happened under the NDP when the Faro mine shut down and we still see the cost on our power bills today for their record of failure.

Again, to the member opposite: We are working on this issue, but we are very focused on getting it right.

I remind the member opposite that the Yukon led the country in growth in real GDP last year at 6.5-percent. Since 2008, we have consistently been one of the leading jurisdictions in growth. Our record of mining investment and mining production: We have mineral production at an all-time high, and the last three years in mining exploration are the three highest years of mining exploration in Yukon history. The member is very conveniently forgetting the fact that Yukon has been very attractive to responsible mining and will continue to be so.

Question re: Alcohol and drug addiction

Mr. Barr: Seven years ago, this government presented Yukoners with their *Yukon Substance Abuse Action Plan*. It lists the criteria for determining if the action plan was successful. On page 18, it says the plan was to be reviewed and adjusted on a regular basis. Measurements for the plan's success included reducing the number of individuals at high-risk who experience harmful consequences of substance abuse; increasing the age at which youth first drink alcohol; decreasing the number of heavy drinkers; decreasing the availability and use of illegal drugs and increasing support for innovative, successful treatment interventions. Will the Minister of Health and Social Services tell us how the *Yukon Substance Abuse Action Plan* has been implemented and adjusted over the seven years since it has been written?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I don't have those exact statistics available at this time, but significant work has occurred in the last little while with respect to alcohol and drug services available to citizens of the Yukon. We have recently initiated strategic planning and a great deal of program redesign work that will ensure that all of our services are responsive to community needs. We're also making sure that our services are culturally appropriate and evidence based. We're also working with other governments to ensure that our services are also following best practices of other jurisdictions in the country. We're also collaborating with stakeholders on redesign of various addiction programs. We're also taking into account the need for a more extensive continuum of services. So all of those things are progressing as we speak.

Mr. Barr: I would ask the minister opposite to please forward these stats. Two years ago, the Minister of Health and Social Services received the *Task Force on Acutely Intoxicated Persons at Risk Final Report*, also known as the Beaton and Allen report.

It is only the latest in a series of reports on addictions available to this government over the past 20 years. In the final report, there is a care plan for creating a detox and treatment system, including details on the location and staffing of facilities. Can the Minister of Health and Social Services advise the House of the reasons for the delay in implementing recommendations in the task force report?

Hon. Mr. Graham: A number of recommendations in the Beaton and Allen report have been implemented. We're also at the present time going ahead with the rebuild of the Sarah Steele Building. Management Board has approved \$60,000 for planning. The planning process is almost com-

pleted, and I expect to have a preliminary plan in hand within the next two to three weeks.

We also, together with Yukon College and Yukon College's First Nation initiatives program, RCMP, CYFN, and the Justice department, coordinated the development and delivery of training focused on Yukon First Nations cross-cultural awareness, sensitivity, and impacts of trauma on addictions. We are progressing and we will continue to do that.

I believe he asked about other issues we are confronting. I think the Premier committed this government to at least a million dollars in funding to the First Nation land-based healing program, if all First Nations in the territory get together and determine one consistent land-based healing program that all would be willing to use.

Mr. Barr: Mr. Speaker, in the 2006 election campaign, the Yukon Party promised that they would work with First Nation governments, NGOs and other stakeholders to develop more treatment centres and programs throughout the territory.

Again, a year ago, when the last territorial election campaign was at its height, the Premier announced that Whitehorse would have a new alcohol and drug services treatment centre. The mandate letter for the Minister of Health and Social Services, written months ago, is specific on land-based treatment and after-care programs. Reports, party platforms, announcements by the Premier and mandate letters do not a strategy make.

What is needed is a workable plan for addictions treatment that is consulted upon and followed. When can Yukoners expect a comprehensive strategy for addictions treatment from this government, and when will it be implemented?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Mr. Speaker, during the last Yukon Forum, the issue of land-based treatment came up and, as the Hon. Minister of Health and Social Services has articulated, we are committed to working with First Nations.

We put forward that we would like to see a healing centre that everybody could use. While this can be part of the after-care program, we understand there are specific needs within First Nations and that there is work to be done at the community level. We understand that. We put forward the tasking of officials to work together — the Yukon government officials and officials representing First Nations — to articulate this program, see whether there is an opportunity to leverage federal dollars to be able to create an institution that is accredited and perhaps be able to enjoy some medical tourism, as well, and perhaps have people coming from other jurisdictions. We also stipulated that we thought that this would be a program that should be run and administered by First Nations. The committee is still working on this, and we look forward to getting an update from them.

Question re: Select Committee on Whistle-blower Protection

Ms. Stick: This government is attempting to close the door on public access to information through amendments. Yesterday we heard this government support lobbying of government with no rules or public accountability. A whistle-blower law to protect public servants who observe and report

wrongdoing in government is something this government also says they support.

Motion No. 195 laid out the terms that if not a final report, an interim report would be tabled during this fall sitting. The Select Committee on Whistle-blower Protection hasn't met since August 2012. Messages requesting another meeting have gone unanswered.

Can the minister tell us when this committee will meet in order to table a report before this Legislature in this fall sitting so this Legislature can address recommendations of this committee?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: As minister responsible for the Public Service Commission, I perhaps would like to pose that question to the select committee, which is comprised of all-party representation. Everyone agreed to get together to review the findings of the previous select committee and to get on with the good work and put forth recommendations so the Government of Yukon could move forward to develop whistle-blower legislation. I have not received an update as of yet, but I certainly look forward to receiving the outcome and the final findings of the select committee on this very issue.

Ms. Stick: I thank the minister for the answer. Yes, the committee has been meeting and is busy, but a request has gone out asking for a date for the next meeting so that this can come forward to this Legislature as laid out. Again I would ask, can we have a date for the next meeting?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Unfortunately I'm not a member of that select committee, but I would ask, perhaps, that the member opposite refer her question to the chair of the committee. We look forward to receiving the final outcome of the report. I have not received an update as to where we are with respect to the final report, but we very much look forward to it. We commend the work of the current select committee and also the past committee that has been working on this. That committee is comprised of representation from all the respective political parties. We support the work and supported the motion that went through to form the committee, and we look forward to receiving the outcome.

Ms. Stick: This message has gone out to the members and the members have answered to it, but still we have no date. It is not up to the members. We're not able to compel the chair to set a time for this meeting. I would ask the minister if she would be willing to ask the chair, who is a member of the government, to please set a date for this committee.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: It is a select committee; it's a committee of the Legislative Assembly, not a committee of the Government of Yukon. I just want to make that differentiation for the members opposite who perhaps are not familiar with the Orders of the Day. We are committed to whistle-blower legislation and that is in fact why we supported the development of the select committee, which would oversee coming up with effective and responsive whistle-blower legislation. That work remains incomplete, but we look forward to the outcome of the committee. I would ask that the member opposite redirect her question to the chair of the committee and any and all other members of the committee.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice of opposition private members' business

Ms. Stik: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of the Official Opposition to be called on Wednesday, November 21, 2012. They are Motion No. 275, standing in the name of the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, and Motion No. 109, standing in the name of the Member for Mayo-Tatchun.

Mr. Silver: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the item standing in the name of the Third Party to be called on Wednesday, November 21, 2012. It is Motion No. 247, standing in the name of the Member for Klondike.

Mr. Elias: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the item standing in the name of the Independent member to be called on Wednesday, November 21, 2012. It is Motion No. 255, standing in the name of the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin.

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. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Vote 3, Department of Education, in Bill No. 7, *Second Appropriation Act, 2012-13*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 7: Second Appropriation Act, 2012-13 — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 7, *Second Appropriation Act, 2012-13*. We will now continue with general debate in Vote 3, Department of Education.

Department of Education

Hon. Mr. Kent: Before I begin, I'd like to welcome two officials to the Legislature with me here today: Deputy Minister Valerie Royle who is no stranger to this House, having appeared here often as a witness for the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, and welcome her in her new position as Deputy Minister of Education, as well as the Director of Finance, Ms. Cyndy Dekuysscher, who has joined us here today again. She was here in the spring when we debated Education during the spring budget as well.

Before I start, I'm just going to provide a few figures and facts to the Legislature today based on the 2011-12 school year. The Department of Education's, in Public schools branch, operated 29 schools. We had 5,023 students and 480.51 full-time equivalent teachers. We had 701 students on IEPs. We had 127.44 full-time equivalent educational assistants and 33 remedial tutors. The cost per student estimate was \$17,104.

In Advanced Education, we ran eight programs, had 571 apprentice registrations, 50 trade certifications were issued, there were 118 STEP program placements, 54 summer career placements, and 133 approved nominees under the nominee program.

On post-secondary student funding, including Canada student loans and grants, the department spent \$5,652,495. We dispersed \$1,291,109 in community training funds. When we break down the O&M expenditures by program for 2011-12, Education Support Services received 5.4 percent of the distribution; Advanced Education received 10.1 percent of the distribution; Yukon College, 16.5 percent; and Public Schools, 68.1 percent.

Those are a few figures that I wanted to bring before the House today. Many of those figures will be included in the annual report for 2011-12. We tabled the 2010-11 report in the spring and anticipate bringing forward the other one during this fall session.

Before I speak to the *Supplementary Estimates No. 1*, I'm going to talk about something quickly. I know the MLA for Klondike and the MLA for Mayo-Tatchun raised a number of questions from the technical briefing that the department held on November 12, 2012.

At the time, Department of Education officials present needed to get back to the member. I do have some of the answers that they had asked for at that time — perhaps not all, but we have tracked them and we will make sure that we get a complete response to members opposite.

One of the questions: What is the total spent, to date, on the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon legal fees? The answer: Starting in 2009-10, including that year and the three subsequent fiscal years up to October 31, 2012, the total budget spent on legal costs by the department was \$2,256,634.

A second question asked by members at that time: Has the Yukon government paid any portion of the CSFY legal fees? The answer to that: Under court order, we were ordered to pay \$400,000 of their legal fees during the 2011-12 fiscal year.

A question with regard to the public schools exit survey: When will the 2011-12 data be available and posted on the website, and are all prior years on the website? The answer to

that question: The latest installment of the Yukon youth secondary school transition survey final report has been updated and is available on the ECO website under the Statistics branch. If members are having difficulty accessing it, I'd be happy to have my staff send the links to chiefs of staff of the Official Opposition, the Liberal Party and the independent member.

The Old Crow land-based experiential program and a copy of the curriculum and guidance materials — what I can do is let members know that we did attend the launch of the curriculum material. It was up at the Beringia Centre. I believe it was close to the start of this session. We had the opportunity to visit with folks there. So I will endeavour to check with the Vuntut Gwitchin and get that information off to the members of the House and available publicly. The material is going to be made available to all schools and First Nations — and the First Nation Partnership unit that's located at the Department of Education.

The fifth question that I do have a response to today deals with the change orders for the civil works phase 2 site work at F.H. Collins. That was the work I believe started in early August and was completed in early October. The answer to that is that civil works phase 2 was a unit price contract. Three change orders were issued and were mainly for adjustments to quantities. The net result of the change orders was to reduce the value of the contract, actually. The award price was approximately \$1.18 million and the final contract value will be approximately \$1.09 million. Again, that's on phase 2 of the civil works.

The geothermal costing is another question asked at that briefing: which years it included in the project budget and what the cost is. The funding is cash flowed over three fiscal years — 2012 to 2015 — and the total is \$918,000. In speaking with my colleague, the Minister of Highways and Public Works, that is the same amount that was allotted for that aspect of the project prior to this revised amount I announced in the Legislature last week.

Another question: What is the total budget for F.H. Collins Secondary School replacement? The total gross amount approved at this time is \$55,796,000. At this point I'd like to just take the opportunity to correct the record. I know last week during Question Period I gave a different figure — a little bit higher — for the total gross estimate for that project. It was due to a clerical error. I just made a mistake and I'd like to apologize to the House. This number that I have today of \$55,796,000 is the correct number, and again my apologies to legislators for the mistake I made during Question Period last week.

When it comes to providing a copy of the memorandum of understanding with First Nations on education, we're just awaiting the signature of all the parties. It is a tripartite memorandum of understanding, including the Department of Education, representing the Yukon government of course; I believe all First Nations in the Yukon can be signatories to this MOU, and of course the Government of Canada. So when I was at the leadership meeting with First Nations at CYFN, I of course signed and the First Nations that were there signed. We're still awaiting the signature from Canada. As soon as that is com-

plete, we'll be able to provide copies of the MOU to not only members of this Legislature but make it available publicly.

One of the questions I believe that was asked by the Member for Klondike is with respect to the Yukon Party's platform commitment of providing home-schoolers with access to program resources and funding. Home educators are funded for courses and resources that are approved through the Department of Education. These courses are provided by Yukon Department of Education through B.C. Distance Education schools. There is no cost to families if they use departmental-approved resources. I believe we have an educator who is actually in charge of that program this year. I think it's for the first time that an actual educator has been in charge at the department level of the home-schooling program.

As I mentioned, there is no cost to families if they use our approved resources. Students enrolled in B.C. Distance Education schools are now also registered in the Yukon student information system, where their year-to-year progress can be tracked. I will provide a written response to all three of the opposition critics — the Third Party, as well as the Independent member — I'll provide that just based on the information that I just read into the record.

Again, there may be some outstanding questions that still need to be answered. I would be happy to provide those to the members opposite at the earliest convenience. Again, the department is working on getting all the answers to questions that were asked at that briefing.

Given that this is Geoscience Week, I wanted to speak about the centre for northern innovation in mining at Yukon College. I know there was a presentation by the president of Yukon College at the Geoscience Forum that was done this morning. I referenced some of this activity when I spoke at the Yukon mining summit Saturday here in Whitehorse, but I just wanted to read a few of the exciting aspects of this program into the record here in the Legislature here today. The centre for northern innovation in mining was a study that was funded by the Department of Economic Development and undertaken by Yukon College over about an 18-month period, I believe — in and around there anyway. They did some tremendous work; the committee and the representation included the college, the departments of Education, Energy, Mines and Resources and Economic Development.

We had industry supports; I believe there were representatives from the Mine Training Association and the Northern Safety Network — a very broad cross-section of people who came together to put together a report and, subsequently, the proposal that was delivered this morning. As I mentioned on Saturday, it's a proposal that has been endorsed by our government, my caucus and Cabinet colleagues, as what we'd like to see moving forward so we can provide training opportunities in mining and industrial trades for a number of Yukoners, as we look to close that significant labour gap that will exist in the mining industry as new projects come onstream and as the exploration and placer mining industries continue to deliver.

One of the opportunities that is going to be offered is to deliver high school dual-credit mining occupation programs in Yukon communities and in Whitehorse using Yukon College as

the successful dual-credit delivery model and creating an avenue for Yukon high school students across the territory to complete high school while acquiring the credentials for a trade relevant to the mining industry.

Secondly, strengthening partnerships with the Yukon Mine Training Association, or the YMTA, and Alaska — again, as I mentioned on the weekend, I did have the opportunity to travel to Juneau and sign a memorandum of agreement between the governments of Yukon and Alaska as well as Yukon College and the University of Alaska to move forward with a number of mine training initiatives and share curriculum, share resources, and look to cooperate on a number of fronts.

Having had the opportunity to spend the day with the Alaskan delegation and a delegation from the Yukon, including officials from Education and the president of Yukon College, it was a great opportunity to visit their downtown Juneau mine training facility with a simulator very similar I believe — it could even be identical to the one that we have at Yukon College. I was able to take a look at some of the underground programming they are offering on that and some of the other trades aspects that they are offering in the downtown mine training centre in Juneau. They also utilize an old abandoned underground mine for training just on the outskirts of Juneau.

They are delivering some tremendous things and have a pathways to mining program they offer to high school students, which is particularly exciting. They have been very generous in offering to share curriculum and share other aspects with us here in the Yukon. I mean, we have a tremendous relationship with Alaska, and the intergovernmental accord that the Premier and the Governor signed, and this memorandum of understanding will, I'm sure, be the first of many when we deal with our neighbours to the west.

One of the aspects of the centre for northern innovation and mining is the ability to deliver trades and technology programs at the mine sites, combining the use of the college's newly acquired mining simulators that I mentioned, and its skill development instruction using a proposed mobile trades school in authentic industrial environments. What the program is intent on offering is innovative apprenticeship programming, premised on a successful apprenticeship model that's used in Ontario. It incorporates all in-school apprenticeship training, coupled with co-op opportunities over a two-year period. The overarching goal is to increase the number of registered industrial apprentices and red seal journey-level tradespeople in the Yukon, providing opportunities for mines to use college resources — of course, as I mentioned, the simulators. But we want to provide the mine sites the opportunity to use those simulators to enhance their professional development opportunities and provide a venue for graduate students to engage in research related to mining in the north.

Finally, Madam Chair, what we're looking forward to is that this will provide the territory with approximately 558 trades, mining and apprenticeship program graduates plus up to 710 completing shorter non-credit courses and programs — you know, a very exciting opportunity for us here in the north. My understanding is this would be one of, if not the only, facility west of Manitoba that would offer such a comprehensive

training program. People who were involved with the project visited a number of mining schools from Abitibi in Quebec to Sudbury and I believe Timmons, and then again, Thompson, Manitoba and brought back a tremendous amount of knowledge. One thing that we're extremely impressed with is the amount of cooperation that we've enjoyed with similar institutions across the country. I know the college is leading the way in that type of activity and they should be commended for that.

I'll get into my actual budget speech when I get the opportunity to get up again, but I did want to touch on the centre for northern innovation in mining, just given that it's Geoscience Week here in the Yukon.

Mr. Tredger: Thank you and welcome to the officials from the department. I say welcome also to all the hard-working members of the department who sit behind the members opposite — figuratively speaking. There are a lot of dedicated people in the department — a lot of people who work very, very hard, and as the minister has just spoken to, they've come up with a lot of good ideas and are doing many great things.

I'd like to just start by saying that it's about the kids. Everything needs to keep that focus. We've seen a lot of good ideas come and be stored on a shelf, tried out for a year — maybe they have a champion and they'll try them out for five years. The hard thing to do is to take those ideas and those programs and grow them as our needs change and install within the department a sense of excitement, a sense of discovery and a real grounding in the kids.

Strategies are idle words unless they impact the kids. We need goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-specific. In the mining industry they take their ideas and ground truth them. We need to ground truth our ideas. We need to test them out.

I'll be asking some more specific questions later, but I want to just talk a little bit about a couple of things that I think are critical, the first of course being the children, the second being the student-teacher relationship. Again the ideas, the concepts, the new programs are only good insofar as they affect the teacher-student relationship. It allows that to grow and be productive because each student is unique, each teaching situation is unique — what worked for my brother obviously didn't work for me.

The second thing we need to make sure we have is the involvement of the community and the parents, the teachers and the citizens of that community, working with the school, involved in the school — and not as an afterthought, not as a special occasion, but integral to the running of the school — from the ground up. Schools need to value communities and communities need to value schools. You can't have one without the other and be effective.

Sometimes we come up with a lot of ideas and we try to do everything. We get scattered and we get spread about. We end up doing a lot of talking and not too much action. In the words of someone, they said our programs become a mile wide and an inch deep. We need deep programs, programs that go to the heart of the matter and work for our kids.

A little of everything accomplishes nothing and I think the final thing we have to keep in mind is that we're not succeeding with many of our students. We're letting them down and we're letting our communities down. People are trying hard and people are working hard, but we're running in place if not falling behind.

It has been 40 years since Elijah Smith and the Yukon First Nations brought forth *Together Today for our Children Tomorrow*. It is instructive for educators, for officials involved in education and especially the minister to go back to this valuable document. It states — and this was written 40 years ago — that most of the changes in the territorial education system have not made things better for the Indian student. We can say that today, with one slight change. Most of the changes in the territorial education system have not made things better for First Nation students.

Still today only 40 percent of First Nation students graduate from high school. There is still an unacceptable rate of First Nation dropouts and truancy in rural Yukon. Rural Yukon schools have a significant gap in achievement to urban schools, or the schools in Whitehorse. Some of my questions then will be around what we are doing for First Nation education. What are we doing for rural education? How are we ensuring that one of our children who grows up in a rural school has the same access to education that an urban student does?

I congratulate the minister for signing the recent MOU and the tripartite agreement with the First Nations. It is exciting, and it is an opportunity. Until it is “ground-truthed” and until it is followed up on, it's just that. Let us hope that this memorandum of understanding achieves more than the reports, studies, memorandums of agreement and discussions that have been carried out over the last 40 years. Let us hope that now we can involve First Nation governments, rural communities and school councils in the real business of educating our children.

So I guess my first question for the minister is this: What instructions has he given to principals and superintendents regarding meetings with respect to First Nation governments, especially regarding the school growth plans through development of local curriculum and looking for ways for local involvement in our rural schools?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Just begging the member's indulgence — I know in my opening comments I didn't get a chance to actually read the supplementary budget speech. It won't take me very long, I can assure everyone, and then I can get into the specifics of the comments and the questions that were raised by the Member for Mayo-Tatchun.

I'm pleased to rise in the House today to speak to the Department of Education *Supplementary Estimates No. 1* budget for 2012-13. This supplementary budget reflects an increase of \$703,000 in operation and maintenance spending, including a revote of \$155,000 and a capital expenditure increase of \$3,866,000, which includes a revote of \$1,707,000.

The Department of Education continues to deliver accessible and quality education to Yukon learners of all ages. Healthy bodies foster healthy minds and the department continually strives to keep those in its care safe. We continue to build on the good work that has been done during this government's last

three mandates, including this one. The capital request of \$3,866,000 includes \$1,275,000 to purchase 15 new vehicles. This summer, during an assessment of its activity buses, the department determined a total of 15 activity buses should be removed from the fleet due to newfound concerns about their structural strength. This concern was identified before it became a real problem and department officials took action to ensure adequate funding was available and proceeded with the tendering for the replacement of these vehicles.

Madam Chair, \$1,523,000 has been allocated to the F.H. Collins reconstruction project, which includes a revote of \$673,000 to complete the design development phase and \$850,000 in new funds to reflect better project estimates and the defined construction schedule.

Various school capital projects started last fiscal year but span a school year, and are being funded with a revote of \$427,000. An additional revote of \$641,000 is being requested to complete a number of capital maintenance repair projects, including the Del Van Gorder boiler upgrade and fire alarm replacement.

On the operation and maintenance side, this supplementary budget reflects a total of \$703,000 included in the Public Schools branch: \$449,000 to cover legal fees, salaries and operating costs relating to the CSFY lawsuit; a revote of \$70,000 for the CHAOS program to support the development of a Yukon First Nation technology course; a total revote of \$60,000 for projects approved under the northern strategy trust program; \$45,000 for the Revitalizing Culture Through Story and Technology project which provides teachers the opportunity to use modern technology to capture the stories, voices and images of elders. In turn, this allows learners to experience language learning in an authentic and meaningful way while preserving Yukon First Nations language and culture.

Madam Chair, \$15,000 is for the land-based experiential education project. It's a revote that was requested to reflect the cash flow required to complete the multi-year transfer agreement with Vuntut Gwitchin. The Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation recently released, as I mentioned earlier, curriculum and resource materials that were developed for the Old Crow experiential project. These materials are now being provided in template form so other Yukon schools and schools across Canada can adapt them for their own First Nations languages and culture. At the launch at the Beringia Centre I spoke about earlier, there were representatives in attendance at that event from the Province of Alberta as well.

Under this supplementary budget, the Department of Education is asking for an overall decrease of \$35,000 under O&M for Advanced Education. \$40,000 is being requested to support the labour market framework for Yukon. These funds are 100 percent recoverable from the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, or CanNor, and a \$25,000 revote to support community training fund agreements signed late in the fiscal year is being requested. Also included under Advanced Education is a one-time transfer from the community training fund to Public Schools branch in support of the Yukon Literacy Coalition in the amount of \$100,000.

With the government's investment in education, we look forward to Yukoners continuing 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.

Madam Chair, I should have mentioned in my opening comments, when I gave the percentages of O&M expenditures by program outlined for education support services, public schools, advanced education and Yukon College, that the total 2011-12 actuals for the Department of Education on the O&M side were \$137,096,387. So that's something that I failed to mention in my opening remarks that I just wanted to clarify.

Now, just with respect to the member's question — I know he referred to the *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* initiative that dates back to 1973, but a number of other initiatives have taken place since: the *Education Act Review, 2003-04*; the *Education Reform Final Report* was released in 2008; *One Vision, Multiple Pathways: Secondary School Programming Process Final Report, 2009*; *Helping Students Succeed*, First Nations Education Advisory Committee in that 2008 year; the Labour Market Framework Symposium and of course the report of the Auditor General in 2009. My predecessor and the Department of Education undertook to combine all those initiatives, and they came up with the *Department of Education Strategic Plan 2011-2016: Our Commitment to New Horizons*.

A substantial number of reports have been generated. I know the member opposite referenced those and he's right — the time for action is now. We don't need to rely on reports; we need to put those reports and all of the good hard work of department staff and our stakeholder groups, our school councils, teachers, parents, students, the entire school community that the member opposite spoke about. I agree with him — the entire community needs to be partners in the education of our children. I think I've said it before, either in this House or perhaps at a Yukon Teachers Association event, that certainly my parents assisted me and were partners in helping me through public school and into my post-secondary time.

I am sure most individuals in this House and most individuals in the community who are successful can point to that as well: a teacher who helped them; a parent; a classmate; any number of occasions where students were assisted by those who are role models throughout their public school life. I could name probably 90 percent of my teachers in the public school system here in the Yukon, going back to my days in kindergarten. What influence they had. I got to see some of them at the retired teachers' breakfast that I attended last week — not all, but some of them attended that event and it's great to catch up with them. Some remember me; some not so much, but that's okay; I remember all of them and everything they were able to help me out with and do to formulate my life. I know that our professional educators do a fantastic job, and they should be commended for the work they do and the time they put into helping shape young lives and build solid citizens.

When it comes to the First Nation education aspects, I'm just going to touch on a couple of things. One is the First Nations Education Commission. My understanding is that com-

mission used to be made up of leaders. So it would be made up of chiefs and perhaps territorial politicians.

One of the exciting things that I was able to talk to leadership about is that it has moved down to a working group level, so we can actually put some things into an action plan for First Nation education and come forward to the decision-makers with the recommendations and move along with that.

The Department of Education's current annual funding for CYFN education initiatives is \$170,000. For 2012-13, CYFN has approval to use for its education initiatives \$40,000 that wasn't spent by the Yukon Native Language Centre. So through the Department of Education, our First Nations Programs and Partnerships unit administers this transfer payment agreement with Council of Yukon First Nations, and we're actively engaged on a multi-year funding for the operation of the First Nations Education Commission. I know I spoke to a number of chiefs on my way out of the leadership meeting last week — and it was my experience when I was working for NGOs that three-year funding commitments or multi-year funding commitments are something that allows organizations to not be slaves to filling out funding applications. They can make some real progress in that amount of time and I'm hopeful that we can have it dealt with in a timely manner and get moving on developing that action plan coming out of the MOU.

I'm going to speak briefly just about some of the partnership projects that we have going on with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation in Dawson City. A partnership with THFN is a priority for the Department of Education. The model that's being developed could well be a template that's used by other rural First Nation communities. The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in education director and staff are working with the superintendent, the director of our FNPP, and the school principal on several projects including dual trades exploration. With that, there's a partnership with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Yukon College, and Robert Service School to explore the feasibility of a dual trades welding course either through shop upgrades or the purchase of trades trailers that I mentioned earlier during my remarks on the centre for northern innovation in mining. If we're unable to proceed, the school is willing to offer a carpentry dual trades program in January 2014.

There are a few issues around the facility and the location of the facility that are proving to be a bit of a hurdle right now with the welding program, but we're hopeful that we can move on quickly.

One of the other things we're working with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in on is camp accreditation — so school staff, First Nation programs and partnerships, and curriculum branch are working with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in staff to create a course and assessment framework for Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in camp courses, such as "First Hunt", "First Fish", and "Plant Use". Staff work through each course as it comes up and, by the 2013-14 school year, students will be able to gain credit for this work. Other discussions about embedding Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in culture in school are also ongoing.

When it comes to alternative programming, Robert Service School is working on identifying issues facing students from

Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and non-Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in families having attendance and success problems. These findings will be discussed with the staff, council and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. Short- and long-term solutions will be identified and implemented as appropriate — similar to the Individual Learning Centre model. Since this note was drafted, I believe some resources have been identified within the school to assign to the Individual Learning Centre program that Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in is interested in pursuing. I did get the opportunity to relay that information to the Chief of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in at the leadership meeting.

Finally TH has developed some resources on the residential school experience. The FNPP unit will discuss how this might be part of a course that we're looking to develop when it comes to residential schools. I know there was a question earlier in this session from, I believe, the Member for Mayo-Tatchun with respect to the residential school curriculum development, and we're certainly committed to developing that. As I mentioned at the time, Nunavut and Northwest Territories were out of the gate rather quickly on developing that. Rather than jump on board, we wanted to monitor their progress and success and come up with something that's specific to the Yukon. Since that question was asked in the House, I understand officials attended some meetings of the Western and Northern Canadian Protocol, which the Yukon is chairing — it's the curriculum development protocol — and had some great things to report from the N.W.T. and Nunavut experience.

So making sure we have a great program that's specific to the Yukon and specific to the experience that Yukoners had in residential school and that we can teach to all Yukon students is something that's important. I think the program that's being offered in the N.W.T. and Nunavut is grade 9 or grade 10. It's at that high school level. So looking forward to hearing about their success with their program and implementing one here in the Yukon as soon as the 2013-14 school year.

As Minister of Education I'm very fortunate to have two critics from across the floor, the Member for Klondike and the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, with substantial experience in rural education. I know the Member for Klondike has spent, I believe, 15 years teaching in rural Yukon and the Member for Mayo-Tatchun 15 years plus a couple maybe; I'm not sure. I know he has done a significant amount of educating in rural Yukon. So as I mentioned in the House this spring, I think it's important that I find a meaningful way to engage those two particular members, based on their expertise as rural educators, when we develop the rural action plan that's going to be coming forward, and I look forward to other action plans when it comes to closing the gap and addressing the needs of all Yukon learners, but specifically closing the gap that exists between students who attend Whitehorse schools and students who attend community schools and of course First Nation and non-First Nation students.

Mr. Tredger: Thank you for that, Mr. Minister. I just have two comments: one is that I would hope that the initiatives that are being done with TH might be spread to the other schools. Sometimes we have pilot projects that go on as pilot

projects for a long time and then the rest of the territory doesn't benefit from them. I'm hoping that is not the case this way.

I was just thinking of all the activities that you had mentioned and I realize everybody is pedaling very hard; I hope they're not on a stationary bike.

I do have a question about school councils. This fall we had a number of absences in school councils — people who didn't run and a number of vacancies.

I realize that the department is moving to fill them now and working with local school councils. Has an evaluation or any questioning been done as to why the number of vacancies? Is there a need to revamp the way school councils are run? Is there a need to involve them more or less? What lessons have we learned from this fall non-election so that we don't repeat them in the future?

Hon. Mr. Kent: In response to the member opposite's first question — of course, when it comes to those initiatives and programs I identified for Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, the department is undertaking that, in partnership with that First Nation. The idea is to have those programs adapted and shared with other First Nations, similar to what's been undertaken by the experiential program that the Vuntut Gwitchin developed.

When it comes to school councils, the member is right — there were a number of councils that had very few members assigned to them. One council, in fact, had no members put their name forward for election — the Grey Mountain Primary School — and we had to hold another by-election in Mayo for the Del Van Gorder School Council.

I'm pleased to say that the councils are at or near full. In fact, we had dozens of individuals come to put their names forward the day after the elections were held. So I think what we have to do is really take a look at the election process and the timing of the election. We have to work with the current school councils. We have a couple of workshops coming up on December 1 and December 8, when we can hopefully address some of the concerns that school council members have or what they have heard from their individual communities as to why at the initial election phase the turnout is not so great, but then, as I mentioned, the next day dozens of people came forward and put their names forward. I think there were only maybe three or four councils that actually had elections, where there was a contested election. So I think that's what we really need to do as far as an evaluation goes — look at the election process and the timing of the election and seek some input and advice from the school councils.

Mr. Tredger: Thank you for that. The First Nation language seems to be in a bit of a crisis. We have elders and people who know the language who are passing away. I know there is one very successful pilot project that Champagne and Aishihik First Nations has been running for three or four years now.

Are we looking at similar ones starting up? This is another pilot project that has proven successful. It has had a chance to go through some growing phases. Will other First Nations have similar opportunities? Is there any evaluation of the First Nation language program done in conjunction with the local First Nations or CYFN to find out how we can make our program-

ming more effective so that First Nation people can be assured that their language is being taught in our schools and that it is being effectively taught?

Hon. Mr. Kent: With respect to the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Southern Tutchone bicultural program: that was a bilingual and bicultural program intended to increase the level of Southern Tutchone content and perspectives in the St. Elias Community School in Haines Junction for the kindergarten to grade 2 levels. As a pilot project, it's going to be reviewed and evaluated. I think we need to take a look at how we're delivering that First Nation language programming.

Just going back to my time at the leadership meeting, there was a very well-respected elder — I believe she's a citizen of the Na Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation — who spoke to me about some of the issues and concerns that we're talking about here today with respect to how we're teaching children the First Nation languages. What is happening with the preservation of those languages is getting to be problematic. I think one of the things that we talked briefly about at CYFN — and I'm hoping, whether it's addressed at the First Nations Education Commission level as part of the action plan or how it's addressed — we need to find a way to get First Nation languages into an early learning setting — the prekindergarten setting. Perhaps the member will have some questions for me later on during this debate about the early learning, the partnership and the work that I'm doing in conjunction with the Minister of Health and Social Services.

I'm excited about those aspects and I think maybe there's an opportunity there to introduce some First Nation language training at that early learning side of things. My niece is three years old and my nephew is one. My niece is fully bilingual in French and English at three years old. Her mother is an educator and has had the opportunity to spend an awful lot of time at home with her and help her make that seamless transition between French and English. I think there are some real opportunities to help some of those younger children at the early learning level adapt to some other language and spend some more time with elders and people who are fluent in First Nation languages.

Mr. Tredger: Again, it's a pilot project. Let's hope it moves beyond being a pilot project.

The minister mentioned residential school curriculum and I have a couple of questions around that. Will the Council of Yukon First Nations be involved in the development of that curriculum? There has been talk of curriculum on land claims in Yukon history.

Have any of those been brought to fruition? Are they currently being taught? Has there been any training of teachers in the programs? That kind of local content equals local involvement. We talk about absentee students and absentee school council people. It's local content and local involvement that lead to people being there, so just a curriculum on land claims, Yukon history, residential schools and the training of teachers around that.

Hon. Mr. Kent: When it comes to the residential schools curriculum, as I mentioned previously the department for several years has been developing resources on residential

schools and some of these resources are already in use in Yukon schools. I don't have the specifics with me, but I'd be happy to get back to the member opposite with some of the specifics of those resources that are being used. Of course, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in is one of the First Nations that is developing some of the local curriculum around that. One of the things that we're committed to is a 20-percent local curriculum. I know we're not there in all cases, but that's certainly the goal.

The department will also soon be hiring an additional First Nations curriculum consultant who will be working on the residential schools curriculum and other First Nation curriculum initiatives. We recognize that it is absolutely necessary to tailor the curriculum to reflect Yukon learning outcomes and to include locally developed materials. As I mentioned before, we will learn from the rollout of the curriculum in Northwest Territories and Nunavut and use their template to develop Yukon-specific curriculum and other resource materials.

When it comes to involving the Council of Yukon First Nations and other First Nations, I think the best way to accomplish that is through the First Nations Education Commission and have that move into our First Nations action plan, which again is part of that Canada-Yukon First Nations MOU that we signed a couple of weeks ago. Absolutely I think that having locals involved in the content — we referenced the great work of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and the work of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and moving toward that 20-percent local curriculum goal.

Mr. Tredger: I guess the minister didn't mention it, but the important part is to train and work with teachers so that it becomes part of the curriculum and that it is an integral part and not just an option. I see them saying yes, it's there — okay, great.

YNTEP was evaluated a year ago, and this is the second year there has been no intake. Originally it was an agreement between Council of Yukon First Nations, Yukon government and Yukon College and was developed to increase First Nation content in our schools and the number of First Nation teachers, with a particular hope that many of them would end up in rural communities. I understand it's undergoing a review, so if the minister could give us an update on that and if he would hit on a couple of highlights: have they looked at the hiring of First Nation personnel — where that is going? What are they doing to ensure First Nation access and support once they are in the program? The previous program had very successful cohorts who supported one another. The camaraderie that developed and the support that came out of that followed them into their teaching careers and made some very, very successful teachers. It worked well that way.

What is the minister doing to ensure that a number of First Nation students remain involved in that? Originally it was 100 percent First Nations, then it became 50 percent First Nations. I'm wondering where we're going from there. I remind him that the program was a TEP program — that's a teacher education program. It was modelled on programs across Canada and it involved more than one or two courses in First Nation curriculum, First Nation history or First Nation culture, but it was integral to the program and it became a part of that. It wasn't

something that was taught beside it; it was incorporated right into all of the teachings.

Have there been discussions with First Nation leadership? What now? Where are we going from here? What is being done and are there any plans for next year? Can prospective students sign up to begin in September or should we go to another course?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Just to follow up on part of the previous question I missed: Yes, of course, they will be locally trained teachers and those opportunities will exist when it comes to the curriculum development for residential schools.

Moving on to this last question the member opposite raised, just to correct the member: This is actually the first year the intake has been suspended. I know it was announced in the spring so it seems like two years, but this is actually the first year that intake has been suspended and we don't anticipate it being suspended beyond this year. The Department of Education has committed to fully fund YNTEP through 2012-13 while the review process takes place. What is happening right now is that is supporting 26 second-, third- and fourth-year students currently enrolled. As I mentioned, year 1 intake has been suspended pending the new implementation.

Based on the recommendations from an external review of the Yukon native teacher education program, the college created a review action committee, or RAC, to determine the purpose, goal and vision for a teacher education program here in the Yukon.

After the RAC makes its recommendations, the implementation committee will begin the task of mapping the curriculum of the revised program. The program has been very successful in getting First Nation teachers into Yukon classrooms. In 2012, 42 members of Yukon's teaching staff were First Nation, as compared with one in 1989 when this program was introduced. So it has been a tremendous success in growing the number of First Nation teachers in the territory. I've had the pleasure of meeting a number of First Nation YNTEP grads in my travels throughout the Yukon over the past year as Minister of Education.

The cost of that external review the college conducted was approximately \$70,000. The review found many successes associated with YNTEP, as well as a few areas of concern, so the college chose to suspend the first year intake of the program while the review was underway. Of course, they're working very closely with First Nations and the Council of Yukon First Nations in conducting this review, as well as staff of the Department of Education. As soon as that work is done, I'd be happy to report back to the House on the progress, and I anticipate that as soon as registrations begin for the 2013-14 school year, we'll be able to do the intake for the year 1 cohort at that point.

But, again, this is a college-led initiative, and I look forward to hearing back from them on their progress and their plan shortly.

Mr. Tredger: I would hope that will form part of the memorandum or be considered in the minister's meetings with CYFN and leadership around the original purpose of YNTEP and whether the college will meet those mandates.

A number of years ago, the Department of Education — I believe it was under the last minister — developed a hiring protocol. One of the goals was to give priority to hiring of First Nation teachers. At the time, it was recognized that although there are now 40-some teachers of First Nation ancestry in our schools, that's still less than 10 percent of the teaching population. Comparatively, we have between 20 and 30 percent of First Nation people in the territory. In the hiring protocol, has that been evaluated?

Has it been successful in increasing the number of First Nations in our teaching situations and are there any thoughts to changing it to make it more effective?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I guess just to reflect on the member opposite's initial remarks when we started debate here this afternoon — we always have to put the children first and we want to make sure that our children are taught by qualified educators. I'm pleased with the progress that has been made as far as ensuring that as of 2012, we do have 42 First Nations teachers in the classroom. I know the member opposite said that that is less than 10 percent of our teaching complement and that's correct, but I think where the focus is and where the college has done some great things is by reviewing YNTEP and making sure that we're producing teachers, both First Nation and the non-First Nation complement from that program, who have an opportunity to succeed in our schools and become the educators I remember as a public school student growing up here and the tremendous success that they have.

So again, while we work hard to ensure that the training opportunities are there and that the First Nation teachers have the training and the expertise and are qualified to be teachers in our schools, as the member opposite mentioned, we always have to think of our children first and make sure that they're getting the quality education that they deserve as students in our public school system.

Mr. Tredger: Thank you for that, Mr. Minister. It's critical that we do think of our students first and that's why it's important that YNTEP continue to produce quality teachers, whether they're First Nation or not, but also to include First Nation teachers.

The minister mentioned earlier the importance of early childhood education and the educational development index, which indicated that over 30 percent of students entering kindergarten were at risk. As an educator and as the minister knows, when somebody who is behind comes into a system, that gap widens and it becomes increasingly more difficult to narrow the gap.

So my question for him today is about what is happening to support our kindergarten teachers. It's important at that age we are able to provide the support to the teachers so they are able to subsequently support the students. We could look at smaller class sizes for kindergarten. We could look at educational assistants for every kindergarten class. We could look at support in other ways. I know a number of rural schools were hoping to get all-day kindergarten for four- and five-year-olds to help give them a boost, rather than having half the year. Head Start has been tried in some schools and some areas. Has that been effective? Has it been evaluated? It's important that a

number of projects around this area — and especially, it's important that we talk to our kindergarten teachers, who are the front-line workers and who are working daily with the students and struggling with pretty difficult situations sometimes to be able to teach effectively.

If a child is school-ready, then they end up being job-ready, and if they're job-ready, then they become productive citizens. So there is the early childhood component, but today I'm particularly asking about what happens in kindergarten and what support we're giving our kindergarten teachers and the schools with young students.

Hon. Mr. Kent: There are three issues I would like to address here: obviously, the early intervention initiatives; maybe I'll touch a little bit on the class composition, and the Learning Together program that the member opposite talked about during his question. When it comes to early intervention initiatives, Yukon educators are working to identify children for early intervention using a number of strategies, which include establishing school-based screening and data collection for kindergarten and grade 1; information sharing, of course, with the Child Development Centre, which is operated by the Department of Health and Social Services; ongoing training for teachers — and this, I think speaks to one of the member's questions — in the areas of formative assessment and differentiated literacy instruction.

All Whitehorse schools and four rural schools have full-day kindergarten, and the remaining nine rural schools have two full years of half-day kindergarten for four year olds and five year olds. The Department of Education staff meets regularly with Health and Social Services early years personnel to identify and work on areas of common concern. In fact, the Department of Education has seconded an official to the Department of Health and Social Services to take a look at some planning and ways we can gain success in those early learning initiatives. We expect to hear back from them, I would say, within a matter of months leading up to possibly a year, but looking forward to the results of that work that is taking place right now. We want to make sure that we have a strong plan in place that addresses the learning needs of those young children who haven't entered the school system yet.

When it comes to class composition — and I think I mentioned this in the figures I outlined at the start for the 2011-12 school year. There were 701 students on IEPs. These students' needs are met by a variety of resources and strategies which include, but aren't limited to, the education assistants and remedial tutors.

We have increased the number of paraprofessionals to 174, an increase of 15 from last year. Each school receives at least one full-time remedial tutor. In shared resource programs, there are 16 full-time equivalent EAs. For one-on-one education assistants, there are 70 full-time equivalents assigned. For shared education assistants, there are 50 full-time equivalents. On top of that, there are speech and language pathologists, counsellors, educational psychologists, learning assistant teachers, Reading Recovery teachers, occupational and physical therapists and those who are involved with assistive technology.

When it comes to the class composition, we're working very diligently to address those concerns. I know there are concerns that are raised by the teachers and there are concerns that are raised by parents. After that first month of evaluation of the situation here in the Yukon, there has been that increase of 15 paraprofessionals over last year's numbers.

The final thing I wanted to touch upon was the Learning Together program that is offered at Selkirk Street School here in Whitehorse. I've spoken about this program in the past in the House, but just to refresh members' memories on it: It's where prekindergarten children aged three to five can access a high-quality learning environment that will help them benefit from social interactions while adults who accompany them learn new ways to support their learning.

One of the things that I've been in discussion with department officials about is expanding that program beyond Selkirk Street Elementary School for next year. The target student population and parent population that we want are more of the at-risk students. As I mentioned, many parents in the territory who attend the Selkirk program are already engaged in their child's education and are just looking for ways to improve. I think where we can make some real progress on this is to expand this program outside of Whitehorse and take a look at how it would work in communities such as Ross River, Pelly Crossing or Watson Lake. We're not sure where that expansion is going to occur yet for the 2013-14 school year, but it's something I'm certainly committed to. It's something that is in my mandate letter that the Premier gave me based on the commitments we made during last year's election.

I'm looking forward to hearing back from the department on where we can implement that program where it will make a real difference in students' lives and assist their parents in helping them through their public school journey. One of the first things that the new deputy minister and I talked about once she came on is that, with just slightly over 5,000 students in our public school system, we have to encourage all students who enter our public school system to think of grade 12 as the minimum. It's something that has really stuck with me over the past couple of months, and I think that there are opportunities through these early learning initiatives and initiatives like the Learning Together program where we can set students on that path to success.

As political promises go, many political promises have an expiry date of four or five years, but this is going to be one of those promises where we as legislators and, of course, I as the minister, and department officials have to look at that long term and really set those preschool students up right now for success and ensure that when they're going through school and when they're approached by companies like Victoria Gold, Northwestel or any number of companies that operate here in the Yukon, that they see the opportunities that will exist when they start with the goal that grade 12 is a starting point and not the end point.

I'm excited about setting the foundation for their success and continuing to work with the students who are currently in the public school system to get them to a point where they feel that grade 12 is the starting point for them as well.

Mr. Tredger: I know there are a lot of things being done around that and I just go back to one of my earlier comments. The key is quality time between the teacher and the student. Anything that we can do to make that better and make that work will pay off. I'm glad to hear that there will be some testing done so that the students aren't falling through the cracks because that relates directly to my next question — literacy training.

We hear from industry, we hear from a lot of people that students are struggling with literacy. They are not able to do science courses; they're not able to get into the careers that they want because they're being held back by literacy. Some of us are able to overcome that; others struggle throughout their whole life with that. What is being done to train teachers in identifying and working with students who have literacy struggles, especially in the later grades? How are teachers being supported as they try to modify courses in the later grades so that they can reach the students who are struggling with literacy?

As part of that, if I could get an update on Wilson Reading and Reading Recovery — I know there was no training happening this year. Will it be happening next year? Where are we going with that?

So that's a series of three or four questions around literacy, and I know the minister has talked before about literacy and all of us in this room recognize the importance of it, so just a little update on that, if you could, please.

Hon. Mr. Kent: When it comes to that student-teacher engagement aspect — I know the member opposite talked about that and one of the things that I think we need to look at is to address the way that teachers are pulled from the classroom to go to meetings that are organized by the department. Many of those meetings take place in Whitehorse. So for Whitehorse-based teachers, maybe it's an afternoon; perhaps it's a full day away from that student engagement. But for rural teachers often it's two days of travel plus the day of meetings and that type of thing. So I think we need to take advantage of technology and different ways to hold meetings — look at some new ways — so that we can maintain that connection time between students and teachers, particularly in the rural schools, as I mentioned.

When it comes to literacy, it's something we are all aware of — the challenges and the problems that exist. The Government of Yukon is committed to supporting literacy as a priority, because literacy is a fundamental building block for learning, as the member opposite knows from his time as an educator.

The department is looking at a new literacy strategy, and it's going to set the strategic direction for early childhood, kindergarten to grade 12, or the public school, as well as adults. In December of this year coming up, the department is hosting the New Horizons Education Summit, which will have a focus on literacy with the following objectives: to increase awareness among stakeholders of literacy as a priority of this government; creation of a common understanding of literacy as lifelong learning; and stakeholder agreement to work together to develop a new literacy strategy.

So that new strategy will reflect the many changes in the field of literacy since the creation of the 2001 Yukon literacy strategy for adults. So, again, that last strategy goes back over 10 years, and that strategy is the driving force behind the government's efforts to prepare people in the Yukon for current and future training and employment opportunities. The development of a new strategy will be led by Advanced Education, Public Schools and, of course, Health and Social Services, as it is that department's responsibility for the prekindergarten literacy initiatives. With respect to that, I should say that the Yukon Imagination Library, which provides a free book per month to children from birth to five years old — there has been a commitment by the Minister of Health and Social Services to support that program.

I know it has tremendous uptake here in the Yukon — so much uptake, I believe, that at last year's Geoscience Forum, they raised — I don't know how many thousands of dollars for that initiative. It's something that's done by one of the local Rotary Clubs and is headed up by a steering committee and has been tremendously successful. I believe that at last night's Geoscience banquet, that was the charity of choice again for raising dollars and, again, a commitment by the Government of Yukon's Department of Health and Social Services to, I believe, match fundraising, up to \$50,000, for that program. It's something that has been very successful.

With respect to Wilson Reading and Reading Recovery, teachers use differentiated learning strategies to help students, and I believe they are receiving training, but I will get back to the member opposite if I'm not correct about that. I believe the training for Wilson Reading and Reading Recovery is ongoing this year, but if I'm wrong — I don't have notes in front of me that say one way or the other. But it's my recollection from the spring sitting of the Legislature that that training is ongoing. I may stand corrected, and I'll get back to the member opposite if I do need to correct myself on that.

Mr. Tredger: Fetal alcohol syndrome is a problem for a lot of our children in the schools, and it creates a number of stresses on the system — on their classmates, on themselves, of course, for learning, and on the teachers and those who are working with them. How many teachers have been trained to work specifically with fetal alcohol syndrome children? What resources are available to them? I know there is a hired position to work with fetal alcohol students or with teachers who are in that area. I'm wondering whether they have been able get out to the communities to deliver the teaching there and to work with the teachers — to the other schools? What specifically is being done to address the needs of these students?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I believe the Child Development Centre does have some officials who travel regularly to the communities to assist those children who are prekindergarten when it comes to the effects of any number of learning issues, or for young children we anticipate being on IEPs when they enter the public school system.

As I mentioned, there are approximately 174 education assistants and remedial tutors. This is as of October 31, 2012, which represents an increase of 15 from last year. There are those supports. I did mention a number of the other programs:

the speech and language pathologist, counsellors, education psychologists, LATs, reading recovery teachers, and occupational and physical therapists. For the 2011-12 school year, we had 701 students on IEPs. That number has increased to 733 students with individualized education plans as of October 31, 2012.

This represents any number of learning issues, from some students who don't require an awful lot of intervention to some who require a full-time EA plus other supports. So, when it comes to how many of those students have fetal alcohol syndrome or how many have autism, I don't have those numbers with me here, but if they are available, I would be happy to provide them to the member opposite. FASD has a number of different behaviours or issues; for each person affected, intervention must be tailored to the individual student and that's done through the individualized education plan.

I know we have a number of supports that are available here in the Yukon as we strive to ensure that we provide quality education to all students who come through our public school system and are moving on to post-secondary school. This was something the Minister of Health and Social Services mentioned when he was up earlier in the session for debate, but we did meet with an individual who talked about those early learning initiatives. I think there are some great opportunities to work on that and I'm looking forward to the work that is being conducted by Health and Social Services and Education when it comes to that.

Again, if the member opposite is looking for specific numbers for specific things, I don't have them with me. From what I understand, perhaps that data is not tracked that way through the department. If it is, we'll provide it. One of the important things is not to label kids, and that's not something that we're prepared to do. We want to make sure that we provide the best quality education for all students, no matter where they are and what their individual needs are.

Mr. Tredger: While it's important not to label students — and I agree with the minister — there is a need for a specific way to teach people who are suffering from fetal alcohol syndrome effects. They do need extra care. They do need a specific way of teaching. That's where it becomes critical that the people who are working with them have the training and are able to design their classrooms and their lessons around accommodating them. It has been shown that with proper work and proper support, these students can achieve quite a bit and it's important that we work to reaching their full potential.

I would like to move on to another area that has been a focus of this government for the last number of years — to focus on developing skills and skills training and readying people for the workforce. I know that there have been many things done and the minister has mentioned quite a few of them. I just had a couple of questions around that. Can the minister give us the figures for the number of students enrolled in skills-oriented courses last year as compared to this year? I know we've been putting a lot of effort into that and it would be important to know whether we are successful in talking students into going into various shop classes or skills classes. I'm not sure that we've had time to track it, but how many of them are coming

out of the other end in apprenticing or going into skills courses?

The other aspect is — and the minister mentioned it — dual credits being offered to high school students. For a while there were dual credits, but it was used primarily for people going and taking their first year university or college courses.

How many students are taking dual credits at high school and in the trades at the same time? Is that increasing? Has it been effective? What are the barriers to the students being involved in that and where are we going with that?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Thank you. With respect to the specific numbers that the member opposite is requesting, I don't have those with me here today. If we do have the opportunity to get them, I will certainly get them to members opposite when it comes to that. When it comes to the status of the Dawson dual trades action plan, I just want to expand a little further on what I mentioned earlier when I was talking about the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in partnership. The department is in the process now of setting timelines for establishing the viability of a successful dual credit welding program in Dawson, and this includes meeting the following needs: identifying partners and program funding; researching an appropriate venue — as I mentioned before — for the program; and ensuring that dual credits are supported at the public high school and college levels. So, once that program has been determined viable, the department will be able to proceed to the next stage of planning.

The pilot programs — these programs on dual credit or programs like this — are an added advantage for students in that Public School covers the cost of their tuition. At a savings of \$324 per student, it's a significant benefit to Yukon families so that they can get that credit for either of the trades or college transfer courses. One of the things that I did speak about on the centre for northern innovation in mining is the fact that we'll be looking at delivering high school dual credit mining occupation programs in Yukon communities and in Whitehorse, using Yukon College's dual credit delivery model and creating an avenue for Yukon high school students across the territory to complete high school while acquiring the credentials for a trade relevant to the mining industry. I also attended the Skills Canada Yukon AGM and something that employers are quite anxious to look at again are some of the co-op opportunities that exist for young students — perhaps even high school students.

I don't have in front of me here what type of numbers we're looking at for the centre for northern innovation in mining at the dual credit side of things. I'm sure if members give me — here we go; I have them. We're looking at up to 66 students who can take advantage of the pre-apprenticeship dual credit aspect. Again, the centre for northern innovation in mining is designed to be phased in over a number of years. Actually, 2012-13 is considered year zero of the offering, and then in the subsequent five years we'll be able to assist a number of individuals in getting that trades training.

The department assists Skills Canada Yukon. Yukon Women in Trades and Technology is another organization we support. At the Geoscience Forum today, prior to the president of Yukon College presenting on the centre for northern innovation in mining, a presentation was done by the mining industry

human resources organization. They took a look at our labour market needs and looked at identifying the population groups that we need to fill future labour market aspects here in the territory as well.

The Yukon government offers two programs to Yukon residents to become a certified journey person in 48 designated trades. The first one is the Yukon apprenticeship program that certifies apprentices who have received on-the-job experience and in-school technical training. The second is the Yukon trades qualification program, which offers access to certification for individuals who hold trade certification from other Canadian jurisdictions or other countries and individuals who have gained the required trade experience without a formal apprenticeship program.

During the 2011-12 school year, Yukon registered 571 apprentices. Of these, 113 self-declared as being of aboriginal ancestry, or 20 percent of that number, and 52 were female, or 11 percent. Again, if the member opposite is looking for some comparison numbers, I'll ask officials to take a look and get back.

Following up on a motion that was passed unanimously in this House, introduced by the Member for Klondike, I believe, in the spring sitting of this Legislative Assembly, I think we're starting to see some real momentum behind assisting those who want to pursue a career path in skilled trades. I know that this centre for northern innovation in mining and the industrial trades that are associated with it, as well as the other work that we're doing — especially at the public schools level through that and through other programs such as Skills Canada — will help us continue down the pathway that was the original intent of the motion that we passed in the last sitting.

I'm excited about the opportunities that are going to exist. We have some tremendously talented young Yukoners who are apprentices or taking trades and technology at the high school level. I think the Member for Klondike referenced a young gentleman — I believe he has already gone to Sao Paulo, Brazil, for an international skills competition. In a tribute earlier this session, we have the second-ever Yukoner going to the WorldSkills Competition in Leipzig, Germany in July of 2013. Both Yukoners who have been very successful have come from one employer, Quantum Machine Works, and Martin Loos — I'll mention by name — should be congratulated for really showing a strong commitment to developing fine young apprentices here in the Yukon.

I know for a fact the Yukon does very well at national skills competitions and we're looking forward to the territorial skills competition coming up in the spring of 2013, which of course will be a qualifier and lead into the national skills competition that will be held in June in Vancouver. We're excited about working with the trades employers and the schools and the apprentices to get them excited about going and also look forward to having a strong presence of Department of Education officials in attendance. I had the opportunity to attend in Edmonton last year with the previous deputy minister and a delegation from Yukon College, and I think we were all very impressed with how the competition was run and how well Yukon residents did at that event.

I guess one of the other things, just quickly before I turn it back over to the member opposite for another question, is to mention to members in the House that the department has hired a skills curriculum consultant, a former teacher from F.H. Collins who is a member of Skills Canada Yukon and is also on the national technical committee, I believe, so very well-qualified and I know he's very enthusiastic. He was at the Skills Canada Yukon AGM I attended. I know I'm looking forward to the work that he's going to do. I think he has visited a number of Yukon communities already, including the Robert Service School in Dawson City. I'm looking forward to him continuing his good work on expanding those skilled trades and tech opportunities to as many Yukon students as would like to pursue that aspect of their career.

Mr. Tredger: Just one more question on skills training. We've neglected the shops and the facilities in our schools for a number of years. Many of the courses, especially in rural Yukon, have been ad hoc teaching off the side of the desk. It left the facilities underused, understaffed and underfunded. Many of them have old tools or a lack of tools.

They haven't been maintained; they need sharpening; they need upgrading. I guess I'm hoping for — I was looking for it in the supplementary budget but I didn't see it — an increase in funding for our facilities both urban and rural.

I know a number of years ago there was a workers' compensation report done on the various schools. It was quite a concern to me when I read it. Will there be another report done to assess the safety of our shops?

I realize that it is expensive to run shops and often schools have to make a choice in terms of their funding and sometimes they'll go with courses that aren't as expensive, but I think it's important that a directive come from the minister that there is extra money or there is funding and then insist that it be used for the facilities. I guess I'm concerned about funding, maintenance of the shop, training of the teachers, the legal liability and proper reporting of safety. Safety — is there a plan for maintenance and upgrading of facilities and equipment? Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Kent: With respect to the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, there is a young worker coordinator that has been engaged with our skills curriculum coordinator in doing those assessments of the shops for safety concerns and looking at the quality of the equipment that's in there. We certainly want to make sure that we have equipment that's safe to operate by our students, that the teachers are qualified and trained to assist and have safety plans in place. So we're very happy about this partnership with the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, and as part of that there will be a revolving plan to replace the equipment that needs to be replaced.

I have had the opportunity to visit most shops in the Yukon — I think almost all of them. I've visited almost every school, save perhaps a couple. But I have been in many of the shops and I agree with the member opposite that some of the equipment needs to be replaced. We'll wait for the results of this assessment that's being done cooperatively with WCB and the

Department of Education and look to identify resources at that point that will replace that equipment.

Mr. Tredger: Thank you for that answer. Experiential or land-based education has been recognized to be very important and it's critical. I know we have a number of individual ones going on and the minister has mentioned them so we don't need to go into that. I'm wondering what types of system support there are for teachers who want to take their children on a field trip or to involve them in the community. Have we identified barriers to expeditions? What training has been given to staff to facilitate expeditions? What kind of cultural training has been given to them before they get out on to the land? How are programs being evaluated? As I say, what are the barriers to delivery of the programs? What kind of training regarding risk assessment and management of risk has been given to the teachers in the local schools and what kind of support is there for doing that?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Perhaps the one thing that I would like to speak to with respect to that question is that the department has two experiential learning consultants. They are trained in first aid and have all the proper risk-assessment tools. One of the gentlemen involved is actually a long-time First Nation Yukoner. I've had the opportunity to speak to him on a number of occasions. I think he actually presented at the leadership meeting but I didn't have the opportunity to stick around for his presentation, unfortunately. Those systems are in place to ensure that, when it comes to experiential learning and the adults who are accompanying the students, especially with respect to these two experiential consultants, they're able to make sure the students are safe and able to participate in a safe way during these field trips.

The gentleman I mentioned earlier, as well as his partner who is the other experiential learning consultant, actually spoke at the Old Crow experiential learning forum about the opportunities. He also attended the camp when it was offered last year.

We have some great support systems in the department to make sure our children are safe when they're out on those field trips that involve experiential learning opportunities.

Chair: Before we continue, a break has been requested. Do the members wish to take a 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 resume general debate on Vote 3, Department of Education.

Mr. Tredger: The Individual Learning Centre has been a very successful program. They serve over 100 kids and do it I would imagine very economically. I was pleased to hear that the department is going to try pilots in other areas.

A couple of questions that I do have for the minister regarding that is what lessons have we learned from the Individual Learning Centre? What are their keys to success? What are we going to replicate in the pilot schools in other schools?

What's the kernel of what's happening there? How are the pilots going to be evaluated?

I guess you could call them a principal, but is the chief administrative officer of the ILC going to be involved in that? Just another little aside on the ILC: I think this is a wonderful opportunity to put a counsellor in there. Many of the students at the ILC could benefit from some counselling, not only personal counselling, but career counselling. I know that the staff there does an admirable job of doing all of that, but it's an opportunity. There are 100-plus high-risk children at that school. The fact that there isn't a counsellor leaves a gap in the services. If the minister could answer those questions, I'm done. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Kent: I'd like to take the opportunity to thank a former member of this Legislative Assembly who passed away — the Hon. John Edzerza, former Minister of Education — for his work in getting the ILC off the ground here in Whitehorse. I know that staff and students dedicated their graduation ceremony at last spring's ILC grad to John and there were two members of his family — two of his children — who attended and assisted in handing out the diplomas.

Again, I think all members in the House would recognize that the ILC is a tremendous facility that offers individual and flexible learning opportunities and we have expanded it to Old Crow and Dawson City. I believe that when I was in Old Crow in early September there were approximately eight — or perhaps that's the figure that's there now — students taking advantage of that program there. For the students that normally — of course, Old Crow students — come to Whitehorse for grades 10, 11 and 12, a number of them for any variety of reasons aren't able to be successful here in Whitehorse and return to the community. So this year is the first year they've had the opportunity to take some of the high school courses. It's offered out of the school there and, as I've heard, by all accounts it has been tremendously successful.

I did receive a letter from the Chief of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in asking about an ILC for Robert Service School and, as I mentioned earlier today, there have been some resources identified to make that a reality at the Robert Service School in Dawson City.

I think it's around a .4 full-time equivalent for this year. Of course, we'll look at the success of it. When it comes to the evaluation, we certainly want to ensure that there is student success, and that program success will lead to the student success. So when we're looking at the current — I guess, for lack of a better word — the "pilot programs" that are operating in Old Crow and Dawson City — and, of course, the stuff that's happening in Whitehorse at the ILC. I mean, it has been tremendously successful.

I have just a couple of stories to share with members. I know the keynote speaker at the grad ceremonies for the ILC this past spring is an ILC graduate and is now in her second or third year at the University of Alberta. She was able to come back and talk about her success as a student and really relay to everyone in attendance how the success of that program led to her success as a student. Then another young Yukoner, who is a constituent of mine, found her way into the ILC this past year

and is now seeing tremendous success there as a student with the programs that are being offered and the flexible and individual learning environments.

Again, we'll continue to look for ways to improve. We're always looking for ways to improve the programs and the facilities we have through ongoing evaluation, no matter what they are, and that is certainly no different for the ILCs that operate here in Whitehorse or the programs currently offered in Old Crow and Dawson City.

One thing I should just quickly mention — in the spring, when we talked and were debating the budget, there were also plans to put one into the school in Teslin, but the community, for one reason or another — obviously, it's there and we need them to respond — didn't want to participate this year. So we'll look for other options for some of those students. Maybe it's the same option for next year. So, as of right now, Old Crow is running, and Dawson City has some resources assigned to it.

Mr. Silver: I thank the officials from the department today for coming to spend their time with us. We appreciate your time. Most of the things have been covered. I'd like to thank the Minister of Education for his thorough report when he started today's debate and also getting back to us with the questions we asked in the briefings.

It's quite important to get those answers, and we appreciate the timely manner in which he has done that. In listening this afternoon, he has mentioned a lot of issues from Dawson — camp courses for example. I just wanted to say how thrilled the local rangers are that they get a chance to participate in the education process and participate in locally developed curriculum. That's a great thing.

He also mentioned Robert Service School working on the attendance solutions, which was a major question and a major concern moving forward, so kudos to him and his department for working on these things. I would also just like to say how happy I am that the minister has figured out meaningful ways to engage the members opposite — the Member for Mayo-Tatchun and I. This is an example of a minister who does cut through partisan politics when he sees an opportunity to better the rural communities and education in general, so I'd just like to thank him for that.

I'm not getting booed from over there, am I?

First issue here — I was thrilled that the dual credit course in welding is occurring at Robert Service School, coordinated by the local campus of the Yukon College as well. We had a mining summit of our own in Dawson about a year ago with educators and with industry.

The capacity to develop more dual credit courses is absolutely there in Dawson. On the ground floor, we have an excellent rapport between the two levels of education at Robert Service School and at the college. We've been hearing a lot about the centre for northern innovation in mining at Yukon College and I was just wondering — could the minister give us an update? I know he spoke a bit about this already today, but I'm looking specifically in terms of funding, timing and also the location of the new training facility. I was wondering if the minister shares my thoughts that Dawson City has the capacity

to be an integral part of the tech and trades directive from his department.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Thank you. Again, as I mentioned, I won't get into it as deeply as I did before when it comes to the centre for northern innovation in mining, but we do have an opportunity I think to provide some meaningful training. One of the aspects that I failed to mention on Saturday at the mining summit — and maybe I failed to get into it as much earlier today as I would like to — is the involvement of industry, so I think when the economy wasn't doing so well in the Yukon, a lot of the training was done — definitely not all of it — for training's sake.

What we're able to do with the involvement of industry is match the training opportunities to actual job opportunities, so through the use of those mobile training facilities, we're going to be able to work not only in Dawson City, but also in communities like Mayo and Pelly Crossing, Watson Lake, Ross River — and Faro, of course, on the reclamation side of things. There are so many communities around the Yukon that will benefit from the mobile trades training aspects. Dawson City, of course, is one, not only given the exceptional exploration activity on the hardrock side of things in that particular area — the opportunities for perhaps some new hardrock mines to open up over the next few years or even on the longer term when it comes to some of those areas that are currently being explored — but also the placer side of things.

Placer mining, I would say, is the "backbone" of the Yukon mining industry. Through thick and thin, even when the gold was \$270 an ounce or \$300 an ounce, placer miners were still working the creeks of the Klondike and other areas throughout the Yukon. I guess that was probably the impetus for the development of the dual credit welding program in Dawson City.

Just to make sure the member opposite heard when I was addressing this question earlier with the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, we're still looking for suitable space and that type of thing to launch that dual credit welding program. If it doesn't happen when it comes to Robert Service School, we'll possibly switch direction to a dual credit carpentry program up there. Again, welding is an essential skill on many of the placer mines, I'm sure, throughout the Yukon, and we're happy to look for a way to offer that. So while it's not underway right now, we're working very hard at the officials level to ensure that it becomes a reality.

Just stepping back to the centre for northern innovation in mining, the president of the college was on the agenda to present this today, so hopefully we're able to deliver some copies to the members opposite of the proposal now that she has made a public presentation on it. Yukon College is requesting approximately \$30 million over the initial life — over the six-year period — of this and that includes both capital and O&M costs. The proposed plan predicts an annual O&M requirement of approximately \$4 million to deliver the training required by industry.

So what we've undertaken right now, as I mentioned earlier, the Department of Education has partnered with Yukon College to fund the executive director position for the current

fiscal year, which equates to year zero of this proposal. One of the things we're looking for is to identify funding partners when it comes to this, be it other levels of government or industry — whatever we can get. We're working very diligently with Yukon College on identifying the funding sources for this program.

One of the things is that it is also adaptive, where we can adjust the training requirements throughout that six-year period to match funding that we have. As I mentioned, I know my colleagues and I in the government are very excited about seeing this program through, when it comes to addressing some of the labour challenges that will occur in the resource industry and the industrial trades over the next number of years.

I think this is going to be one of the key pieces, as far as training Yukoners for those Yukon opportunities, and perhaps even having Canadians travel to the Yukon to be trained for Yukon or Canadian opportunities. We're excited about all aspects of this.

Beyond the training side of things, even a mine life cycle chair has been recruited through a federal grant and industry contributions. That will be based out of the Yukon Research Centre and will conduct research into the life cycle of a mine from discovery to closure and reclamation. It's not just about training; there are some other exciting aspects, and I will endeavour to get copies of this proposal delivered to the opposition parties before the end of the week, now that the college president has made it public.

Mr. Silver: I guess I'm not getting a commitment to bring the centre for northern innovation in mining to the Dawson campus, so I will move on. I will continue to bring this up, though.

I'd like to move on to the temporary worker nominee program. I've been hearing from a few of my different constituents that the rural Yukon is not necessarily being served as well by this program, so I was just wondering if the minister can speak to this. Has any review taken place to see if the program is working in rural Yukon compared to the Whitehorse centre?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Perhaps the member was referring to the Yukon nominee program, which is the program that a lot of Yukon service sector and tourism operators have taken advantage of. I'm not sure of the exact numbers, although I did get the chance to mention them in my opening comments for 2011-12, saying the approved nominees for that year were 133 through Advanced Education, the immigration side of things, and since 2007, 662 nominees have been approved through the program. That goes from 2007 to October 1, 2012.

I don't have the breakdown of how many of those individuals have relocated to rural Yukon. Obviously anecdotally, travelling around to a number of Yukon communities, seeking advice and input from my colleagues who represent Yukon communities, I know a number of nominees are working outside of Whitehorse at this time. I don't have the exact numbers.

Perhaps the other thing that I could just touch on briefly is with the temporary foreign worker annex that the Yukon government is negotiating with the Government of Canada. It has been a couple of years since that work has started. Right now in the department we are seeking input and advice from the busi-

ness community to identify how many businesses and what types of businesses would be interested in acquiring or hiring the temporary foreign workers. That work is underway right now and we look forward to the results from that before we assign resources to it internally.

Mr. Silver: I thank the minister for his answer. Sorry if it seems like I'm kind of jumping all around here, but most of the questions I had were actually addressed earlier today, so I'm picking off the list.

There was a request from rural educators in kindergarten to allow the Department of Health to share basic information on kindergarten-aged individuals living in the communities. I brought this up in the spring session, and I was told at that time the departments would take a look at it.

As the Member for Mayo-Tatchun can attest, any information on new enrolment prior to the first day of school really takes a huge weight off of teachers and administrators. This would be basic information and not medical records. I was just wondering if the minister indicate whether or not he thinks that this would actually be able to be accomplished?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Yes, as I mentioned earlier, some work is being undertaken right now between the Department of Education and the Department of Health to address quite a number of the early learning initiatives. They are trying to find a way to bridge some of the gaps we see there, as far as the early learning goes and where we can make the biggest impact.

As mentioned earlier, the Department of Education has assigned an official to work with the Department of Health and Social Services over the next number of months to address some of the programs and what we can do to start to make a real and meaningful difference — or, at least build upon the differences we're making through programs like the Child Development Centre and the work of Health and Social Services.

Certainly, when it comes to what the member opposite knows of ensuring there is information sharing, as best we can, and trying to plan for school years, whether it is with teacher allocation or staff allocation — any of that stuff. I agree with the member opposite that any information we can get is crucial, and that will be an important part of the undertaking that is underway right now.

Mr. Silver: I'd like to switch to housing — I know it's not that ministry, but educational housing. No housing for teachers — in my first year in Dawson, I had a few less gray hairs, that's for sure, Madam Chair. Maybe it was because of less stress, and one of the factors that I didn't have to worry about at that time was housing. I could arrive in Dawson City, and I knew that even though I didn't know the town — I actually got lost in Dawson my first day there. I didn't really know the town, but I did know that I had a place to stay. Yukon Housing Corporation used to supply housing to all new teachers in the rural communities.

Then, there were no houses available and it went from that to not even being a guarantee. Now, it's not even considered. This year, as usual, in the Klondike there were a few new hires in Education. One of these teachers went from downtown Toronto to living in a tent on the Klondike for his first few weeks in town. This was his first time ever in a tent, and that was ac-

tually his accommodation. He liked it — he enjoyed it, but at the same time it speaks of a greater need. He went from there to couch-surfing — I believe now, he's actually house-sitting, but we will have to move again in January and nobody in the Klondike likes to move in January.

Now, there are pros and cons for using social housing for staff housing, and I really believe that that special rate that is offered should be looked at. When I first moved there, it was great to have that, but I believe the rate was \$600 then and it might be the same currently, but at the same time after four years of living in social housing, I didn't have any incentive to actually put more effort into maybe moving into a new place or even starting a mortgage and actually making a larger commitment to the community. So I was just wondering if the minister can just comment, basically, on what he thinks as far as using social housing for staff accommodations as it applies to education.

Does he think there should be maybe a reinstatement of that plan and maybe a time limit on it — maybe a year or two? Any comments toward that would be great?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I'd pass this off to the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation, but I don't think it's going to work too well in this case. However, I don't have a lot of the notes so I'll do my best to answer it without the benefit of some of the notes that I have with respect to the Yukon Housing Corporation.

One of the things that I think is going to be important in moving forward is that the Yukon Housing Corporation, Department of Education and the Yukon Teachers Association are going to look at the formation of a joint housing assessment and maintenance committee. I think where we're seeing some pressure outside of Whitehorse on the staff housing side of things is particularly Dawson City and Watson Lake. Of course, the new hospitals that are coming on stream in the next while there are creating some staff housing pressure. We have upgraded some of the housing in Dawson City for use by those professionals who are going to be moving in to work at the hospital.

When I was at Robert Service School in September, that example the member opposite talked about was brought forward to me by the school principal. When it comes to the overall staff housing side of things, I think it's important that we look at it from that broader approach, and that's something that I'll be able to speak to in greater detail when we're in Yukon Housing Corporation debate. If you look at that letter of expectations and the protocol agreement that I signed as minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation with the board — it's something I've asked them to look at. I've asked the Housing Corporation and its board to look at the staff housing policy and how we can move and make it something where we're providing good quality, safe and secure housing to our employees who make the commitment to work outside of Whitehorse. It would be premature to talk about any details until I get some further information back from the Housing Corporation on how they recommend we move forward.

Mr. Silver: I appreciate that answer, and I appreciate that this is a larger question. Just for the record, I knew that

after year one, I wasn't going anywhere and I'd be staying in the community of Klondike for an extended period of time, if not the rest of my life.

I also knew that I had enough money at that time to find rental accommodations. I'm not sure if people coming into the communities could have such a great connection to the community without some kind of prearranged accommodations. It is one of those things we hear all the time about people coming to the communities — that you have to actually experience, not just Dawson, but all rural Yukon communities to realize what an amazing and special place it is from the point of view of teachers and medical staff and RCMP officers and so on and so forth. I think it is essential they have somewhere to stay, but I think maybe we should also have some kind of incentive to get them going into their own types of accommodations or mortgages.

I only have two short questions left here. We spoke a lot here about replacing the money that students used to receive from writing standardized exams, and I was just wondering if the member opposite, the Minister of Education, could comment on where we are with that file.

Hon. Mr. Kent: The member opposite — and my apologies if he mentioned this — but he is referring, of course, to the Yukon excellence awards?

What we've done is that, starting in the 2012-13 school year, the Yukon achievement tests have moved from an Alberta-based system to a British Columbia-based assessment. What that has done — the Alberta-based grades actually were grades 3, 6 and 9 texts and the British Columbia-based assessments are for grades 4 and 7, so we've actually dropped another test where there was some potential for excellence awards. As minister, I was pleased to make this move because of the fact that we're on the B.C. curriculum. Something that I couldn't quite wrap my head around when I was first appointed Minister of Education was why we would be on that Alberta-based system. So I think it makes a lot of sense and there has been a lot of support from educators to moving to that B.C.-based system.

This year, we're able to get year over year results, which is not so fortunate, I think, for some of the kids in grades 3 and 6 who are now taking the grades 4 and 7 assessments this year, but once they get beyond that I know we're going to have some very good data on which to base some of our improvements on and some of our student improvements.

When it comes to the Yukon excellence awards, what they're now based on are the two Yukon achievement tests, the YATs as well as the mandatory B.C. provincial exams. Those have been decreased; there are tests. There are grade 9 results in language arts and math and the five mandatory B.C. provincials, so language arts 10, 12, science 10, math 10 and social studies 11.

One of the things that I'm particularly excited about when it comes to the excellence awards and the program review is that the criteria is being looked at with the intent of also recognizing student success in areas such as technology, fine arts and applied skills in addition to what we're currently doing with the five B.C. provincial exam results.

What we're looking forward to for the 2013-14 school year is having this expanded and more accessible model in place. I guess I should correct myself just to clarify that it's the grade 9 YATs that this was based on and they're no longer available under the new B.C.-based assessments, so they won't be included in the criteria for the Yukon excellence awards. That said, I'm excited to move into some other areas and reward students for being successful in these other areas that I've mentioned: technology, fine arts and applied skills.

Mr. Silver: Thank you. That's great news. The YATs out of Alberta I believe were actually designed in the States as well, and as a math teacher who had to explain to my students that now the algebra tiles that they're used to having being red and white and now white and black and the red one is now positive and that one's negative — that was very confusing, so it's very nice to see that there's a little more streamlining there.

I have one more question for the minister and his officials. Shannon Van Bibber deserves an awful lot of credit for her hard work getting her grandfather JJ Van Bibber's book *I was born under a spruce tree* to print. She and the rest of the family have done an excellent job promoting the sales of this fascinating book as well. I gave a copy of the book to the Minister of Education on behalf of the Van Bibber family, and I also have a copy for the president of the Yukon Teachers Association. I've already spoken to the minister about this and we've had an ongoing conversation about the possibility of getting this book into curriculum — into local schools.

If the book was only JJ's pictures that he took himself and developed himself mostly out in the bush, it would be enough to warrant the placement of this book into our history classes, but it's much more than that. It's basically the Yukon's history told from one man's experiences. It's an extraordinary biography of a man whose journey speaks of this territory's resilience and heart. Its application to curriculum is very vast. Could the minister give his opinion as to whether or not we could see this book being in the Yukon classrooms, both at the high school level and through Advanced Education at the college?

Hon. Mr. Kent: We're excited to report on this and I thank the member opposite for giving me a copy of the book by JJ Van Bibber. The pictures are fantastic. I did get the opportunity to emcee the unofficial book launch at the leader's brunch on Sunday here in Whitehorse and had the opportunity to catch up with a number of the members of the Van Bibber family, including Shannon and Alex — and Pat Van Bibber, JJ's brother.

So it was great to see the family there and to have longtime family friend, Sue Craig, honour them that way. I know a number of the books were available last night at the silent auction at the Geoscience Forum and were also for sale at the event.

One of the things that I will commit to the member opposite and the Van Bibber family is that we will offer the books in every school library in the Yukon. I'm looking forward to finishing the book. I think it's a tremendous read — what I've been able to get through so far. You're right — it's one man's history lesson of the Yukon and some of the stories in there are quite remarkable, given their transportation to school and from Pelly to Dawson and that type of thing.

When it comes to involving it in the curriculum, there is a process that will need to be followed. I'll commit to essentially starting that process by giving the book to our curriculum consultants for their review. As mentioned earlier, the member and I have had some conversations about this already. Perhaps it's something that could be incorporated as a start in the curriculum that's offered at Robert Service School in Dawson City. There is a commitment by the department to have 20-percent local curriculum developed, so perhaps that's a starting point. But if we just let the process flow a little bit more it may be something that is offered — just to make that commitment again, especially to the Van Bibber family and JJ's brothers in particular, that we will ensure that this book is made available to all Yukon students in every Yukon school library.

Mr. Elias: It's a pleasure to rise today in the House to engage in the debate of the supplementary estimates for 2012-13 for the Department of Education.

I want to begin by once again thanking the officials for accompanying the minister here today and making him look good. I also wanted to echo my colleague from Klondike's words, expressing his appreciation for the way the new minister conducts his business. Wow, what a difference a new minister makes. On behalf of my constituents and myself, I appreciate the minister's open dialogue in the year of his new mandate under the direction of the Premier and I think that actions speak a lot louder than words.

I've been asked by my constituents to publicly congratulate the minister on some of the efforts we've been working toward in our community of Old Crow, many of which have been touched on today and seem to be simple. I'll give you an example, and that's ensuring that our high school students get their transportation paid to and from Old Crow on two occasions: Thanksgiving and Easter. I've said over and over in this House why those two holidays are important. Within the first year, it was absolutely phenomenal for the word to get to our community that Thanksgiving travel opportunities were going to be provided for the kids from Old Crow. So again, thank you to the minister. We still have to work on Easter though, okay? I say that with a smile on my face, Madam Chair, for *Hansard* purposes.

I'm going to touch on some of the priorities from Old Crow. Over the years, land-based experiential learning was a priority; getting some high school curriculum in Old Crow was a priority; getting a safe, reliable school bus in the community was a priority; and strengthening the partnership with public government and industry and using all the resources that we had within the community, such as the Vuntut Gwitchin government, the renewable resources councils, other departments of the federal government — namely, the RCMP, Parks Canada, federal Fisheries and Oceans, the list goes on and on and on — and the Department of Environment and Education within YTG all coming together and working toward achieving the educational outcomes of the children in Old Crow, using our number one resource: our land, our water, our wildlife, our culture and traditional practices.

I cannot say with any great strength — I'm at a loss for words — what I have seen within the land-based experiential

project in Old Crow. On October 25, there was a celebration and lots of materials here — the Beringia Centre with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation sharing the booklets from that program and sharing the Old Crow experiential program booklets. They had a three-year theme and a grade grouping. One was traditions and science; the other was traditions, history and geography; and the last was tradition, arts and trades. It also came with a teacher's guide; it came with a field trip inventory; a poster was developed; there were three issues of the *Push-Up Press* which I have given to every member of this House. I believe I gave three of them because they were annual newsletters that were produced by the Vuntut Gwitchin government and the Chief Zzeh Gittlit School. There was also a Gwich'in phrase booklet that was designed and developed from this program that was shared.

This program was funded by the northern strategy trust back in 2009. It was a partnership between the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation — the education, heritage and culture, and land and resources departments — the Chief Zzeh Gittlit School, Old Crow community members and, of course, the Yukon Department of Education. I have spoken about this at great length. This is a success story. If we're to continue this partnership there needs to be another long-term commitment. That would be one of the questions I have for the minister today. Seeing that this is such a resounding success, there are jurisdictions from Ontario that I'm aware of, also from Alberta, British Columbia and more recently Nova Scotia that have expressed interest in receiving the background information with regard to this project.

My question to the minister: How does he see this partnership progressing into the future?

Hopefully it will be a permanent line item in the Yukon territorial government's budget.

Going back to the Thanksgiving and Easter travel for the students — I'm not sure that the minister knows what he has done because I had so many emotional constituents call me and e-mail me saying how important it is for our students to get back to Old Crow during these times. Again, on behalf of my constituents, thank you very much for that initiative and effort.

I believe there are eight or nine students participating in the high school program in Old Crow. It is very well received in the community. The students like it; the parents like it; however, there was one concern that I can bring to the minister's attention, and that is that a part of the program criteria, review and analysis and factors of success was regarding attendance. One of the students came up to me and said — because she has a baby — that attendance is used as a success factor in this program. "I have an 80 percentile in the course. However, sometimes I have to miss three days at a time because I have to look after my child."

The minister should consider the attendance factor as part of the review of the program as being in the high percentile factors for the success of the program because that's just one of the factors we have to deal with in Old Crow — that's one of them.

Another important thing is the high school students. It's not just the students who are Vuntut Gwitchin beneficiaries or

from Old Crow when they come to Whitehorse. We embrace other communities, like Dawson and Carcross, for instance. What they're doing now is that it has always been encouraged by our leadership in Old Crow — our elders and our parents — for the students, when they're about to graduate, to go out and see the world; go out and see what other jurisdictions are doing; go out and see what other provinces are doing; go on student exchanges, and don't just ask for a handout from the government. You go out and you work and you raise money, so that you value it a lot more. That's exactly what the students are doing. It was a pleasure to attend the fundraising event this past Saturday at the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre. There were some MLAs here in attendance as well, and thank you for that support.

They're going to New York City in the springtime. The event was sold out. They almost raised \$10,000. It was a fun event. It was an alcohol- and drug-free event. There was fiddling and dancing, and I can't forget the prime rib that was served. It was a tremendous effort by the students. For me, it was a pleasure to see the students engaged, saying hello to everybody, serving people and making sure everybody had fun, because it was their event to come to the table and say, "Okay, we're doing our part." When you see that, it's easy for industry and for other levels of government to say, "Okay, wow. This is really neat." I think for them to want to go — they picked New York City. I'm glad they picked New York City, because it's going to be an eye-opener. I've been to New York City — to the United Nations and to other pretty important venues in the city. It's going to be an eye-opener for those children, because not just what they see on TV — they're going to be able to see it, feel it and taste it, and experience that there are other places in the world that exist. New York City is going to be an eye-opener, for sure. So that's happening.

With the community helping out and bake sales and fun events, like luncheons and things like that, it's going to make this trip worthwhile and a tremendous learning experience.

One other thing that I wanted to mention was in the summer, which hasn't been mentioned, and events that haven't been mentioned — that over the last years, complementary to the land-based experiential learning project, there are community-funded land-based girls science camps and land-based boys science camps. There are also focused biology camps that are supported by the community as well — the chum salmon tagging or on the Porcupine River, for instance. One of the camps that I had the pleasure of helping with was the girls science camp last summer — or, was it the summer before? I think it was the summer before.

What happens there is that we use all of the community's resources, and we had the Department of Environment biologists come to the camp and talk about the jobs they do. We had Parks Canada come.

We had Parks Canada come; we had the Department of Fisheries and Oceans come; we had elders come to the camp and talk about traditional knowledge. We had search and rescue people come to the camp and teach the girls how to live and survive off the land in terms of travelling, boat safety, being able to overturn a canoe and flip it back over and jump back in

— those kinds of things — river travel and river safety, as well as the biology — taking microscopes out on to the land and learning about everything from fish to caribou. They actually harvested a caribou, which was pretty neat. Those are the kinds of things that happen in the off-season that are complementary to some of the education efforts that we do see in Old Crow. To quote Chief Linklater: “The students themselves, when they say ‘I can’t wait to go back to school next year’ — how many kids can say ‘I can’t wait to go back to school next year?’”

This three-year program has had a great success and I think that this is something that the minister can use as a template to ensure, when he’s sitting around with his Cabinet colleagues, that it gets long-term support because it’s successful. It not only reaches the Yukon education goals and objectives, but it exceeds them a lot of the times.

I also wanted to mention a couple of other educational initiatives that don’t necessarily deal with Old Crow. I don’t have to get into it in any great detail, but I had the pleasure of experiencing the Hockey Canada Skills Academy. I previously brought this to the attention of the minister. It doesn’t necessarily have to be geared toward hockey. I focus on that one because it’s all set up already across the country of Canada. It could be skiing, it could be soccer, it could be a vast array of other sports, but I think this has value, because it has been so successful in other jurisdictions. It does have a fragile shelf life, however, because it needs a lot of support, but it has been successful in students achieving their academic goals. So I’d like to touch on some of those today.

I’ll go on to a pretty big topic. I was asked to raise it in the Legislature so I have. I’ve been going through the educational system right from kindergarten here in the territory through Yukon College and now the education of this Legislative Assembly. I’ve heard of and seen a multitude of reports; I’ve listened to the Auditor General; I’ve listened to parents; I’ve listened to school councils and I have seen the success and failures of the education system. I have experienced them myself. I’ve been hearing more and more about the creation of a Yukon First Nation school board and creating a Yukon First Nation school that welcomes everyone, but has a different model of delivery in terms of education. In the present system, we try to encompass the cultural values and the traditional values of each different community — First Nation values into the western way of doing business and educating our children. When we continuously see attendance rates of First Nation students and the success and graduation rates of First Nation students going the wrong way, of course this is going to be an issue.

I’d like to hear the minister’s thoughts on this because there are other jurisdictions that have success with regard to their own First Nation school boards and their own First Nation schools where everyone is welcome. It’s a different style of learning; they have their own infrastructure and their own boards to achieve the educational outcomes and curriculum requirements in our territory. It’s time to pay serious attention to this because it doesn’t seem to be going away.

Many First Nation representatives have told me that they’ve tried to work over the years to nudge the present education system in a certain way to achieve the best possible educa-

tional success of their students, especially in rural Yukon. It doesn’t seem to be moving fast enough or working quick enough. I’m hearing that sentiment across the territory. But if this is going to happen, it has to happen in a really structured good way. I’d like to hear some of the minister’s comments on that.

I also wanted to talk about a couple of specific issues with regard to the risk of violence in Yukon schools. I understand that minister has launched a new program about reducing the risk in our Yukon schools.

I haven’t — and this is delving from a lot of the serious incidents in the U.S. and across Canada. I couldn’t find too much information about that program, so if he could expand on that.

Another specific program that came to my attention — I got flooded with it for a couple of days when it was announced. But I will just give you the situation. I was at the Canada Games Centre and it was about Challenge Day and that Challenge Day was tomorrow. So immediately I got mixed reviews about “Yes, it’s a good day”, and some parents came to me and said, “No, it’s not a good day” because what happens is that they end up — I’ve never been to one of these, but I’ve just been told from the students and the parents that the students are able to share some of the hurtful things in their life just for one day. So there is no follow-up assistance or counselling with the students who do decide to share in front of their fellow students.

It’s beneficial for some, but not beneficial for others — it’s actually hurtful. The students end up using what was shared in the gymnasium or classroom at future dates with the other students, and that is pretty hurtful. What ends up happening is that the students who don’t see value in it or parents who don’t see value in that day just tell their kids, “Don’t go to school that day”, and that’s something that has been happening. I do have other comments and questions about the budget before us today, and I look forward to hearing some of the minister’s comments in the short time that’s left in the House today to deal with the very important issue of education in our territory. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Thank you. I’ll try to touch on all the issues raised by the member opposite, and if I do miss one, if you could just let me know. I think I was able to capture most of the issues that he raised during his remarks. The first one I’ll touch on is of course the northern strategy project and the Old Crow experiential program. As I mentioned earlier, it was on October 25, which was actually the first day of this fall legislative sitting, that the Vuntut Gwitchin released the curriculum and resource materials that were developed for the experiential project.

The materials are being provided in template form, so other Yukon schools and schools across Canada can adapt them to their own First Nation languages and culture. Discussions on how best to implement this program in other schools and communities are underway at the Department of Education. Although I had to leave the launch of this curriculum early to get back to the sitting of the House for that day, I understand they had spoken about six years of funding at that time, so there is some secured funding that is in place for that program. It’s

something that is very exciting. I know the department participated in contracting the curriculum developer — a young teacher who lived in Old Crow when this was first brought in, I believe, but then subsequently moved to Saskatchewan to further her career. She was retained as a consultant to develop a lot of the materials and the curriculum development that was done for this project. I think there is an awful lot of excitement. The northern strategy funding approval that we received in October 2009 — that initial three years, which has hopefully morphed into — what is my understanding — six years of funding for this project.

I did also get the opportunity to go to Old Crow in September and participate in the launch of their boat — the river boat that was built by two well-respected members of the community, and that they were able to use for the camp, which I understand is about 20 minutes downstream of Old Crow and was built in March 2010. I think *Blue Rock* was the name of the boat that we launched that day — again, an awful lot of excitement. The entire school was out. The Member for Pelly-Nisutlin and I were in Old Crow that day and able to participate in that aspect of the Old Crow experiential learning side of things. As I mentioned earlier, we do have two experiential learning consultants in the department, and one of them has been quite involved with the Old Crow program. I think it's something we can be very proud of as Yukoners. Of course, the people of Old Crow and Vuntut Gwitchin citizens should be awfully proud of their contributions to this, and we look forward to making this successful and something that can be adapted across the country.

One of the other things the member opposite spoke about was the high school or secondary projects. When I announced this in the spring, we were anticipating that it would be secondary projects in Old Crow and Teslin. We had the full support of the Staffing Allocation Advisory Committee and additional staff positions were allocated to both Old Crow and Teslin schools for 2012-13 so the needs of the disengaged students could be assessed and programming put in place to support them attaining graduation.

As the member opposite mentioned, the Old Crow program has proceeded and there are currently eight students participating in it. As I mentioned earlier, and I'll just reiterate here, when we worked with the school community in Teslin, after consulting with them it was felt that the conditions weren't in place for the initiative to be a success so it was not implemented in that community. Subsequently there has been an ILC model that we've looked at for the Robert Service School in Dawson City and some resources have been allocated to that.

The project will be reassessed in the spring of 2013 to decide whether to continue or revise or consider another model for programming so I think with eight students, obviously we'll have to ensure that their outcomes are being met and that we're seeing some student success, but by all accounts so far it has been a great success in the community, and I'll look forward to the evaluation when it comes to the end of the school year, looking into next year as to whether it's something that we want to continue.

I guess I would join the member opposite in congratulating the students who are planning the field trip to New York City; as he mentioned, they hosted an event on Saturday evening that they hosted to raise money, and I did catch up with the member opposite, the chief and another gentleman who works for the Yukon Development Corporation on Saturday evening and they were raving about the event. As mentioned, I believe other members were there, including the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, who was providing some of the entertainment that evening, so thanks to everybody who has been involved.

These field trips are very important, not only for the students from Old Crow, but we have kids working hard all the time. I don't think anybody in this House has been to a local grocery store on a weekend where you're not donating to a school trip or a school project or a band trip or a sporting trip for our students to be able to travel outside of Whitehorse. We have many, many advantages to being Yukon residents and one of the tough things for a lot of sporting teams or bands or anything is raising that money, but they all work very, very hard. I think everybody deserves credit no matter where they're off to. I thank the member for bringing up the students who are working hard to make that trip to New York City, I believe in the spring — perhaps February or March — a reality.

When it comes to the camps that the member opposite referenced, I'm not sure if he was referring to some of the camps that are offered by Yukon College. I know there are a number of kids' camps and those types of activities that are offered throughout the summer months. They're tremendously successful, as well as some of the other programs that are offered at a variety of institutes, such as McBride Museum or other places.

Some tremendous programming is being offered. One of the things I spoke with the deputy minister about is some of the summer credits for some of the camps and the culture camps that are taking place in the summer. I've heard from a number of individuals throughout the Yukon community that it's often a challenge to re-engage students who have been off for the summer. It's almost like they've taken a step back sometimes when they've been off for the summer, then in September or late August when they come back to school.

We want to look at how credits are offered for some of those summer camp activities and whether it's extra credit or credits-in-lieu so they can take part in some different activities throughout the regular school year, but we keep them engaged on the full calendar year perspective. There are some exciting opportunities.

When it comes to the action plan and the First Nation school the member opposite spoke about, my preference as minister is to focus on the work of the First Nation education committee in their development of an action plan.

We have some tremendous opportunities there with the 20-percent local curriculum. I mean, so many of our schools have First Nations students in them and a number of them, especially outside of Whitehorse, have a vast majority of First Nations students. I think that offering that curriculum in that programming and, again, building on the success for programs like the Old Crow Experiential Program, we can really make a difference.

I heard from the member opposite about the tremendous reaction from his constituents about allowing the students to travel home at Thanksgiving and Easter, which is another important holiday. Often it lines up closely with spring break, but when it doesn't it's another opportunity to get students home, not only for some of the cultural reasons but also the fact that it's an extremely religious holiday, I hear, for many Christians throughout our country. So after the uptake on the Thanksgiving trip, it would certainly be fine to have the students also travel home for Easter and can make that commitment for 2013.

With that, seeing the time, Madam Chair, I would move that you report progress.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Kent 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 Mr. Cathers that the Speaker resume the Chair.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 7, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2012-13*, and directed me to report progress on it.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

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 5:28 p.m.

The following document was filed November 20, 2012:

33-1-28

Bill C-400: An Act to ensure secure, adequate, accessible and affordable housing for Canadians, letter re: (dated November 20, 2012) from the Hon. Scott Kent, Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation to Marie-Claude Morin, MP for Saint-Hyacinthe-Bagot (Kent)