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HANSARD

Wednesday, April 3, 2024 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Jeremy Harper

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2024 Spring Sitting

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DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Lane Tredger, MLA, Whitehorse Centre

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Hon. Richard Mostyn	Whitehorse West	Minister of Community Services; Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board
Hon. John Streicker	Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes	Government House Leader Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources; Tourism and Culture; Minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation; French Language Services Directorate
Hon. Sandy Silver	Klondike	Minister of Finance; Public Service Commission; Minister responsible for the Yukon Liquor Corporation and the Yukon Lottery Commission

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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, April 3, 2024 — 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.

Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, we have several guests today for our para snowboard tribute. Could we please welcome to the gallery: Sarah Marsh, who is the president of Snowboard Yukon; Monika Kozlerova, who is from Summit Events and Services and planned the festival; Sam Oettli, Mount Sima's general manager; Tracey Bilsky, who is the executive director of Sport Yukon; Amanda Deuling, who is the sport tourism coordinator for Sport Yukon; and Eduardo Lafforgue, who is the director of Tourism from Tourism and Culture — if we could welcome them all, please.

Applause

Speaker: Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Lost in Paradise FIS Para Snowboard World Cup

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, I am dedicating my tribute today to a young downhill skier and friend, Charlie Fidler. Charlie, your friends and family are rooting for you.

I rise today to pay tribute to the athletes and volunteers involved with the Lost in Paradise Banked Slalom World Cup event at Mount Sima. This was the ultimate race in the Shred the North 2023-24 World Cup series.

Athletes started arriving last week, and the event took place March 28 and 29. This is the first time the Yukon has hosted a snowboard world cup event.

I was lucky enough to attend the kickoff for Lost in Paradise and heard from athletes across the world about the positive impact of para sport. One para athlete shared the inspiration that he felt in seeing that sport and recreation at the highest level was still possible.

Para athletes from across the globe were on the hill for a timed event on a purpose-built banked slalom run featuring U-shaped turns, rollers, bumps, and dips. They put on a great show and likely also learned what many of us already know: that Mount Sima is a northern treasure.

Mr. Speaker, Mount Sima means so much to our community. Over the years, it has grown into an important recreational facility for Yukoners and also a world-class hill that the planet is taking notice of.

It is thrilling to watch Mount Sima's stature grow on the national and international stage, and we are honoured that this group of world-class athletes chose our hill for the final event of the international season. The event was a collaboration between Canada Snowboard, Mount Sima, Snowboard Yukon, and Sport Yukon and does not happen without the efforts of well-intentioned people, many of whom are with us here today.

Through the leadership shown by the Friends of Mount Sima Society, Sport Yukon, and many territorial sport organizations, the Yukon's popular and beloved ski and snowboard hill is gaining attention.

Last night, Canada Snowboard shared this note of gratitude with us — quote: "Thank you so much to the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council for graciously hosting us all on their beautiful traditional territory. Thank you to the Government of Canada, the Yukon Government, City of Whitehorse, Mount Sima, Snowboard Yukon, and the countless and amazing people across the Yukon who have helped to make this incredible international event a great example of hosting and athletic execution."

This may have been the last race in this year's world cup, but my guess is that this will not be the last time that Mount Sima is the host for a world cup event.

Mr. Speaker, today we applaud the athletes who dazzled us with their skills and performances. Together, we celebrate the Yukon's sporting community for putting our territory on the map with the little hill that could.

Applause

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize the Lost in Paradise FIS Para Snowboard World Cup and Festival held this year at Mount Sima. Top para snowboarding competitors from around the world took part in banked slalom events as part of the FIS Para Snowboard World Cup on March 28 and 29.

This was followed by the Yukon championships on March 29 and 30 — a friendly, open competition featuring slopestyle, snowboard cross, and banked slalom events. A lot of work went into organizing the event and all the festivities that went along with it. In collaboration between Canada Snowboard, Snowboard Yukon, Mount Sima, and Sport Yukon and with the participation of local vendors, performers, and athletes, it was a successful and fun way to spend the Easter long weekend.

We would like to congratulate all athletes and thank all those involved with organizing and hosting this international event and helping to put our incredible Mount Sima on the international map once again.

Applause

Ms. White: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon NDP to celebrate the epic achievement of all of those who played such important roles in hosting last week's FIS Para Snowboard World Cup banked slalom event. So much time, effort, and heart were incorporated into the Lost in Paradise festival both long before the event happened and straight through to the end. Amanda at Sport Yukon — she moved mountains to make sure

that we put our best foot forward and were the gracious super host that Yukon is known to be. Monika created an amazing festival feeling and an incredible kickoff event that had the athletes feeling like the stars that they are.

The small, dedicated team at Snowboard Yukon stepped up to put on a race series the likes of which the Yukon has never seen before. On top of coordinating this excellent event, they had their athletes put on an indoor riglet park at the CGC for the public to try out during the kickoff event. Their volunteers spent long days standing on the courses — judges and officials — ensuring that the races ran smoothly.

Canada Snowboard employees were on the slopes for many long days leading into the event working with the Mount Sima team on logistics and setting up this world-class race. Northwestel channel 9 and their production team did an incredible job with their brilliant livestream, framing shots to make it look like the event was being hosted in an area much larger than ours. This gave the families, friends, and supporters of participants the ability to watch the event live for the first time ever.

The Canadian Ski Patrol volunteers helped Mount Sima pro patrollers keep everyone safe and, of course, there were volunteer doctors on-site in case they were needed.

Last but certainly not least, a huge thank you and high five to Sam and his dedicated team at Mount Sima. You folks continue to set the bar high and then rise higher and exceed any expectations that you have set for yourselves.

Congratulations to this big team. You worked hard and you smashed it.

Applause

In recognition of Dawson City Community Radio Society 40th anniversary

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the 40th anniversary of the community radio society in my riding of Klondike. CFYT 106.9 FM, The Spirit of Dawson, is a community radio station broadcasting out of a little building on Queen and Front streets in Dawson City. The radio station is a non-profit community organization run by the Dawson City Community Radio Society, a volunteer board of seven members, 30-plus volunteer DJs, and countless other supporters who are right now broadcasting these tributes live on the radio.

Dawson is a unique place with unique people, so it is only fitting that they would have a public radio station to match. CFYT offers a wide range of programming with something for everyone. It is a space for residents to share and explore musical tastes, relate their experiences and stories, discover diverse topics, contribute to educational experiences, and so much more. For instance, Gradio7 is an hour-long, biweekly radio show that is broadcast live from the grade 7 class at Robert Service School. Students plan, create, and deliver segments of the show and learn a wide range of skills, including recording, editing, and posting, for the airways and for digital.

Another interesting project is the Dawson City podcasting course being organized by a team of volunteers, including board members Peter Menzies and also Danny Dowhal. Local

participants will be mentored in every aspect of creating and delivering a podcast with a focus on spoken-word projects and subject matter relevant to the Dawson community. A major podcast event and celebration is actually planned for later on this year.

In addition to the wonderful and eclectic regular programming, CFYT offers special broadcasting of community events and television broadcasts of local events and festivals such as the ever-popular Dawson City Music Festival. The Yukon government is a proud supporter of CFYT because public radio has always played a crucial role in northern Canada. Pre-Internet and pre-telephone and even for many people in my community still today, it provides a vital link across and between those remote and distant communities, keeping people informed and connected to each other, the rest of the country, and the world.

Public radio fosters a sense of community by highlighting local events, achievements, concerns, culture, language, education, advertising, bingo, trivia, life advice, and, when necessary, emergency communications. All this and much more is shared over CFYT airwaves. This beloved little station is part of the proud history of northern radio and stands as a reflection of the unique geographic, cultural, and social landscape of the region.

Congratulations to the Dawson City Community Radio Society for 40 years of being The Spirit of Dawson. We look forward to tuning in and listening for many, many years to come.

Applause

Ms. Van Bibber: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to The Spirit of Dawson, 106.9 FM CFYT. I am honoured to pay tribute to all the folks through the decades who ensured that a local radio station survived in Dawson.

A touch of history for us — in 1923, the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals opened two radio stations in Yukon — Dawson City and Mayo — as wider northern operations. It was changed to a civilian broadcasting station but only in Dawson City on April 1, 1948. CFYT — Canadian Forces Yukon Territory — was born. Back then, just as today, the local folks and teens took turns volunteering to make sure the airwaves were filled with stories and music.

Another big change happened in 1958 when CBC took over the northern radio stations. Recorded tapes were sent to be played weekly. We might have been a week behind, but we were worldly. CBC Radio was always on in every household. In 1960, we were live and on real time. We were really in the know.

In 1984, an engaged group of Dawsonites decided to have a home radio station with more local interest, all with volunteer members and a small board. They are amazing. Such programming as *Eye on Dawson* and *He Played, She Played* are just a couple of items on the schedule. They also administer the rolling ads on Dawson City TV channel 11 and live, televised special community events on channel 12. They have volunteer DJs and are willing to train said DJs.

They also do fundraising for their continued operations and also look for new sponsors as they prosper. When not on with Dawson content, they simulcast CKRW FM, which is a great partner for the community.

So, through history from 1923 to today, Dawson has had some sort of radio link to the outside world. To the locals who, through the years, support, volunteer, and listen to local radio — kudos to you. To the little Spirit of Dawson station on Queen Street, despite the ups and downs through the years, for continuing a tradition of radio, we commend you.

Congratulations and here's to many more years of airplay.
Applause

MLA Tredger: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to pay tribute to Dawson's community radio society. I want to echo what has been said by the other speakers and add our voices to the celebration. It is pretty incredible what a group of volunteers can create. From their picturesque building front that welcomes people with its Progress Pride flag and Black Lives Matter sign to their steady stream of programming ranging from politics to music, CFYT is a treasure that the Yukon is lucky to have.

Congratulations on 40 years and here's to many more.
Applause

Speaker: Introduction of visitors outside the usual time provided.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome to the Assembly today iconic teacher, education innovator, award-winning innovator and entrepreneur, and constituent of the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes Mr. Bob Sharp, who is with us today.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling a letter of support for the establishment of Shāw Kwā'ą Health and Wellness Yukon from each of: the Kluane First Nation, Teslin Tlingit Council, Kwanlin Dūn First Nation, and the Ta'an Kwāch'ān Council.

I also have for tabling a message from the Yukon hospitals to the public on January 19, 2024 regarding the increase in medical imaging services by 5,600 additional exams.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling two documents. The first is an e-mail from Ted Hupé, president of the Yukon Association of Education Professionals, to me dated April 2, 2024 entitled "Teaching Profession Act consultation Section 19."

The second document is my response dated today, April 3, 2024.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling today three letters: the first one from the First Nation School Board in support of Bill No. 307; the second one from the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate in support of Bill No. 307; and finally, a letter from the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon in support of Bill No. 307.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling a *Yukon News* article from June 2007 from which I quoted yesterday.

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

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House congratulates Yukon's North of Ordinary Media on the acquisition of *Up Here* magazine.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Sexualized assault response team expansion

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to release the "what we heard" report from the engagement on expanding the sexualized assault response team services to rural communities. The "what we heard" report represents a milestone in our commitment to addressing sexualized violence in rural Yukon. It brings together the voices of victims, Yukon First Nation peoples, service providers, and community stakeholders and offers a comprehensive review of the current service offering and the unique challenges faced in Yukon communities.

The report calls for: increased awareness of resources and services for victims of sexualized violence; access to robust cultural and land-based healing supports; providing extensive training to service providers and volunteers that is trauma- and violence-informed and culturally safe; more safe houses, shelters, service hubs, and improved infrastructure for victims; reliable transportation services between communities to access services; and clear policy guidance and comprehensive training to ensure standardized protocols and procedures for evidence collection kits. These recommendations will address challenges and build on the strengths within the Yukon communities.

Efforts are underway to tackle several critical issues, which include: a lack of awareness of what sexualized assault is and the services available to address it; lack of transportation for victims to access services not available in the communities; and access to training for service providers in communities.

Mr. Speaker, SART offers important services to victims of all ages, genders, and sexual orientations. It is vital that anyone who needs these services can access them. Our goal is to remove as many barriers as possible, remove the stigma that still exists around sexualized crime, and make sure that each

victim who has the courage to come forward is heard and supported in the way they need. The next step is for us to consider how service expansion into communities can be most effectively designed and implemented.

Mr. Speaker, thank you to all those who added their voices to this report. Meaningful change which requires diverse voices and experiences often requires significant time and effort to develop and implement effectively. While we are moving forward diligently, we are also mindful of the importance of getting it right. This is challenging work, but it is critical that we continue making progress and supporting those who are victims of these terrible crimes.

Ms. Clarke: Salamat, Mr. Speaker. In response to the ministerial statement about the sexualized assault response team and the “what we heard” report, I will note that we look forward to reading the report and seeing how the government plans to implement the recommendations.

When I was the chair of the Yukon Advisory Council on Women’s Issues, we advocated for better integration of sexual assault support services, so I am happy to see this work progress. The Yukon Party Official Opposition recognizes the need to take action to reduce sexual assault in our territory and to support victims.

As has been stated in many reports, sexualized assault rates are higher in the territories. On October 20, 2021, I asked the government about the decision to halt the Yukon advocate case review that was set up to examine sexual assault cases. In my question, I noted that the rate of cases deemed unfounded is 25 percent in the territory compared with 19 percent nationally. At the time, Yukon women’s groups asked for the decision to be reversed and for the Yukon to introduce a local project. While the Yukon RCMP supported the advocate case review, it was the federal RCMP who stopped the review because it was deemed that it violated the *Privacy Act*.

In her response, can the minister give us an update on any plans to reinstate the Yukon advocate case review that was set up to examine sexual assault cases in Yukon?

Salamat po.

MLA Tredger: Mr. Speaker, it is a little difficult to respond to this statement given that the “what we heard” report that it’s about has not been made public as of this morning. I am looking for a commitment from the government that it will be made public, and I would like to suggest that, in the future, sharing documents before making statements about them would allow us all to have a more productive discussion. In the meantime, I can only base my response on the minister’s summary of the report.

Notably, her statement did not include a commitment to accept the recommendations of the report nor timelines for achieving them, so my first question is: Does she plan to accept the recommendations? Will there be an action plan to implement them and when? What are the timelines?

She said that efforts are underway to tackle a number of the issues addressed. I would like to follow up on the efforts that she said are underway to address the lack of transportation

for victims to access services not available in their communities. Can she elaborate on what work is being done? I understand that currently people who declare themselves as victims of violence can apply to the sexualized assault response team to have their gas money reimbursed if they have to travel to a different community. This is obviously a solution that will not work for many people. It doesn’t help anyone who doesn’t already have a vehicle or a trusted person with a vehicle who has time to drive them. It doesn’t help anyone who doesn’t have money up front for gas, and it doesn’t help any of the people who are not ready to declare themselves a victim of violence but desperately need to get away to get support and avoid experiencing further violence.

What would help this situation is a publicly accessible bus service between communities that anyone can access regardless of whether they have a vehicle or how they want to label themselves. Does the minister’s work include plans for a service like this?

I also want to speak about the recommendation for a clear policy guidance and comprehensive training for evidence collection kits. We have heard stories of people who have gone to their health centres after being sexually assaulted only to be told that, because the centres were staffed with agency nurses, the nurses were not trained or required to administer the evidence collection kits. Instead, these people were told that they would have to find their own way to travel to another community, with no support for transportation.

While I am glad to hear that there is a recommendation to change this, it should not have taken a year-long engagement to know that this situation is completely unacceptable. It should not have taken a report to know that this situation needed to be fixed. No one should go to a health centre for help after a sexual assault and be told that it’s up to them to find their way to another community hundreds of kilometres away.

Given the sensitive and legal nature of administering the tests, we do understand that every service provider may not be able to administer them. As an interim solution, will the minister commit to providing transportation, through medevac or other means, for any assault survivor who needs to travel to another community to access the evidence collection kits?

Finally, can the minister tell us if any changes are planned for the Whitehorse-based sexualized assault response team? I look forward to her responses.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the questions. Expanding SART services to Yukon communities is a significant step forward in our Liberal government’s commitment to addressing sexualized violence across the territory. This is work that the Minister responsible for the Women and Gender Equity Directorate and I have done throughout both of our careers and work that we will continue to advance to improve the experiences of victims of sexualized crimes as well as our response as a society.

To guide our efforts in refining and extending SART services, we are using insights from reports like the “what we heard” report, the final report from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and

Yukon's missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit+ people strategy.

We engage directly with victims to understand their experiences accessing services and the barriers they face in seeking support. Our engagement efforts involved victims of all genders and ages as well as parents and caregivers of child and youth victims. In total, 244 individuals from 14 Yukon communities participated in the engagement. Ipsos and Cisco led these engagements using community-based partnership research methods tailored to First Nation communities. Participation had various options for engagement, helping to ensure their comfort and safety. Culturally appropriate support services were available for anyone experiencing distress due to the conversations about sexualized violence.

The goal of extending SART services to rural communities underscores our commitment to addressing the unique needs of all Yukoners who are affected by sexualized violence. We have actively worked on improving existing services such as providing training for service providers in rural communities. As we implement the solutions based on the report's findings, we are committed to ensuring Indigenous representation on the SART team by 2028.

Based on what we heard during this engagement, work has already begun to address some critical items. This includes an awareness campaign launched in early 2024. The campaign aims to raise awareness of sexualized assault and promote awareness of the increased access to resources for victims. We're evaluating our online resources to respond to users' feedback and ensure that victims have access to the information that will empower them. We're also actively working to reduce barriers for inter-community transportation for victims to access services or seek safety from violence. This includes: financial support for travel; assistance through agreements with transition homes in Whitehorse, Watson Lake, and Dawson; and providing funding for the next three years thanks to the funding from the *National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence*.

Victims or their support people can obtain funds for victims to cover travel costs such as gas, food, and accommodations when accessing services or seeking safety from a perpetrator. Additional funds have been added to the victims of crime emergency fund to allow Victim Services workers to help with urgent travel, including food, gas, or flights.

SART training is available to service providers in rural communities and addresses various needs, including cultural awareness and safety. We have started to work with community health centres to increase trauma- and violence-informed responses. SART is now part of the orientation for training for nurses.

Mr. Speaker, our government remains absolutely committed to addressing sexualized violence across the territory.

Speaker: This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Yukon Hospital Corporation funding

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, yesterday in Question Period and in comments to the media, the Minister of Health and Social Services claimed that the Yukon Hospital Corporation was able to avoid any disruptions or reductions of services because of funding provided by the government in December. That quite frankly is blatantly incorrect.

The December press release just re-announced money contained in the supplementary budget tabled in October. In November, it was widely reported and confirmed with documents from the Yukon Hospital Corporation that limitations imposed on medical imaging began in early November.

Here is a quote from CBC on November 21: "One document shows the hospital began limiting certain medical imaging services in early November. The affected services include CT scans, mammograms, MRIs, ultrasounds, X-rays and 'special procedures.'"

Why did the minister incorrectly claim yesterday that there were no disruptions to medical imaging services?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, the Department of Health and Social Services has worked with the Yukon Hospital Corporation to ensure that required funding is provided when necessary based on weekly cash-flow forecasts received from the corporation. This is, of course, an improvement in services.

In the fall of 2023, the hospital was facing a number of pressures related to increased need, complexity, acuity, and health and human resources constraints. The Yukon Hospital Corporation looked at a number of measures, including cost containment, as the pressures were continuously increasing and evolving. The cost-containment measures put in place did not result in significant service reductions during this period or have a lasting impact on wait times. Our work together continues to improve health care for Yukoners.

Mr. Cathers: Well, Mr. Speaker, patients and doctors say otherwise.

Yesterday, the minister told media that funding they provided to the Hospital Corporation meant that they were able to avoid any of the cuts, reductions, or slowdowns that were anticipated; but again, Mr. Speaker, that is completely incorrect. The fact is that service disruptions as a result of the hospital's cost-containment measures had already begun in November. Here is what 14 local doctors and surgeons said in a letter to the minister on November 20, 2023: "Reduction of services has already been rolled out and staffing contracts have already been cancelled, with scheduled OR capacity already reduced." That letter also says that "... this reduction in surgical services has already been implemented..."

Why is the minister trying to rewrite history and claim that there were no service reductions at our hospitals when there so clearly were service reductions?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, most wait times have remained neutral, and the number of surgeries and imaging exams provided by the hospital have increased year over year. The number of medical imaging exams overall is projected to

have increased in 2023-24 by 14 percent over the year before. The number of surgical procedures is projected to be six percent higher than last year. Plans were activated in the fall of 2023 to resume normal services at the hospital on November 29, 2023, other than the usual seasonal service slowdown that is predicted over Christmas.

On December 1, 2023, the government announced the provision of additional funding to the Yukon Hospital Corporation to address the immediate pressures impacting surgeries and medical imaging. I will note that the additional funding provided to the Yukon Hospital Corporation was not supported by the Yukon Party. They have not supported our budgets; they have not supported supplementary budgets. I know their excuse, but the truth is that if they are concerned about Yukoners having the appropriate medical care that they need and the services that are required by the Yukon Hospital Corporation, they should support the funds to do so.

Mr. Cathers: Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister knows that we vote against the government on confidence matters.

It seems that yet again the minister of health isn't letting the facts get in the way of her talking points on this issue. Throughout last fall, multiple media reports that cited the Hospital Corporation's media spokesperson and multiple leaked documents from the hospital all showed that cuts and caps on medical imaging began in early November. We have a letter from 14 doctors that clearly states that the service reductions were already affecting patients as of November 20 and states their disappointment and anger.

On the other hand, we have the minister of health who is saying that all of these groups and people are wrong and that there were never any slowdowns, reductions, or cuts at the hospital. Who does the minister think Yukoners will believe is telling the truth: doctors and health professionals or her?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I do have to comment on the concept of "leaked" documents. These were not leaked documents; they are documents that were provided to medical personnel at the Yukon hospital. They were in no way marked "confidential". Our government has supported transparency and openness with respect to the documents, the changes we have made to the ATIPP act, and the opportunity for briefing notes to be public — we have supported this concept throughout our term here in office. We will continue to do so. The member opposite is clearly just disingenuous when he is trying to categorize documents as "leaked".

On December 1, 2023, our government announced the provision of additional funding to the Yukon Hospital Corporation to address immediate pressures that were impacting surgeries and medical imaging. On February 16, 2024, the department provided \$6.5 million in increased funding that was received the week of February 19, 2024. \$5.2 million was to address the operation and maintenance deficit at the hospital; \$1 million was to address capital maintenance; \$300,000 was for breast cancer screenings; and \$25,000 was with respect to loan servicing.

The Yukon government and the Yukon Hospital Corporation have established a strong working relationship that benefits Yukoners.

Question re: Big Creek bridge replacement

Mr. Hassard: Mr. Speaker, we know that concrete deficiencies have caused lengthy delays in the drawn-out legal battle regarding the Big Creek bridge west of Watson Lake. Naturally, people in my community have become concerned after seeing photographs circulating on social media of what appears to be serious concrete deficiencies on the north abutment of the Nisutlin Bay bridge.

Can the minister assure Yukoners that we won't face similar issues with the Nisutlin Bay bridge as we have seen with the Big Creek bridge?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question from the member opposite about this vital piece of Yukon infrastructure that is progressing very well.

To date, the contractor has completed both abutments for the new bridge as well as three of the six piers. Work is ongoing on the next pier, on the temporary bridge, of which 80 percent has been installed. Piling works on the last pier will be started in April — this month. Steel girders for the new bridge have been fabricated, and deliveries for the precast panels for the deck are ongoing.

Granular pit development and rock production near Teslin and environmental measures, such as hydroacoustic monitoring, fish salvage, and water sampling, are ongoing. During the upcoming construction season, the contractor plans to have the temporary bridge and all piers for the new bridge completed, with steel girders and precast panels installed in both new fish habitat areas created.

I look forward to further discussion on this significant piece of Yukon infrastructure.

Mr. Hassard: Mr. Speaker, so the question was actually about the exposed rebar on the north abutment, so I would like to remind the minister that, even by his own admission, the Nisutlin Bay bridge project is now one of the biggest capital projects in Yukon's history. The bigger the project, the bigger the problems become, which means increased costs.

So, can the minister ensure that Yukoners won't face similar issues with the Nisutlin Bay bridge as we have seen with the Big Creek bridge?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, change orders both large and small are a regular part of contract management. To date, as the member opposite has indicated, there has been one change in the contract value resulting from a change order. That change order stemmed from unexpected and restrictive terms and conditions in the *Fisheries Act* authorization and water licence required for the project. When the Nisutlin Bay bridge project was tendered, there was no reason to expect any significant deviation from similar previous *Fisheries Act* authorizations from regulator Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

Working together with Government of Yukon, the Teslin Tlingit Council, and Graham Infrastructure LP, we are moving forward on this file. We have a high degree of confidence, as indicated in previous answers, with respect to the project's management and have every reason to believe that this contract and that the bridge of incredibly important North American infrastructure will be completed by late 2025, with all work substantially complete in 2026.

I will just remind the member opposite of the previous government's complete inability to get this project done.

Mr. Hassard: Mr. Speaker, it really is unfortunate that the minister doesn't take his portfolio seriously. The question was about concrete deficiencies and whether the minister can actually assure Yukoners that we won't face similar issues with the Nisutlin Bay bridge as we have seen with the Big Creek bridge.

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is engaging in speculation. What I can say is that I meet on a — well, I meet almost daily with my deputy minister but certainly have been briefed on the Nisutlin Bay bridge project, as I am briefed on the Erik Nielsen international airport project, another massive infrastructure project for the Yukon.

If there are any concerns that are raised as per the speculation from the member opposite, they would certainly be brought to my attention and they would be rectified.

So, I have every expectation that this project is proceeding as I am being advised on a weekly basis.

Mr. Speaker, just to confirm, last year, capital spending out the door for Highways and Public Works — \$312 million. In the last year of the Yukon Party government, capital spending out the door — \$71 million. It's rough math, but that is, in fiscal 2022-23, four and a half times the capital spending out the door in one year.

Question re: Minto mine reclamation

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, when Yukon Zinc walked away from the Wolverine mine in 2015, they owed creditors — many of them local small businesses — a total of \$29 million. Yukon companies lost an enormous amount of money in the process, as they were awarded just pennies on the dollar from the receiver. Ever since, the Yukon NDP have pushed successive governments to review the *Miners Lien Act* to ensure that Yukon companies are taken care of first.

When a big mine like Minto closes, it leaves a hole in more than just the ground. There are a lot of Yukoners with a big hole in their bank accounts. The minister said yesterday in debate that he cares about creditors, so can the minister share, for the record, how much money is owed to Yukon companies by what once was the Minto mine?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, I will try to find the number for the member opposite, but what I can say is that there were quite a few creditors who were owed money — some Yukon companies, some beyond. When we spoke with the receiver that was put in place, we talked about the importance of these creditors to the receiver, but I think that our number one priority — and I mentioned this yesterday in my responses — was making sure that our environment was safe. We worked very quickly to make sure that there was remediation work happening right away around the Minto mine site, and we worked closely with the Selkirk First Nation to make sure that they were aware of our priorities and that we were listening to them as well.

I will try to get the technical answer for the member opposite as I get back on my feet.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, while I appreciate the answer from the minister, I am talking about the *Miners Lien Act*.

Information on the receiver's website shows a long list of local companies owed money from the Minto mine — from hotels to powersports dealers and an almost comprehensive list of Yukon suppliers, retailers, and logistics companies. Out of that long list of creditors, three Yukon companies are owed almost \$10 million.

Yesterday, the minister said — and I quote: "... we are making sure that those businesses that were shorted as a result of the Minto mine closure are considered so that we can do the best by them as possible." I sure hope that the minister is planning to do better by these companies than his predecessor did when Wolverine closed.

Will the minister explain to Yukon business owners exactly how he plans to ensure that they get paid what they are owed?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, the context of the question from yesterday was around contracts that Energy, Mines and Resources was issuing in the remediation work. So, when we looked at the contracts that we were issuing, there was consideration — certainly in the early parts of that work — to look at those companies that were creditors. I also said that we were moving toward a more transparent bid process, so that was the reference that I made yesterday here in the House.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, I was looking to find out how the minister was going to ensure that local businesses were paid.

This is not a new issue and the problem grows with nearly every mine closure. Not only do mining companies leave Canadians on the hook for the cleanup bill, but First Nations, Crown corporations, and businesses big and small are all left holding the bag. The Yukon government has an opportunity to change how that process is done. The *Miners Lien Act* continues to shortchange local businesses and create unnecessary hardship for them. The minister has the power to change that and make the *Miners Lien Act* work for Yukoners and not global corporations.

When will this minister finally protect Yukon small businesses by fixing the *Miners Lien Act*?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, under devolution transfer when the Yukon took on province-like powers, there was an agreement with First Nations that what we would do is successor legislation around all of our natural resources, so we have been focused on successor legislation for new minerals legislation, including our *Placer Mining Act* and our *Quartz Mining Act*. We previously had done the forestry act and we are also working with First Nations around the *Lands Act*. I appreciate that this is another priority. However, in how we are prioritizing that work, we are working directly with First Nations to make sure that we are listening to them about what their critical priorities are.

Question re: Emergency medical services in Dawson City

Ms. Van Bibber: Mr. Speaker, over the past winter, there were considerable challenges with EMS coverage in Dawson City. As a result, concerned residents formed the Dawson City Ambulance Association. Yukon EMS reported that for the first two months of the year, Dawson had 100-percent coverage, which is certainly good, but there are some questions that remain.

A report prepared by the Dawson City Ambulance Association shows that there appears to be a discrepancy between the reported local coverage figures for Dawson and the local coverage represented on staffing schedules.

Has the Yukon government reviewed this report, and if so, have they been able to explain the discrepancy?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, the department may well have reviewed the report. It has not come to me yet. The member opposite is interested to present her question outside of this jurisdiction. I am happy to respond to it in writing. I am happy to look into her question specifically with respect to the importance of services in communities with respect to EMS.

What I am also pleased to say is that emergency support services are available to provide opportunities for Yukoners to have emergency services in their home, in their hospitals locally, if appropriate, and ultimately here in Whitehorse, if necessary. The discrepancy that the member opposite is speaking of is not apparent to me at the moment, but I am happy to look into it and to respond to her directly.

Ms. Van Bibber: The report prepared by the Dawson City Ambulance Association found that from January 1 to October 31, 2023, the availability of ambulance service was far less than what the YEMS has reported publicly — and I quote: “Our analysis has determined that 85% of available hours were allocated to individuals on the schedule. However, based on the YEMS definition of ‘coverage’ an ambulance could have been dispatched only 58.8% of the time.”

What is the government’s response to this claim, and what steps have been taken to address these concerns? What level of ambulance coverage could Dawson City residents expect for the rest of 2024?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to creating an integrated and person-centred health care system that operates in a seamless and coordinated way. I hope the members opposite will support such progress for Yukoners. Emergency Medical Services staff and community responders are dedicated to providing Yukoners with timely and high-quality health care service across the territory.

In 2024-25, we have budgeted \$13 million for Emergency Medical Services. There are 80.8 FTEs — full-time equivalents — and 102 community responders providing emergency medical services across the territory. We have recently increased the per diem for community service providers by more than double.

Dawson City has coverage in January of this year of 99 percent and 99 percent in February of this year. As of March 2024, emergency medical services coverage is supported by responders in each and every community. The

question seems to be about Dawson. They have eight community responders, two full-time and four auxiliary-on-call employees, and one is becoming trained.

Question re: Vangorda Plateau mining claims

Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, so, in August 2021, the Yukon government released a joint press release with the RRDC — the Ross River Dena Council — and Canada regarding the sale of mining claims and leases on the Vangorda Plateau portion of the Faro mine site.

The release noted that before mining activity could commence, the joint venture partnership would need to apply for permits, authorizations, and assessments and provide the required financial security for the activities.

I am wondering if the minister can provide us with an update on this project and let us know if there are any legislative or regulatory changes needed in order to advance this project and, if so, what those would be.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, I can say that I know that the deputy minister is actually in meetings today around this project.

The project does have some requirements — I won’t call them “regulatory”, but what I would say is that there has to be an agreement with affected First Nations and approval from the courts, so there are some steps that are required. We have been participating in discussions around Vangorda with affected First Nations, and as I just mentioned earlier, those conversations are ongoing. We are ensuring that — there are, of course, historical liabilities around — Vangorda is a part, a portion, of the Faro mine site, and we want to make sure that those are secured and that, of course, any mining activities will be subject to Yukon’s assessment and regulatory regimes.

I look forward to further questions on Vangorda.

Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, perhaps since the minister brought it up, he can elaborate on the subject of those deputy minister meetings that are taking place today. Again, the minister, in his response, mentioned that prior to concluding a sale process and the subsequent transfer of the Vangorda area to the Tse Zul Corporation, an agreement with affected First Nations and approval from the courts will be required.

I’m just wondering if the minister can tell us what stage these discussions are at and when they anticipate such an agreement being achieved or when the approval from the court will be applied for.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, the nature of the meetings today, at least as far as I am informed, is the ongoing dialogue around these agreements. Section 6.64 of the devolution transfer agreement provides alternative approaches to government and managing work at type 2 mine sites provided that the Yukon, Canada, and affected First Nation governments agree. So, that is the type of agreement that is being sought.

I don’t have a timeline in front of me, but I’m happy to check in with Energy, Mines and Resources. By the way, we were here all day yesterday — was it yesterday or the day before? I think we were here all day yesterday afternoon with debate on Energy, Mines and Resources, and I just don’t recall

these questions coming up, but I'm happy to try to get information for the members opposite.

Question re: Forestry industry

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I have some questions for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources regarding the forest industry here in the Yukon. Concerns have been raised in the past about commercial fuelwood harvesting having to shut down on April 1 because of the wildfire season beginning in Canada. This year is no exception, as commercial harvesters and processors are still playing catch-up from the supply shortage the Liberals created two seasons ago.

Can the minister tell us if he is considering extending the winter harvesting period to better align with wildfire season in the north, and are there any areas in the Yukon that will be available for commercial harvesting this summer?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, most of those requirements are about safety, so I think we just need to be careful. I will take technical advice from the Forest Management branch on those issues.

The broad direction that I have given to the branch is to please work to try to enhance the access to wood and wood supply. I know that we are working closely with Wildland Fire Management. I was at meetings last night — a community meeting with the folks from Wildland Fire — or they were there and I happened to attend their meeting talking about work that they are doing in and around Whitehorse.

I know that we have work happening across several of our communities with Wildland Fire. We are trying to coordinate with them. We have been seeing some successes to our approaches over the last couple of years. From 2021 to last year, the annual volume of harvested fuelwood increased from 10,000 cubic metres to roughly 19,000 cubic meters, so that is close to doubling in two years. That is a success.

I thank the member for her suggestion about safety and summertime. I will try to check in with the department and make sure to talk with the Wildland Fire Management folks to see what they consider to be safe and if there are any avenues for us to extend the season.

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, fuelwood isn't the only aspect of forestry in the territory. We also have a number of small mills that operate and supply lumber for retail sale. We have heard that, due to a lack of supply, one of the mills is closing and another is shipping their equipment south to be used in BC.

So, can the minister tell us why he is unable to identify a sustainable amount of timber harvest for these mills so that they can continue to operate and provide jobs for Yukon citizens?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, it is a good question. I think that it is important that we provide that supply for our local mills. Again, last night, I had a conversation in Mount Lorne, at their local advisory council meeting, to talk about working to move ahead with rezoning changes to promote opportunities for this type of activity over time.

I talked directly with one of those operators just last week, and I respect their decision. I certainly am concerned about it, so I have raised that concern with the branch and asked them to

come back to me with a game plan about how we will work to secure supply for mills here in the Yukon.

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, the *Forest Resources Act* review, consultation, and public engagement concluded almost a year ago on April 12, 2023. The review itself has been underway since 2017. According to the minister's fall briefing binder, proposed changes include clarifying terms and streamlining licensing and permitting processes. These would be welcomed by industry and consumers alike.

Can the minister tell us where we are at with this review and when we can expect forestry act amendments to be tabled in this House?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, in the spring of last year, we completed consultation and public engagement on the *Forest Resources Act* with First Nation governments. We talked with renewable resources councils, we certainly talked with industry, we talked broadly with Yukoners, and we produced a "what we heard" report, which is available online. We took that feedback, and we are now in the process of developing final recommended changes. The proposed changes include streamlining and modernizing licensing, permitting enforcement, and better aligning the legislation with Indigenous self-government agreements and other consultation requirements.

That work is underway right now. I want to say that I appreciate all of the feedback that we got from the public and appreciate the opportunity for us to improve the system for all Yukoners.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

OPPOSITION PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

BILLS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 307: *Act to Amend the Education Act* — Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 307, standing in the name of Ms. White.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 307, entitled *Act to Amend the Education Act*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Leader of the Third Party that Bill No. 307, entitled *Act to Amend the Education Act*, be now read a second time.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill No. 307, entitled *Act to Amend the Education Act*. Since last summer when I was first approached by Mr. Sharp — or Bob Sharp, as people who weren't his students know him — about this change to the *Education Act*, every single education champion whom I have spoken to about this amendment and the future of education will say that they agree with the change, but what is sorely needed is an *Education Act* that is relevant and reflective of modern times.

I will note that the last review was in the very early 2000s, and a lot has changed since then. I wish that I could lead the charge of a comprehensive review and rewrite of the Yukon *Education Act*, but that is not a current reality. I want to be very clear and honest that what I am proposing today really is a stop-gap measure to help more students reach graduation until a complete review and rewrite of the *Education Act* can be completed.

This bill is about giving Yukon students more opportunities now to earn graduation credits by taking courses that are locally designed and relevant to them and their communities. It is well understood that students are more likely to stick with education when they feel that their education is both relevant and meaningful. This bill will be especially helpful for rural and First Nation students because it will give them more opportunities to explore experiential learning.

The change that the Yukon NDP is proposing is about driving student engagement by dropping an outdated clause of the Yukon *Education Act*. While the Yukon follows BC's curriculum and BC's graduation requirements, the BC government has made some changes that the Yukon has not. Making these changes will bring the Yukon back in line with the BC education policy on locally developed courses, where we once were. BC has a policy statement that explains that locally developed courses respond to the local needs of the schools and their communities while providing choice and flexibility for students. This is a missing piece in the Yukon. We don't highlight or celebrate the power of locally developed courses in the same way that BC does, and we should.

It is worth noting that when I was in school, Whitehorse had three separate junior high schools and only one high school. When I got to high school, there were so many options that didn't exist in my junior high, like one of the two coveted experiential programs — ACES, or Achievement, Challenge, Environment, Stewardship, and then at the time the newly minted MAD program, or Music, Art and Drama — but there were choices. Today, there are no fewer than 23 different locally developed courses for Yukon students. Each of these courses has gone through a comprehensive process to make sure that they meet the standard for course development as per Yukon and BC guidelines. These are courses developed by Yukon teachers and education champions for Yukon students and Yukon communities.

These courses are a testament to the dedication and commitment of teachers, education champions, who want their students to be engaged, empowered, and successful.

One of the problems that educators are facing right now is that some Yukon high schools made a shift in how they offer courses. Instead of five courses per semester, some have followed British Columbia and have moved to just four courses per semester. This means that each course makes up 25 percent of the total course load. This change created the problem that this bill intends to address.

Section 43(2) of the Yukon's *Education Act* states — and I'm quoting: "Locally developed courses may constitute up to 20 per cent of the educational program offered to any student in a semester or a school year." That means that offering a

locally developed course for school credits would now be in violation of the *Education Act* for any school that does four classes per semester. Students cannot use any of these courses for graduation requirements.

In British Columbia, the policy on locally developed courses is broader. Students can use board/authority authorized or First Nation-authorized courses to fulfill elective graduation requirements. These courses are developed for schools to offer locally relevant courses.

The bill that we are debating is suggesting that we drop section 43(2) of the *Education Act* so that the Yukon is more in line with the current BC policy on locally developed courses. This change would allow all Yukon high schools to once again start to offer these courses.

Section 43 of the *Education Act* is found in part 4, which deals with school operation, and it reads as follows: "(1) A locally developed course of study may be used in an educational program if the course has been approved by a School Board or Council and the Minister.

"(2) Locally developed courses may constitute up to 20 per cent of the educational program offered to any student in a semester or a school year.

"(3) The Minister shall approve or reject a proposal for the development of a locally developed course of study within 30 days of its receipt and shall provide reasons for any rejection.

"(4) When the Minister approves a proposal for a locally developed course of study, the Minister may provide support for the development of the course of study."

I just want to be clear that nothing in our proposed amendment affects any other part of section 43. These courses will still need to meet education standards and will still need to go through an approval and vetting process. This amendment could allow a change in how graduation requirements in the Yukon would work. It could mean that the Yukon would use the same method as British Columbia does to evaluate a local course to see if it qualifies for graduation credits.

I am going to digress here for a moment and describe how locally approved courses are developed and evaluated in BC. In BC, board/authority authorized courses developed by schools and approved by boards of education or independent school authorities need to align with ministry curriculum and structure.

First Nation-authorized courses developed for First Nation schools to offer locally relevant courses are approved in accordance with the First Nation authorized course process. Board/authority authorized and First Nation authorized courses are not eligible for the adult graduation program requirements, but students on a school completion certificate program may take board/authority authorized courses. Grade 12 level board/authority authorized and First Nation authorized courses count toward the 16 grade 12 level credits required for graduation.

Grade 11 board/authority authorized and First Nation authorized courses that align with the ministry grade 11 arts education or applied design, skills, and technologies curriculum may be used to satisfy the graduation requirement for arts education and/or applied design, skills, and technologies.

There are strict requirements for courses to meet approval to be considered board/authority authorized or First Nation authorized courses. Eligible courses can include those courses that meet the arts education and/or the applied design, skills, and technologies graduation requirements. They can include courses that prepare students with disabilities and diverse abilities through skill instruction to be successful across a wide variety of subjects and settings, or they can address the cultural and academic literacy needs of English language learners.

However, there are also strict limitations on what courses can be considered. Remedial courses that are designed to help students succeed in meeting learning standards cannot be used. Courses that have significant overlap with existing approved courses cannot be used, and this would also include adaptations of existing courses or hybrids of two or more existing approved courses.

In the Yukon, as part of the approval process to create a course, educators have a long checklist to create and submit. One of the requirements for this checklist is a series of big ideas that make connections between local and global concepts. In addition to the interconnected big ideas, each course goes through a comprehensive vetting process where it must fulfill strict requirements. This includes descriptions for special training, facilities, or equipment, a course synopsis, goals and rationale, Yukon First Nation perspectives, learning standards, assessment components, and formative and summative practices.

This amendment to the Yukon *Education Act* would allow the Yukon education system to work in exactly the same way as the BC system is working now. Any course that is developed under this process must meet the same rigorous standards of every other course that follows the BC curriculum. These locally developed courses are not easier in any way than what students are doing right now in schools for graduation credits.

The Yukon is already using the BC method to develop courses. The only difference in what we do here and what is done in BC is that BC's courses get approved for graduation credits and ours can only get approved as extra credits.

I have already mentioned that, in the Yukon, we have 23 locally developed courses. Of these 23 existing courses, we have five that could become eligible for required graduation credits as arts education or as applied design, skills, and technology courses. They are courses in Aesthetics 11, Ancestral Technology 11, Hairstyling 11, Mentorship 11, and Youth for Dignity 11. The rest of the courses could become required courses as science, social studies, or physical and health education required credits. This would depend on how the minister and the Department of Education evaluated and approve these courses after the act has changed with the removal of section 43(2).

I want to take a moment to talk about a few of the courses that I just mentioned. Hairstyling is a ticketed trade. Aesthetics is a ticketed trade. There are courses for grades 10, 11, and 12 for these skills already created. If you go to the Department of Education website and follow the links through the descriptions of these approved courses and the Goals and Rationale section, you will read that these courses were developed due to the

overwhelming student interest in these fields. You will read that students develop skills quickly and that they feel a sense of ownership in the classroom. Think about that — overwhelming interest and a sense of ownership. If we want students to stay in school and graduate grade 12 with skills and knowledge that mean something to them, we cannot ignore what these courses are telling us.

Earlier on, I tabled support letters and I would like to read from the support letter from the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate to the Leader of the NDP: “The Yukon First Nation Education Directorate wholeheartedly supports the removal of clause 43(2) of the Yukon *Education Act* so that we can allow more locally-developed courses to count towards graduation.

“There are far too many barriers facing our Indigenous students in the Yukon education system. YFNED determines that only 3 out of 10 First Nations kindergarten students will make it to graduation. One of the first things we can do to improve education outcomes for our students, is to make changes to outdated policies and legislation — the low-hanging fruit of solutions.

“We have heard from First Nations Education Commissioners, families, students and education professionals that we need more locally-developed courses to count towards graduation — courses that could include land-based learning or that involves Knowledge Keepers and language teachers in novel formats and that are more accessible and relevant to our students.

“Currently, clause 43(2) of the *Act* allows for only 20% of locally developed courses to count towards graduation. For many students, their schedules do not allow them to take locally-developed courses at all. Not only does this fail Indigenous students who want to take culturally-relevant coursework but it also deprives non-First Nations students from taking courses that teach them about subjects relevant to their home: courses on land claims, leadership, traditional technologies etc.

“Recently, BC amended their education act in this exact area. They broadened the policy on locally developed courses so that BAA or FNA courses can fulfill elective graduation requirements. We should make similar changes here, first by dropping the section of the *Act* that says that locally developed courses cannot represent more than 20% of course-load. And second, by allowing Grade 11 and 12 BAA and FNA courses to count towards required electives for graduation.

“I am excited to see this change come to fruition. I predict a surge in development of new locally developed courses that have the opportunity to ignite an interest in school-based learning for our children, and encourage greater educational outcomes.

“Mahsi’ Cho,

“Melanie Bennett

“Executive Director, Yukon First Nation Education Directorate”

So, I want to expand a bit on what goes on into the development of some of these courses. For example, there are two locally developed courses on climate change. We know that climate change in the Yukon has unique issues and effects.

These courses provide both a global and local context to these issues. They empower students to be part of the climate solution as citizens and as leaders. They make climate change relevant, personal, and show how it is not insurmountable. They give students concrete tools and actions to move forward.

That is what the big ideas for local courses are meant to do. Courses like Yukon First Nations Leadership 10 encourages students to have pride in their own cultural identity and the identity of others, an understanding of Yukon First Nation perspectives, and the capacity to pursue goals and dreams both individually and as a community. The First Fish course was designed at the Ghùch Tlâ Community School at the Carcross/Tagish First Nation, and this course was designed for students to gain traditional skills and knowledge by embedding Carcross/Tagish First Nation ways of knowing, doing, and being. This course recognizes that to empower students to achieve optimum success in school, it is essential that they have a sense of self-worth and pride in themselves and their culture, heritage, and language. It teaches them that nature is an amazing spectacle that offers even more value when seen through a specific lens.

So, I am also going to read from a letter of support from the First Nation School Board. So, it says — quote:

“Thank you for engaging us in your efforts to amend the *Education Act*, following BC’s example to increase the allowance of locally developed courses counting towards graduation credits.

“This is an important topic for us at the First Nation School Board (FNSB), as it has been one of the top priorities or concerns brought to us by our school communities since taking on responsibility for their local schools. We now operate and manage 11 schools throughout Yukon, and in each community we have heard from families, community members, and First Nations governments that they want to see the Learners at their school doing more on-the-land, with Knowledge Keepers, gaining the skills and education we know only our communities, cultures and environments can teach. Often we hear that the school and education systems needs to ‘value’ local knowledge, traditions, protocols and teachings. Accreditation for more locally developed courses and curriculum is one option we have to formally empower communities and signify that we respect non-Western, non-colonial schools of thought, knowledge and ways of being, doing and teaching.

“At FNSB we are also acutely aware of the importance belonging and identity has for all of our Learners. We operate public schools in Yukon, open to students of all backgrounds, and we know that no matter what their ethnicity all of our Learners will benefit from locally-developed courses. They are here, on this land, right now — that is part of who they are and their story. Because of this, they have a responsibility and a privilege to learn the history and culture of this place. They have the ability and opportunity to learn numeracy, literacy and science from our shared land and stories. As educators in Yukon, we have the responsibility to work with community in a good way to develop locally developed courses and make sure they are implemented and engaged with, not as an extra

curricular activity, but as a core element to our Learners’ school careers.

“Finally, we are very familiar with the concerns or criticism that locally developed material does not set our Learners up to be competitive and successful in society. To this, we simply shake our heads. There is no one way to teach any subject, but there are proven strategies to increase engagement and student success. These strategies include storytelling, land-based teaching, and student-specific structure — all elements of a Yukon First Nation pedagogy that is doctrine in our schools.

“With these elements of our mandate and mission outlined, I offer this letter of support from the First Nation School Board for the Yukon NDP’s proposed amendment to remove clause 43(2) of the Yukon *Education Act*.

“Mahsi,

“Melissa Flynn

“Executive Director

“First Nation School Board”

This is just a brief description of only a few of the many locally developed courses that Yukon kids could and should have access to. Why I read that last letter is because I want to be clear that there is a process to make sure that these courses are thoughtful, relevant, and engaging. These are examples of courses that all Yukon students should and hopefully will have access to.

If we want Yukon students to see how they fit in the world around them, they deserve the chance for local, relevant, experiential learning. But right now, as the act stands, Yukon students are being shut out of the experiences that could open doors to their future. This wasn’t always the case, but when BC adjusted to accommodate their locally developed courses, the Yukon did not; we fell behind. Making this small adjustment will get us back to the side of allowing more Yukon students the ability to access locally developed courses.

I am hopeful that every member here should be realizing now that, by making this change, we will have a big impact. Again, this simple change could mean so much for Yukon students, so I hope that each and every one in this Chamber will be voting in favour of this bill.

Hon. Ms. McLean: I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak to this private member’s bill, Bill No. 307, brought forward by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King regarding locally developed courses of study.

Recognizing the unique needs of Yukon First Nations and Yukon communities, we place a high value on offering educational courses that are responsive and relevant to local context. Our commitment extends beyond curriculum development. It’s about building a foundation for a meaningful education that respects and incorporates Yukon First Nation ways of knowing, doing, and being.

In partnership with Yukon First Nations, educators, students, and their families, we are on a journey to reimagine our school system. This transformational journey is rooted in trust and collaboration, ensuring that every step we take is aligned with the needs and aspirations of those we serve. Our

work includes the continuous development and enhancement of curriculum, resources, and training. These efforts are designed to foster localized, culturally inclusive programs that deepen the understanding of Yukon First Nation culture, history, and contributions among all K to 12 students.

Today, I wish to clarify the workings of our curriculum and credit system and how it relates to this private member's bill tabled by the Leader of the New Democratic Party and the implications of our future direction. Yukon's education system follows British Columbia's curriculum and graduation program. By adopting BC's rigorous standards and processes for developing and approving courses, we ensure that our educational offerings meet the diverse needs of Yukon students.

The Yukon *Education Act*, specifically under section 5(a), grants the minister the authority to establish a wide range of courses. Furthermore, section 43 empowers us to offer locally developed courses with approval from school councils or boards and the minister, allowing up to 20 percent of student programs each semester made up of these local courses. This legislative framework was designed to bring flexibility and relevance to our curriculum, particularly benefiting Indigenous students by endorsing locally developed or Indigenous courses and curriculum content.

Over the last 30 years as BC has moved toward a more localized curriculum, the Yukon has followed suit, enriching our curriculum with local and Indigenous content across all grades.

BC's curriculum reform, which includes board/authority authorized — BAA — courses and First Nation authorized courses, allows an unlimited number of locally developed courses to contribute to the 28 elective credits required for graduation. Yukon mirrors this approach, enabling students to potentially fulfill all 28 elective credits with locally developed courses, constituting up to 35 percent of their total course load. There have been no documented cases of students being unable to take locally developed courses due to the current restrictions. Despite this, we recognize the need to re-evaluate and potentially update our legislation to reflect current educational practices.

Our partnership with BC has resulted in a procedure handbook that guides the integration of Yukon's unique educational framework into approved locally developed courses. This collaborative effort underscores our dedication to educational excellence and cultural relevance.

The flexibility of BC's curriculum facilitates the integration of significant Indigenous content without the need to separate courses. Mandatory training of teachers ensures effective delivery of these units, fostering respect and understanding of Yukon First Nation history and culture.

Despite the *Education Act* capping locally developed programs at 20 percent, the evolving nature of our curriculum toward greater localization and Indigenous highlights this restriction's diminishing relevance. Our curriculum framework, heavily influenced by BC policy, supports the creation of Yukon-specific courses that count toward

graduation, emphasizing the value of local and Indigenous content.

Looking ahead to the 2024-25 school year, the Yukon First Nation cultural language and traditional knowledge learning policy will further expand these options, illustrating our commitment to enriching our educational offerings with culturally significant content. In light of these considerations, I certainly support in principle the intent of the private member's bill to remove the limit on locally developed courses, aligning our legislation with current educational practices and the needs of our students. This proposed amendment to the act reflects our ongoing commitment to flexible, inclusive, and enriching education systems.

I want to go just a little bit further into the BC curriculum redesign. I have stated some of this already, but I wanted to take a bit of a deeper dive into it because I think it is really important that we put this on record. We offer students from early kindergarten through to grade 12 a contemporary curriculum that aligns with best practices both nationally and globally. This curriculum is tailored to include the unique context of Yukon and Yukon First Nation ways of knowing, doing, and being.

For many years, the Yukon has adopted the BC curriculum. However, the adoption of BC's redesigned curriculum has truly enhanced our ability to integrate local context and culture into our education programs. As I have heard the member opposite discuss this, I really wanted to put on the record that there are definitely some discrepancies in understanding how we are working within our curriculum and how we have adopted BC's approach. With the adoption of BC's redesigned curriculum and graduation program, Yukon adopted the board/authority authorized process.

Again, just wanting to clarify that and correct the record — it is called the "locally developed course process" in the Yukon and we have collaborated with BC on a procedural handbook. I am happy to provide that to Members of the Legislative Assembly or a link to it, because it is a bigger document. The updated handbook references that students can achieve all of their 28 elective credits for graduation through the BAA or locally developed equivalent and Yukon courses, should they choose. Yukon students currently engage in various locally developed courses in Yukon schools and are accessing credits toward graduation for these courses.

Historically, BC's curriculum was quite rigid, offering little room for the development of locally tailored or Indigenous courses of study. With the passage of the Yukon *Education Act* in 1990, specifically section 43(2), we were given the flexibility to include up to 20 percent of locally developed courses in a student's educational program. This change aimed to make courses more relevant to Yukon students, especially for Indigenous students.

The curriculum redesign, fully implemented in 2020, has eliminated past restraints on personalized instruction. The updated curriculum has introduced: increased hands-on learning opportunities; more personalized learning paths based on student interest; greater emphasis on financial literacy, career education, and life skills; enhanced inclusion of Yukon content and resources; and easier integration of Yukon First

Nation ways of knowing, doing, and being across all subjects and grade levels. Indigenous perspectives are woven throughout all subjects, offering the flexibility to adapt these perspectives to the Yukon context. The curriculum encourages flexible learning environments that are mindful of local context and promote place-based learning. It allows for the creation of rigorous, locally developed courses that reflect our unique needs and context.

This curriculum supports the development of 21st century skills and competencies, ensuring that students are well prepared for the dynamic world ahead, emphasizing numeracy and literacy. Students are expected to hone core competencies in thinking, communication, and personal and social skills across all areas of study. The curriculum highlights these core competencies along with essential academic content and literacy and numeracy foundations, contributing to a deeper and more comprehensive learning experience for our students.

Our redesigned, personalized approach champions a concept-based, competency-driven curriculum that encourages advanced thinking. In collaboration with the curriculum working group, which included representation from Yukon First Nations, cross-cultural units have been developed and were made available for teachers in 2018.

Highlighting our dedication to localized education, we have three units that will soon be among the mandatory courses of all Yukon schools: the grade 10 Indian residential school unit is part of the Social Studies 10 curriculum, offering a full four-credit course; a grade 9 Indian residential school unit is scheduled for pilot in select schools during the 2024-25 school year; additionally, a grade 5 residential school unit has already been piloted. We anticipate its availability in all schools for the 2024-25 school year, accompanied by educator training.

In our collaborative journey with Yukon First Nations, our engagement spanned several levels to ensure a comprehensive and respectful partnership. We recognize the sovereignty and autonomy of Yukon First Nations by engaging with them on a government-to-government basis, ensuring that our interactions respect their equal standing. In our community engagement efforts, we focus on delivering education that is tailored to the citizens within their traditional territories, aiming to reflect the unique needs and aspirations of each community.

Additionally, our commitment to Yukon-wide collaboration is demonstrated through our work with all Yukon First Nation governments and the Council of Yukon First Nations, facilitated through forums like the Yukon Forum. This extensive collaboration extends to partnerships with the Yukon Native Language Centre, the Chiefs Committee on Education, the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate, the First Nations Education Commission, the First Nation School Board, and the data working group, showcasing our dedication to a holistic and inclusive approach to education across the Yukon.

Our ongoing commitment to enhancing educational outcomes for students involves numerous strategic partnerships and initiatives. Community-level education agreements and the joint education action plan serve as foundational frameworks for our collaborative efforts.

Responding to the 2019 audit focuses on areas like reimagining inclusive and special education, demonstrating our commitment to continuous improvement. Agreements with the Yukon Native Language Centre through memorandums of understanding and transfer payment agreements support the revitalization of Indigenous languages. The joint collaboration framework delineates our shared priorities with Yukon First Nations, ensuring that our partnerships effectively address the educational needs.

Initiatives such as the Yukon First Nation credit policy, Ready-to-Learn Schools, and the Indigenous Academy at F.H. illustrate our innovative approaches to education that respect and incorporate First Nation perspectives. A prime example of our collaborative efforts is the partnership with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in aiming toward the co-governance of education in their traditional territory. The initiative guided by section 17.7 of the self-government agreement showcases our dedication to working hand in hand with First Nations to tailor education to our cultural and community values.

I want to explore the crucial elements of the educational framework under section 17.7 of the self-government agreement, commonly known as the "section 17.7s". What exactly are these provisions? I think it's really important to bring this perspective into the House today in this debate.

In 1998, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in signed its self-government agreement, incorporating specific provisions under section 17.7 to section 17.10. These are what we refer to as the "section 17.7s". These provisions not only ensure representation on school committees, councils, or boards within the tradition territory but also enable negotiation over the design, delivery, and administration of several key educational areas, including: school counselling; cross-cultural teacher and administrator orientation; composition of teaching staff; early childhood, special, and adult educational curriculum; the evaluation of teachers, administrators, and other employees; and, notably, the kindergarten through grade 12 curriculum.

The section 17 provision embodies the spirit of the self-government agreements. They enhance government-to-government relationships and pave the way for joint management of education programs, aiming to boost educational outcomes for First Nations students.

Following the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in's lead, the Selkirk First Nation, Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and Carcross/Tagish First Nation are incorporating section 17.7 language into their self-government agreements with the option available to all self-governing Yukon First Nations, which we are working toward right now.

Implementing section 17.7 under the self-government agreements represents a critical shift toward a more collaborative educational approach within First Nation traditional territories, working together to enhance education delivery.

Education and curriculum decisions are now made in partnership, not in isolation. In practice, this means regular collaboration between departmental staff, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in education teams, and the school administrators to collectively address planning, prioritization, and problem-solving.

This past summer, such collaboration was exemplified when department staff and the Robert Service School principal, the superintendent, and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in education staff met in Moosehide village to plan activities supporting this partnership alongside participation in First Fish activities. The cooperative approach extended in curriculum development, aiming to weave local knowledge and traditions throughout all subjects, with the Curriculum and Assessment branch providing support to identify priorities.

A curriculum consultant collaborates with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in team to refresh locally developed courses and integrate the Dënezhu ways of knowing, doing, and being across a curriculum beyond just language classes or land-based learning. We can continue to work and learn together alongside Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. We look forward to forging new agreements with other First Nations that are guided by the principles of section 17.7.

Our commitment to partnership and inclusive education is steadfast, reflecting our dedication to enhancing relationships and empowering First Nation voices throughout education.

Other First Nations such as Carcross/Tagish First Nation, Selkirk First Nation, and Ta'an Kwäch'än have also, as I have said, embraced section 17 language, tailoring it to their communities' unique needs and aspirations through the core principles of empowering communities to shape their educational futures. It remains absolutely constant.

Looking forward, we are excited to negotiate those new agreements, honouring the unique dreams and aspirations of Yukon First Nation self-government agreements and really moving into their vision for education systems in the Yukon while maintaining our commitment to collaborative governance.

In conclusion, on the section 17.7 provision, our landmark in our journey toward reconciliation, an inclusive education by valuing First Nation knowledge, traditions, and aspirations enriches our educational landscape and fosters a brighter, more equitable future for all.

The Department of Education's commitment extends to decolonization of the education system and support for Indigenous language revitalization across all Yukon schools. An example of this commitment is the pilot training program launched in the 2023-24 school year. This program allows two Yukon First Nation educators to undertake paid professional development leave, enhancing their skills and fluency in Yukon First Nation languages. The anticipated impact of this program on language teaching effectiveness in our classroom highlights our dedication to preserving and promoting Indigenous languages as a core component to our educational landscape.

I wanted to talk a little bit about the 2019 audit. The Office of the Auditor General of Canada conducted an audit, and we received that report in 2019. It conducted an audit that led to recommendations for the Department of Education to solidify and act on its commitments to working alongside Yukon First Nations. This included the creation and execution of a policy designed for collaboration as well as a strategic action plan characterized by specific measurable actions and timelines aimed at bolstering our joint efforts.

Following the audit's release, we have taken several significant steps. We established education agreements with all Yukon First Nations underlining our shared commitment to improving education outcomes for First Nation students. A student data-sharing memorandum of understanding — or, sorry — a memorandum of understanding on data working group has been formed with Yukon First Nations, facilitating better insights and decision-making based on shared information. The data working group stands as a collaborative effort that includes representatives from Yukon First Nations, Yukon education, and technical staff from the Chiefs Committee on Education.

The primary aim of this group is to facilitate the sharing of aggregated data on Yukon First Nation students' performance. Additionally, it ensures that Yukon First Nations have a significant role in the review and quality assurance process for this data, highlighting our commitment to transparency and collaborative evaluation.

To enhance our support for the data needs of Yukon First Nations, the department has developed a dedicated Yukon First Nation dashboard. This tool compiles various data sets to provide a comprehensive overview of student performance and other relevant metrics. The dashboard has been made available to First Nations and the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate, serving as a resource to inform decisions and initiatives aimed at improving educational outcomes for First Nation students.

In the 2023-24 fiscal year, we are allocating \$735,000 in funding to support the implementation of the joint education action plan and other collective education priorities, demonstrating our financial commitment to these vital initiatives.

Our partnership with Yukon First Nations in the realm of education is both dynamic and evolving, particularly through the joint education action plan of 2014 to 2024. This plan identifies four critical areas for action. In our approach to education, we prioritize ensuring that students receive an education that deeply respects and integrates First Nation culture and language throughout their K to 12 schooling. This commitment to K to 12 culture and language is foundational to our educational philosophy.

Simultaneously, we are dedicated to working toward greater First Nation involvement and leadership within the educational processes that directly impact their communities. This effort toward authority, control, and responsibility aims to empower First Nations with more significant input and decision-making power in education. Moreover, we strive to create a supportive environment that fosters educational success and sustainability. Through targeted support and resources, our focus on sustainability supports and success is designed to bolster the educational journey of every student.

Finally, addressing and reducing the disparities of academic achievement between First Nation students and their peers is a critical objective. By closing the academic achievement gap, we are committed to ensuring quality in education, recognizing the importance of every student's success.

In pursuit of these priorities, we have undertaken several significant actions. We have committed \$1.83 million in 2023-24 to collaborate with 14 Yukon First Nations on a government-to-government basis at the community level. This funding supports initiatives tailored to the unique educational priorities within their traditional territories, often articulated through education or funding agreements.

In our ongoing efforts to support the revitalization of Yukon First Nation languages, we allocated \$1.2 million to the Yukon Native Language Centre. This investment aided in providing training and support for Yukon First Nation language teachers in schools, underlining our commitment to preserving and promoting Indigenous languages. To further bolster language initiatives within schools, we have dedicated an additional \$2.6 million in the 2023-24 year, ensuring that language learning and cultural immersion remain a priority in our educational strategy.

The Yukon First Nation Education Directorate received annual funding of \$735,000 from YG, which contributes to covering a portion of their administrative costs and, again, expenses related to the joint education action plan. This funding represents four percent of their total annual budget, reinforcing our support for their pivotal role in shaping educational outcomes in the Yukon.

The launch of the Ready-to-Learn Schools initiative in the fall of 2022 marks another milestone in our efforts to create an educational environment that is welcoming and conducive to learning for all students from their very first day of school. Through these actions, we are making strides toward realizing the goals set forth in the joint education action plan, demonstrating our commitment to a collaborative, inclusive, and culturally responsive educational landscape in the Yukon. Current discussions are underway for the renewal of the joint education action plan, which will not only revisit our strategies but will also include crucial funding discussions, ensuring the continued support and enhancement of our educational collaboration.

In the 2023 school year, as it commenced, an historic milestone was reached with the 11 schools across the Yukon being operated by the First Nation School Board. This momentous development signifies a powerful step forward in Yukon First Nations and their citizens reclaiming greater control and responsibility over the educational programs in their communities. This journey toward self-determination and education autonomy began 51 years ago when a delegation of Indigenous leaders from Yukon travelled to Ottawa. Their mission was to present a landmark document entitled *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* to the Prime Minister, laying the groundwork for the significant advancements we see today.

The establishment of the First Nation School Board stands as a testament to the effective collaboration between Yukon First Nations and the Government of Yukon. This partnership is a cornerstone to advancing reconciliation, supporting First Nation students, and enriching the educational experience for all Yukon students with the knowledge of Yukon First Nation ways of knowing, doing, and being.

To support the implementation of the joint education action plan, the First Nation School Board has been allocated substantial funding. \$1.2 million is directed toward the employment of language teachers within the schools, underscoring the importance of language preservation and revitalization. An additional \$6.8 million is provided to bolster the First Nation School Board's initiatives. This funding is earmarked for enhancing student supports, including the integration of culture, language, heritage, and the Indigenization of the curriculum, alongside the development of community committees. These funds are pivotal in ensuring that the First Nation School Board can effectively implement initiatives that reflect the values, traditions, and educational aspirations of Yukon First Nations, making a lasting impact on student lives.

With the funding agreement with the First Nation School Board set to expire on June 30, 2024, we are actively seeking a negotiating mandate to ensure the sustainability of this partnership and continued support for First Nation education in the Yukon. Our collaborative efforts also extend to the development of a new teacher resource and professional learning tool. This tool is designed to integrate Yukon First Nation languages, culture, history, and ways of knowing, doing, and being across all grade levels and subject areas, reflecting our commitment to an education system that respects and celebrates First Nation heritage.

In February 2022, a significant stride was made in the pursuit of enhancing First Nation education in the Yukon. Department officials and members of the First Nations Education Commission, also known as FNEC, came together to finalize the Yukon First Nation education collaborative framework. This framework, crafted through a partnership between the Department of Education and FNEC, aligns with the priority areas identified in the joint education action plan, which include: Yukon First Nation culture and language authority; control and responsibility; sustainability; supports and success; closing the academic achievement gap; and data and student information.

The framework outlines opportunities for collaboration, actions taken, and timelines, setting a clear path for future initiatives. A crucial next step for its implementation is to ensure that all department staff are well-informed about the collaborative framework. This includes understanding its purpose, their individual roles within it, and what effective implementation entails.

Implementation of the collaborative framework can take various forms, each contributing to an overarching goal of enriching First Nation education in the Yukon. Some of these methods include our ongoing work with the Yukon Native Language Centre to support the revitalization of Yukon First Nation languages and negotiating and implementing education agreements with Yukon First Nations that reflect joint priorities. Additionally, it involves implementing specific provisions under the self-government agreements with five First Nation communities, ensuring that all students have opportunities to learn about Yukon First Nation language,

culture, and traditions, and supporting schools operating under the First Nation School Board.

Further efforts include collaborating with Yukon First Nations to develop their teacher resource that incorporates First Nation ways of knowing, doing, and being into lessons, developing a learner outcome strategy, and implementing the data-sharing memorandum of understanding.

The First Nations Education Commission had tasked the department with working closely with Yukon First Nations to report back on the implementation progress of the collaborative framework at each quarterly FNEC meeting. This directive underscores the commitment of transparency, accountability, and continuous dialogue, ensuring that the path forward is both collaborative and reflective of shared educational goals.

Finally, we are on the cusp of finalizing the learning outcome strategy. This strategy aims to ensure that all efforts are aligned and effective in delivering the best possible educational outcomes for students across the Yukon, marking another step forward in our commitment to education that is inclusive, respectful, and comprehensive.

The Department of Education has established education funding agreements with 12 Yukon First Nations to support the implementation of education priorities and outcomes for their citizens. These agreements are with the Carcross/Tagish First Nation, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun, Kluane First Nation, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation, Ross River Dena Council, Selkirk First Nation, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, Teslin Tlingit Council, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, and White River First Nation. Efforts are ongoing to finalize the transfer payment agreements with the Liard First Nation and the Vuntut Gwitchin Government, ensuring that funding flows to them to support the educational aspirations of their communities.

The collaboration between the department and the First Nations has yielded significant benefits for Yukon students, breathing life into various programs, units, camps, and resources that enrich the educational landscape. Among these initiatives are the Yukon First Nation credit policy, which acknowledges credits for land-based and locally delivered education programs. Highlights of these collaborative efforts include the doöli, a project offering traditional knowledge resource development with the Northern Tutchone nations for the schools at Pelly Crossing, Mayo, and Carmacks, which also includes teacher training to ensure that these resources are effectively integrated into learning.

In partnership with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, credits for First Fish, First Hunt, and Moose Hunt have been recognized as part of the education agreement under section 17.7, validating these important cultural practices as educational achievements. Spring culture and trapping camps have been established, such as the one that you will find in Old Crow with the Vuntut Gwitchin Government and the Kluane Lake School with the Kluane First Nation providing students with immersive experiences in traditional practices. Curriculum integration with the Carcross/Tagish First Nation is a tailored curriculum focused on first fish, hunt, or trapping experience that has been developed, further embedding cultural knowledge and practices

into the educational experience. These initiatives are exemplary of the depth and meaningful collaboration between the department and First Nations aimed at creating an educational system that really respects and reflects the rich cultural heritage and knowledge of Yukon First Nations.

In an effort to acknowledge and honour the educational value of the First Nation-led cultural experiences, a draft for the Yukon First Nation credit was developed, echoing the feedback from numerous Yukon First Nation partners. This initiative was presented to the First Nations Education Commission members in May 2023 during their gathering in Dawson City and revisited with an updated draft this past February. The next draft will be brought to FNEC next month.

According to section 43 of the *Education Act*, a locally developed course of study can be integrated into an educational program once it has received approval from both the school board, council, and minister. These proposed credits are envisioned to be recognized as locally developed electives within the Dogwood graduation program. The FNEC members expressed support for the concept of the credit policy, highlighting the need for further discussion to understand how such a policy might uniquely affect each First Nation. This conversation is crucial for ensuring that the policy is inclusive, equitable, and reflective of the diverse needs and aspirations of all Yukon First Nation communities.

Additionally, in 2021, the Indigenous Academy at F.H. Collins has been pioneering an educational model that embraces learning through Yukon First Nation ways of knowing, doing, and being utilizing an experiential learning approach. This program allows students to engage in authentic, hands-on Indigenous activities, deepening their understanding of local cultures and contributing positively to the community. Students partake in a half-day program that includes credit courses in languages as well as immersive experiences with elders, knowledge-keepers, and respected Indigenous leaders. Upon successful completion, students are awarded grade 10 credits for English, First Peoples, leadership, social studies, and career life education showcasing the practical and cultural value of integrating Indigenous knowledge and practice into ministry-based curriculum.

Highlighting our dedication to localized education, we have three units that are or soon will be among the mandatory courses for all Yukon schools. The grade 10 Indian residential school unit is delivered as part of the Social Studies 10 curriculum. This is a full four-credit course. We have a grade 9 Indian residential school unit that has already been piloted. We expect that it will be offered in the 2024-25 school year in all schools. This will include training for educators.

I would also like to highlight some of the locally developed elective courses which are equivalent to BC's board/authority courses. Yukon First Nations Leadership 10 engages Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth with leadership skills grounded in cultures of Yukon First Nations. It emphasizes understanding and pride in one's cultural identity and the identities of others, fostering respect for Yukon First Nation languages, histories, and traditions.

First Fish 10 is designed for students to gain traditional skills and knowledge by embedding Carcross/Tagish First Nation ways of knowing, doing, and being. It teaches students how to interact with the environment around us and our place within, which promotes sustainability for future generations. Ancestral Technology 11 introduces students to the design and making of a variety of Yukon First Nation ancestral technologies designed for living on the land. By making these implements, students gather a depth of understanding of the challenges faced by First Nations long ago and the skills and attitudes that they acquired through that.

Youth for Dignity 12 helps youth understand issues and causes related to gender-based and relationship violence and enables them to communicate this knowledge with their peers, family, and community members. Youth become empowered with the skills and tools needed to increase safety and respond to gender-based and relationship violence in their own lives and in those of their family and community members.

There are a few other experiential learning programs — I know that they were mentioned by the Leader of the New Democratic Party — and I would just like to talk briefly about them. We take pride in offering a diverse range of experiential learning programs across several Yukon schools, each designed to enrich students' educational experiences through hands-on learning. These programs' core objective is to enable students to learn from their direct experience, engaging them in ways that traditional classroom settings may not. Among these innovative programs are ACES — the Achievement, Challenge, Environment, Stewardship program, established in 1988. ACES promotes positive peer modelling through challenges and stewardship of the environment, aiming to instill a sense of achievement and responsibility in students. CHAOS — the Community, Heritage, Adventure, Outdoors and Skills program — is characterized by expeditions that blend academic studies with adventures focusing on community engagement, heritage appreciation, outdoor skills, and personal growth. MAD — Music, Art and Drama — offers students a comprehensive foundation in arts, including creative dramatics, acting, stagecraft, music, dance, and play-writing, encouraging creative expression and artistic development.

It basically operates as a school within a school. Each of these programs maintains a unique schedule and sets learning objectives tailored to their specific focus area. The model facilitates a personalized learning environment that supports students' diverse interests and goals. These experiential learning initiatives underscore our dedication to a holistic and inclusive education approach. By incorporating respect for and understanding of Yukon First Nation culture and knowledge, we aim to foster an educational environment that really values diversity, creativity, and hands-on learning.

Earlier today, I tabled a letter. I will speak about it in a moment, but I wanted to talk about the duty to consult. Recognizing the invaluable contributions of our many and diverse stakeholders, the Department of Education is very much committed to holistic and inclusive approaches to policy development. We firmly believe that understanding the perspectives and needs of our partners is essential to crafting

informed, effective decisions that positively impact our educational communities. This foundational belief underscores our dedication to fostering meaningful engagement and collaboration with all stakeholders, ensuring that every voice is heard and considered in the shaping of policies that enrich Yukon's educational landscape.

The Department of Education in Yukon, which encompasses three distinct school authorities — the First Nation School Board, the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon, and Yukon Education — upholds a pivotal responsibility to engage in thorough consultation with the Yukon Association of Education Professionals before the introduction of the implementation of any new policy or directive. As we know, this consultation process is especially critical when the proposed changes have the potential to impact the work conditions and employment relationship of members within the Yukon Association of Education Professionals bargaining unit.

At the heart of this process is the understanding that the employment relationship exists squarely between the employer and the employees. This relationship is governed by a set of policies that address key employment matters including but not limited to leave entitlements, salary arrangements, recruitment strategies, and disciplinary actions.

It is imperative that any new policy introduced does not only steer clear of conflicting with the established terms and conditions of the collective agreement between the Yukon government and the Yukon Association of Education Professionals but also respects and enhances this foundational employment relationship.

To ensure that the consultation process is both meaningful and effective, the department adheres to a set of guiding principles designed to facilitate open, transparent, and constructive dialogue. These principles include: initiating the consultation process at an early stage of any policy review or change, thereby ensuring that all parties involved are well-informed about the proposed decision and have ample opportunity to prepare and share their input; providing comprehensive information to all relevant stakeholders about the decision under consideration, ensuring that each party is fully aware of the potential impacts and implications; guaranteeing that each party is afforded a genuine and timely opportunity to present their views, opinions, and feedback on the proposed policy or directive. This involves creating an environment where all contributions are valued and considered, remaining genuinely open to suggestions from all stakeholders, and responding thoughtfully and thoroughly to any concerns, questions, or issues that may arise during the consultation process. This includes: giving serious consideration to any suggestions or opinions put forth by representatives of the parties involved; committing to review and consider all suggestions, opinions, and feedback provided by stakeholders with the aim of integrating valuable insights into the final decision-making process; and ensuring that responses to requests for additional information or clarification are provided in a timely and effective manner, thereby facilitating an ongoing and productive dialogue among all parties.

By adhering to these principles, the Department of Education's three school authorities seek to foster a collaborative and respectful relationship with the Yukon Association of Education Professionals.

This approach not only supports the development of policies that are in the best interest of both the education professionals and the broader educational community but also reinforces the culture of mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation. It is through this collaborative process that we can continue to enhance the quality of education in the Yukon, ensuring that it meets the diverse needs and expectations of the community.

Earlier today, I tabled a letter that was in response to a letter from the president of the Yukon Association of Education Professionals — an e-mail to me and a response. I have sent a letter just advising all of our partners and key stakeholders that this bill has been tabled. I have sent a letter outlining what it is that we are doing today to Carcross/Tagish First Nation, Champagne and Aishihik First Nation, First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun, Kluane First Nation, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Liard First Nation, Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation, Ross River Dena Council, Selkirk First Nation, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, Teslin Tlingit Council, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Vuntut Gwitchin, White River First Nation, and other partners — the Association of Yukon School Councils, Boards and Committees, the Yukon Association of Education Professionals, First Nation School Board, Chiefs Committee on Education, the First Nations Education Commission, the Advisory Committee for Yukon Education, which is made up of 31 partners, and the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon. I can table that letter tomorrow during the tabling of documents.

On that note, I thank you very much for the opportunity to speak to this important topic today. As I mentioned in the beginning, we place a high value on offering educational courses that are responsive and relevant to local context. I appreciate all of the work and partnerships that go into localizing curriculum in the Yukon, and I certainly look forward to a lot more of that work happening in our territory to really advance the education of all Yukon children.

Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak at second reading to this bill today, and I wanted to thank the Leader of the NDP and her staff for the briefing that they provided to us yesterday with respect to the proposed changes to the *Education Act*.

On the surface, this amendment seems quite straightforward. Obviously, adjusting the percentage of offerings for locally developed curriculum is something that, again, as I mentioned, does seem quite straightforward. We understand, of course, that under the 2021 confidence and supply agreement between the NDP and the Yukon Liberals, section 3.1 spells out the requirement to allow one private member's bill per Sitting to advance to a vote. So, given that, it is our understanding that this bill has been identified under that section and will be advanced through second reading today and into Committee and then the opportunity, of course, for a third

reading vote at the next private member's day, unless, of course, unanimous consent is granted to get that to a vote to third reading later today.

One of the concerns — and I have talked to the Leader of the NDP about this — from our standpoint is with respect to consultation. There were some letters tabled earlier today by the sponsor of this bill. As well, the Minister of Education tabled an e-mail and a letter respecting what we are talking about here as well. You know, I think that obviously the Yukon Association of Education Professionals is the subject of the letters that the minister tabled, and they are important partners in educating our children in the public school system, but, of course, there are others. When I talked to the member yesterday, I asked about school councils; I asked about post-secondary institutions like Yukon University and then some of the southern post-secondary institutions that Yukon students would often attend and what their response was.

I certainly recognize that there is a lack of resources that opposition parties have when it comes to broad consultation on this, but I will look forward to getting some answers in Committee of the Whole on the consultation and some other questions that we have with respect to the bill. We will be supporting the bill at second reading to get it to Committee of the Whole so that we can ask those questions and get some responses from the Member for Takhini-Kopper King, the Leader of the NDP.

Again, as I mentioned earlier, having looked at the documents that the minister tabled today, the e-mail from the president of the Yukon Association of Education Professionals and her letter and response, I think it's also important that I flag an e-mail that came in just after 3:00 p.m. this afternoon — 3:01 p.m. It is to the Minister of Education and copied to the Leader of the NDP, the Leader of the Yukon Party, and myself as the Yukon Party Education critic. It says, "Dear Hon. Minister..." — it says the minister's name, but, of course, I can't read that out — "... Thank you for the timely correspondence and information.

"The YAEP supports changes to the legislation which promote the creation of Yukon-specific courses that count towards graduation and emphasize the value of local and Indigenous content.

"We provide this support with the recognition and understanding that Yukon-specific courses must be developed in a manner which facilitates improved and better access for Yukon graduates to tertiary opportunities.

"We look forward to hearing how Yukon government will practically support and ensure the academic relevance of courses that improve and ensure better access for Yukon graduates to tertiary opportunities."

Mr. Speaker, as I am copied on this, I will table the letter now for the House. I can provide that letter to the Clerk. Again, this is from Ted Hupé, the President of the Yukon Association of Education Professionals. It certainly addresses the concerns that we had with respect to YAEP. They indicate from this e-mail that they are supportive of these proposed amendments.

One of the other aspects for YAEP that I will be interested in hearing more about is with respect to professional

development. Obviously, any changes to curriculum could require additional training and professional development for our educators, so that would be something that we would look forward to hearing about, but I will wrap up my comments. As I mentioned, we will have some questions in Committee of the Whole and we will be supporting this bill at second reading.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the opportunity today to speak to this important motion and bill. I also appreciate the opportunity to speak about Yukon education and the importance of what I believe is the future of education, and it certainly involves locally crafted courses and further experiential learning programs. I also appreciate the bill being brought forward by the Leader of the Third Party and the opportunity to discuss what I believe are truly important issues here in the territory.

I had the honour of working with the Department of Education for a few years. I am trained, many years ago, as a teacher and spent some time in classrooms both outside of the territory and inside and, more particularly, at what is now Yukon University as well, so I truly believe in the importance of our education system. Ultimately, what is being asked of here today is progress.

I will start just for a moment about the legal aspect of the importance of changing laws, and laws clearly affect nearly every aspect of our daily lives — no question. Certainly, it impacts the daily lives of everybody in this room at the moment for the purposes of the responsibility and the burden that we have to make sure that legislation is relevant — relevant for the community that it serves and regulates and that it responds to the needs of Yukoners. The work that is done here in this Chamber is responsible for making sure that those values are upheld for the purposes of making sure that Yukoners are accessing and being responsible to so many of the changing values in our communities and society. As we evolve and we learn social norms or progress, we need to adapt and amend laws to make sure that we are making the changes that are required by society and that we are responsive in the nature.

I've said several times in this Legislative Assembly that it's often government that takes the lead in making change by making a change in a law. We have been proud — me in particular and I know my colleagues, in particular, the Minister responsible for the Women and Gender Equity Directorate and the Department of Education — to stand in this Legislative Assembly and bring forward new laws that are progressive with respect to protecting the LGBTQ2S+ community and gender-equity-seeking groups for the purpose of making laws relevant to them and adapting our laws to social norms as they progress.

We are a progressive government in that way and I'm very proud of the work that has been done as one example of how our laws can first of all lead in community change and secondly effect community change as we move forward. In Canada, for instance, Indigenous customs and traditions have also contributed to alternative approaches to laws — in particular, such as healing or sentencing circles, community justice, restorative justice — and here in the world of education, we've heard much about the education development of the First

Nation School Board, the development of the First Nation Education Directorate, and the real change that they have brought to the lives of Yukoners and Yukon students.

In Yukon, Mr. Speaker, we are leaders in this world of change. Other jurisdictions in Canada and actually outside of Canada look to us to determine how we do things and how we have had the benefit and the responsibility of collaborating with Yukon First Nation governments, community organizations, individuals, and others to learn and to do better as we move forward.

Just one example of that would be the collaborative approach that has been taken to the changes to the *Child and Family Services Act* and the importance of doing that for the benefit of Indigenous children here in the territory who are in the care of others and the collaboration that it requires of government and caregivers who are responsible for children to make sure that there is collaboration, cooperation, and connection to a child's First Nation. That is just one example.

Our society is extremely complex and the work that goes into these types of collaborations — a collaboration similar to the one for the health authority which is currently before this Legislative Assembly — are real priorities for our government and I say the future of how legislation will be developed as we go forward.

With respect to how processes are developed with respect to changing legislation or amending legislation here in the territory in the Legislative Assembly and the work that goes behind — it is truly, Mr. Speaker, impossible to explain the work that goes behind bringing a piece of legislation to this House for debate — the process of our Cabinet Committee on Legislation, our working group with respect to legislation — and yes, we have certainly heard many times in this House that changes should be made: Just make that change to an act; just bring a new act in to do this, that, or the other thing. We appreciate — and I certainly know that the government officials who work on these projects appreciate — that it takes a long time for that process to unwind, but that is because it is incredibly important to make sure that the process includes policy development, which includes assessment and evaluation of the impact of the changes to other pieces of legislation — how does a new act or an amendment to an act interact with other laws, policies, or procedures — other regulations, other integrated pieces of law here in the law that operate? Someone might say that this is a pretty simple change; we are just going to take out a section of the *Education Act* and we are going to make sure that all of a sudden there is no limit on what locally developed courses can be used to fulfill our high school graduation. But that interacts realistically and practically with the BC curriculum which has been chosen to be the criteria upon which individuals who achieve it will be assessed.

Now, that's not to say that there's not strong merit in this approach or strong merit even in the amendment that's being suggested, but it absolutely must be addressed or assessed and evaluated on the basis of what impact those changes will have on other pieces of legislation. How does it interact with laws, policies, and procedures? There has to be a full consideration of what needs to be changed to give life to the amendments or

to new laws. I say that not only is that a general rule, but it applies here in this case.

If a proper assessment — and full consideration of what needs to be done — is not properly done, there could be an issue of unintended consequences, and they may later become apparent. One of the primary concerns that I have — and not necessarily in relation to this specific bill — is about access for students to locally developed courses, access to students in the Yukon for consistency across the territory, for consistency in opportunity, and for consistency in what is available. I will speak in a moment about something that is very impressive, developed by teachers and others in 2012, I believe — or 2013 is the first one — but I will return for a second to the idea of locally developed courses, which is specific to this bill.

The full assessment and the full consideration of what is asked for here in this bill is a focus on locally developed courses. I appreciate that it's a term that has some definition and perhaps is even too narrow. It doesn't really matter where courses are developed. I'll speak in a moment about the importance of experiential education generally, but it doesn't matter where a course is developed; it matters what the educational and learning outcomes are and what it is designed to achieve.

There are questions that we have to ask ourselves. Does the curriculum — 20 percent or 100 percent or 62 percent — or I don't know what the number is — in total have high school criteria achieved? Does it help students achieve critical thinking, emotional intelligence, experiential learning, and the skills that one needs to achieve things in life — the skills one needs to achieve success and happiness in their own lives, whatever that is for an individual?

A long time ago, I think we decided that memorizing a bunch of history dates, war dates, or maybe even long lists of great prose for English literature — those kinds of things — really has to take second seat to the skills that we are trying to achieve for students.

We have to know about and consider what we should focus on and what courses, no matter where or how they are developed — do they achieve these learning outcomes?

The bill here before us now anticipates removing limits completely in compliance with the BC curriculum. I wanted to turn to the idea in a moment about true access to these courses and the importance of that. I think that we have to take into account what the bill is really attempting to do. If there has been a limit on locally developed courses, what is the purpose of that limit? Is it outdated? Does it need to be removed? In the event that the answer to all of those questions is yes, then what does it need to be replaced with? I am not aware, standing here in this Legislative Assembly — or from anything I have heard so far — what the curriculum experts say about that.

Is that any reason to not proceed? No, but it is a consideration that has to be taken into account.

Yukon's curriculum is based on the BC curriculum. We have heard that. It is specially designed — intentionally designed — to allow teachers to adapt and to incorporate local and Indigenous content extensively from kindergarten through to grade 12. So, perhaps the mover of this bill will say that this

is not enough and that locally developed content isn't what we're looking for; we're looking for full courses and those courses have to count toward graduation requirements. I appreciate that argument, but we must recognize that there is room within the current system to really focus on our students and what they need. We all, I think, agree that they need locally developed content and that they need experiences that are uniquely available here in the Yukon. I can't imagine anyone saying that the bison hunt and the muskrat camp are not unrivalled experiences anywhere in the world. The children who get to experience this are so blessed with respect to having those opportunities.

The Department of Education here in the territory does oversee a structured process to develop and approve locally developed courses for use all across Yukon schools, and I think that is incredibly important. Locally developed courses that count toward graduation credits have to be available to students across the territory. Determining how that could happen or at what rate that could happen is an important practical outcome for this particular bill. The act permits the local development of education programs for school use and it does limit, at the moment, the use to 20 percent of the student's overall education program. We know that this is causing problems because of the concept that we heard of the four courses now instead of five, so what does 20 percent mean? It's not a quarter and it's not one of the four courses; it's part of a course — so that clearly needs to be adjusted.

We have to recognize also that, under the current *Education Act*, the minister does have the authority to establish courses of study for implementation of the goals and objectives of the Yukon education system. We do need to remember and recognize that the goals and objectives of the education system and the criteria set out in the BC curriculum have to be transferable. It has to be a language that can be spoken across the world as our students graduate and go out into the world and try to achieve their own hopes and dreams.

I will take that opportunity to talk about the importance of experiential learning — what are commonly known as the Wood Street programs: the outdoor education programs and the Music, Art and Drama program — the MAD program. During my opportunities as the Minister of Education, I worked to expand such programs and access to such programs to make sure that they are available. I worked hard against the criticism that they were only available to certain groups of students and worked hard to make sure that they were expanded. Even during COVID, we worked diligently to make the changes that would be necessary to ensure that, firstly, our schools didn't close, as in many other places in Canada and the world, but that these experiential learning opportunities were available to students. We clearly understood the importance of them in achieving and maintaining students' opportunities to develop skills and self-expression or self-direction, creativity and discipline, cooperation, adaptability, and conflict resolution. These are skills that are absolutely invaluable and are the way of the future of education. I said that many times; I truly believe that here in the Yukon but everywhere. Our redesigned curriculum at the time and now encourages student-centred,

hands-on learning, and this is the way of the future for education. We need to adapt, we need to make sure that our laws are relevant, and we need to make sure that our students are at the core of all of these decisions.

MLA Tredger: Mr. Speaker, I want to add a perspective to the conversation today as someone who went to school in a Yukon school and had the absolute privilege of attending some pretty world-class programs at Wood Street school. I was very lucky to attend the OPES program. I was trying to remember exactly what that stands for. I think it's outdoor pursuit and experiential science, but please don't quote me on that because I think that the name of the program has changed anyway, though I'm seeing some thumbs-up, so I think I got the name right. Anyway, when I was in grade 10, we just called it "OPES" — might have even been in grade 9.

I had just the most amazing semester there. I got credits for science, social studies, physical education, and outdoor education — and probably some other things that have slipped away from my memory — at the time. I don't really remember the credits, but I sure remember what I learned in those courses. I remember going on — I don't know what the official name for it was, but we called it our "winter survival trip" where we got to stay out all night in minus 20, camping and learning what it was like. We learned about the symptoms of hypothermia, so we knew how to avoid them. We learned about how to safely make fires and do it in a way that was environmentally responsible. You know, every time that I have been in the bush since and getting cold, I have thought back to that night and thought: What should I do? — and I have known. One of the trips that I remember from that semester that stands out the most in my mind is that we biked along the South Canol all the way to Ross River and, as we went, we observed the trees as we changed altitude, and we got to learn about all those trees and I can still identify most of the trees on that road as I learned when I drove it last summer.

Then, when we got to Ross River we got into canoes and we paddled down to Faro — and there we had the absolute treat of going on a tour of the mine site — the Faro mine site. That is something that not many people get to do. I have since talked about getting to tour the mine site and see some of the areas where there have been spills and what the effects were. Those images really have stayed with me in my mind — of what an effect of a spill from decades ago looks like. I have talked about it to friends who study mining and they say: We have never been able to get access to see that. That is incredible that you were able to actually go in that site and see there. That was all thanks to that program.

We learned a lot in the classroom too. I remember learning about the tragedy of the commons and talking about what environmental stewardship looks like. How can we collectively have resources and take care of them together? I remember learning about avalanche safety, and those are things that I think about every time I go out in the winter in the backcountry.

It was a really incredible experience for me, but to be honest, school in general worked pretty well for me. I probably would have been okay even if I had stayed in the regular

program, but a lot of my peers — for them, it was the first place they really felt that they were thriving and they were excited to be learning about science and social studies — things that before had just been textbooks, now they got to go out and learn about, and that made all the difference for them.

I think that is even more true when you think about students living outside of Whitehorse — living in rural places where we know the graduation rates are lower — and I think that a big part of that is because students don't always see the relevance to themselves in learning about — oh, I don't know — the French revolution, which we also covered in OPES, but we did it in a way that connected it back to what we were doing as we travelled around the Yukon.

These experiential learning programs are incredible, and they are really the envy of a lot of Canada. When I think about the Wood Street programs, we are so lucky to have them here in the Yukon, and I feel so lucky that I got to experience them.

So, bringing it back to this bill, you might be wondering: Well, if we already have that program, why do we need this change to have actually locally developed courses and not just local content within courses? The reason my party brought forward this bill is because we heard from people — like the creators of the Wood Street programs, like the Yukon First Nation School Board, like the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate — that they were being limited by this restriction that students couldn't take more than 20 percent of a semester's course load, that the law that we're trying to change today was limiting their ability to enact meaningful experiential, local courses and local content for students. This was the content that their students were asking for, that the families of their students were asking for, and as educators, they knew this would be meaningful to students in a way that no textbook could be.

So that's why we're here today discussing this bill. It's because of those requests; it's because the people on the ground told us this was what was needed. When I think back to my experience at OPES, I want that for every student in the Yukon. I want every student in the Yukon to have meaningful, experiential, relevant courses that speak to them and that give them ways to thrive and learn in all the many ways that students learn.

When educators tell us that this is what they need, I think we should take that pretty seriously. That's why I am supporting this bill today, because I want those experiences for all students, and I hope I'll see the support of all my colleagues in this House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to my colleagues who have spoken on second reading here today and to the Leader of the NDP for bringing forth this bill. It must be very interesting to hear the MLAs today speak about experiential learning when one of the architects of such learning opportunities is sitting in the gallery listening. It's quite an honour to be able to have this conversation with Mr. Sharp here. I know that the first of the Antigonish crew who came up here, Jeff Teasdale, was mentored under Mr. Sharp and speaks very highly of him every time I see him. So, this is a wonderful opportunity to give back a little bit of

praise to those who helped us along the way. I think about somebody like Paula Thompson as well in my career as a math teacher. Paula was the curriculum advisor for math when I was in the school system in Robert Service School.

She was great in mentoring rural math teachers who didn't necessarily have the ability to be in Whitehorse and get the professional development opportunities that an urban math teacher would have. She made it a point to ensure that rural teachers were going out and correcting standardized testing — the exams at that time we received from BC, but they were part of the Alberta curriculum. The people that got contracts in Alberta were actually from the United States.

It was very interesting to have these types of questions when you're sitting in Dawson City and you have a certain curriculum and then you have standardized tests that now used different examples, different coloured algebra tiles — different everything — to be able to go into a conversation when you're correcting exams and ask the other teachers from BC — such as teachers from Vancouver and all the way to Prince George and all the rural teachers in the Yukon — and then having a conversation about how accurate the examples that we see are and how limiting these examples are when we look at the education of our students here in Yukon.

This brings me to escalators. There was one example that really bothered me in the BC curriculum. It was an example for a standardized test where it said you were on an escalator, and it talked about sine, cosine, the degrees, the angles, and all that, but there is not a single escalator in Old Crow. I kept thinking about how these examples bring a lot of anxiety to a student who is just there to learn or just trying to apply their knowledge to a test and then all of a sudden they get an example on a standardized test that has nothing to do with the curriculum you were taught. There are no examples of those particular things in the book, but also, if the examples don't reflect your community, you are already at a disadvantage.

Again, I had the opportunity to go down and help develop the BC curriculum that allows for regional considerations. That was one of the things that I brought to that conversation, which was making sure that our examples in these tests were more accurate. I was presented at that time with statistically relevant information that basically determines that rural kids with those types of questions will do worse on these exams even if they have the same level of education as someone who was raised in a city that has a mall and escalators are second nature to a person. That split second of indecision — of being, like: Escalator? Oh, my god.

Again, that might seem like a small example, but it is an extremely big barrier. So, it was very important for me, as an educator — and again, a shout-out to Paula Thompson for giving me the opportunity to voice my concerns back when we were developing what I thought was an amazing leap forward in education when BC changed their curriculum, changed the pedagogy, and went to a system where they embraced these concepts of locally developed curriculum.

Also, locally developed material of study is something that this Chamber has also previously considered, as groups of MLAs from a variety of backgrounds and political experiences

have come to a strong consensus in the past. An example of that was when I brought forth a private member's motion in December 2012 when I called upon the government to adapt J.J. Van Bibber's memoir *I was born under a spruce tree* as part of the Yukon education curriculum. I was very pleased that the entire Legislative Assembly supported the motion as amended and gave it unanimous support, which was a rare thing for an opposition member's motion at that time. This particular book, *I was born under a spruce tree*, is an outstanding work by an iconic Yukoner, and I thought that it should be part of every student's education, and the Legislative Assembly thought so too.

I would say it this way: If you are studying school in Pelly, for example, and you had the opportunity to learn social studies based upon the journeys of J.J. Van Bibber or social studies based upon King Henry VIII, I wonder which one would grasp the attention of those students better. Again, I think this is an extremely important debate and it's worthy of people's time and effort here today.

When I brought forth that motion, I spoke to how, when we use local knowledge, experiences, and history as often as possible in our school systems, it pays huge dividends. I spoke about how I believe that we needed to have — and I will quote myself, a strange thing to do: "... more locally developed curriculum in the school system for students to have a greater interest not only in just being in the classroom, but being an active participant, being able to relate."

I spoke about Mr. Van Bibber's memoir and how everyone — the Minister of Education, the Sergeant-at-Arms of the day — loved the book and how common it was to devour that book in one sitting.

This is why I was very pleased when the topic of discussion came up in the Chamber here today, because local knowledge, experience, and history and Indigenous knowledge, experience, and history — those are absolutely critical in our education system. It is happening right now. It's what gives Yukon students the edge over their peers across the country — because of that strong educational foundation that they do have.

I have often, in grad speeches, told folks that, because of the curriculum we have, because of the First Nation School Board and the efforts that we are making to make more locally developed curriculum, we are unicorns. There is not a post-secondary institution, trade school, or any higher learning that doesn't actively want to seek out our students because we are so unique and we have such an amazing perspective on the world and we bring a lot to those institutions. Our students bring a lot to those institutions because of the hard work that has been done by many, many mentors in the education system.

So, when we look at the rules under the *Education Act*, which state that students are limited to having no more than 20 percent of their program composed of locally developed courses, I could see how this is a big restriction and could prevent access to those valuable educational options. I could also see, at the time, why it is important to have that to begin with. Now you see BC moving forward and moving that limit, because it takes a long time to develop curriculum and to get the actual recognition in the universities and post-secondary

education. That's a big deal. So, it's time to have this consideration and to have this conversation. I do thank our colleagues in the Third Party for getting us into this conversation and for choosing this as our discussion for debate today.

Since I became Premier in 2016 and in my roles that I have seen since 2023, I have seen how Government of Yukon supports the inclusion of locally developed courses in our school curriculum, ensuring that our students' education is relevant, diverse, and reflects our community needs and our unique cultural and educational backgrounds. In partnership with Yukon First Nations, educators, students, and their families, we are on a journey to reimagine our school system. This transformative journey is rooted in trust and collaboration, ensuring that, every step of the way, we are aligned with the needs of those whom we serve — extremely important. Our work includes the continuous development and enhancement of curriculum, resources, and training. These efforts are designed to foster localized, culturally intensive programming and deepening our understanding of First Nation culture, history, and contributions among all K to 12 students.

As I mentioned just a bit ago, under the current Yukon *Education Act*, that limitation definitely, in theory, prevents access to these valuable educational opportunities. The education system following BC's curriculum model now emphasizes the localization and Indigenization of courses, making the 20-percent cap outdated and unnecessary for today's educational landscape, in my humble opinion.

As I mentioned, Mr. Speaker, part of what makes Yukon students and graduates so appealing to universities is that locally developed educational experience. That's a great success story, but with education changing in BC, we see the opportunity here to do more and to go further.

For the most part, I have been talking about my experience as a teacher, as an MLA, and as Premier, but I do hold the role, the honour, of being the Minister of the Public Service Commission. I have a great vantage point to witness the resounding work that the Public Service Commission does, and it spends a sizable amount of time building up strong working relationships with union counterparts and associations. The associations and unions are critically important to this country, to this territory, and to the type of government and governance that we have embraced as a Yukon Liberal government. So, every interaction, every board, and every bilat between YG and labour is very critical.

I know that the Minister of Education spoke earlier about the extensive collaboration with Yukon First Nations on education that occurs and how the engagement spans several levels to ensure success and comprehensive, respectful partnerships — extremely important — extensive collaboration with the Yukon Native Language Centre, the Chiefs Committee on Education, the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate, the First Nations Education Commission, the First Nation School Board — the list goes on — extremely important partners, extremely important collaborations, so I appreciate the minister sharing a bit about that collaboration.

As the Public Service Commission minister, I know that consultation must go even further. Opening up legislation like the *Education Act*, even if it is a very small and positive change, an agreeable change — it's important and merits the substantive consultation. That's a government responsibility. It's very difficult when a third party or an opposition party puts a bill forward, because the obligation is not on that party. It's on the government, but it is extremely important for us to talk about that today — that extremely important responsibility — in light of the back-and-forth of letters with the YAEP president.

So, the Government of Yukon values that work and the vital contributions made by education professionals in fostering the intellectual, the social, and the personal development of our students. Our intent is to ensure that every student has availability and access to locally developed curriculum in order to reach their full potential and that educational voices are heard and considered in that process.

As I am talking about the Public Service Commission and our relationship with education partners, I would note that, with the current collective agreement set to expire in June of this year, the Yukon government is committed to collaborating with the Yukon Association of Education Professionals — the YAEP — to achieve the goal of an agreement that is fair, balanced, and fiscally responsible and conducive to recruitment and retention efforts.

Furthermore, our government is dedicated to equitable labour practices and the welfare of our public servants, and fiscal accountability consistently forms the foundation of any bargaining strategy. The negotiations during collective bargaining can often be challenging endeavours demanding dedication and cultivation of relationships founded on trust and mutual understanding, which necessitates ongoing efforts to continue to nurture and continue to sustain these important relationships. This further underscores our government's approach.

Turning back to consultation, the Yukon government has consultation obligations with the Yukon Association of Education Professionals, and that is under section 19 of the *Teaching Profession Act* and under article 33 of our collective agreement. The *Teaching Profession Act* obligates the Minister of Education to consult with YAEP on matters of educational policy that affect its membership. The collective agreement obligates the employer to consult with YAEP on new policies and directives prior to their implementation or any subsequent changes if such policies and directives affect members of the bargaining unit in their employment relationships.

Mr. Speaker, consultation is distinguished from information-sharing, where there is little dialogue and no meaningful opportunity to affect a decision. Consultation is also distinguished from cooperation or from joint decision-making in that consultation does not require mutual agreement at the end of the process; it does not give the consulting party a veto.

In consultation, both parties have an active role to discuss, express opinions, make their values known to each other, and express a meaningful response all before a key decision is

made. Under article 33 of the collective agreement, YAEP and the Labour Relations branch of the Public Service Commission form a joint consultation committee — a forum for most matters of consultation to take place.

We all recognize that, as I mentioned, the Third Party doesn't have that requirement as the government does, so that duty to consult is that of the minister. But we have started the progress of this bill, and the concerns that were voiced by the association — I felt it necessary to reiterate here in Hansard our commitments, our responsibilities, to our partners in the association.

Recognizing the crucial contribution of teachers and their unions and the collective endeavours of everyone in the field of education — that is why we discuss, collaborate, and consult with our hard-working colleagues and partners in many different organizations and bodies to ensure that we are doing what is best for our young people, for our students, and for the academic community as well.

Mr. Speaker, I will just conclude by saying that, as a Yukoner, as a former teacher, as an MLA, as a minister in this government, and as a person who deeply cares about education and recognizes the importance of reconciliation and integrating Indigenous knowledge and history into our systems and our curriculum of learning, I am very supportive of the intent of this bill to have more access to locally develop the curriculum in our territory. I am definitely looking forward to more of the conversation in Committee of the Whole on the work that is going to be done and the conversations that the Third Party have had to date. With that, I just want to thank you for the time to voice my opinion on this important endeavour.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, I will add a few more thoughts to the conversation today. Before I get going, I just want to acknowledge that my parents were teachers and dedicated their lives to it. I have had the pleasure of being a lecturer, I guess — a teacher at universities and colleges. So, I think it's a very important profession — and a shout-out to our teachers and in particular to those teachers who always try to make teaching relevant and meaningful for our students.

When we think of curriculum, we often think about what students are learning, but I really think that it's also about how we foster their interest in learning — how to learn. I think it's almost always better when that learning is relevant for students. If you can engage with students, if you can empower them and excite them, then they are always going to have better learning outcomes. The comments that came from the Member for Whitehorse Centre were just an example of that.

The two things that I wanted to try to add to our consideration today — number one is about the *Education Act* in 1990 as it came in. I went back and looked at it. It was brought in under the Penikett government and it was Minister Piers McDonald, the Minister of Education, who brought this new *Education Act* forward. I read through it at second reading, third reading, and Committee of the Whole, and there were also a couple of ministerial statements. I am just going to provide some insights for all of us here as we think about trying to improve this act.

The preamble of the act I think is worth noting. I will just touch on it a little bit. It begins by saying — quote: “Recognizing that Yukon people agree that the goal of the Yukon education system is to work in co-operation with parents to develop the whole child including the intellectual, physical, social, emotional, cultural, and aesthetic potential of all students to the extent of their abilities so that they may become productive, responsible, and self-reliant members of society while leading personally rewarding lives in a changing world...”

That preamble goes on to talk about the right to an education and how it needs to be appropriate to individual learners and it talks about promoting a love of learning. There is a clause at the end of the preamble that I would like to just share — and again, I am quoting: “Recognizing that the Yukon curriculum must include the cultural and linguistic heritage of Yukon aboriginal people and the multicultural heritage of Canada...” This to me sounds like they are trying to build in local learning.

In particular, I was trying to watch for references to clause 43. When I looked through the debate on the act, it was pretty obvious that they had a sense — they were very proud of the act as it came in, they felt that it was going to be transformational, and they oftentimes referenced how important it was that the act was going to foster local learning.

The minister of the day, Piers McDonald, said at second reading — quote: “The people of the Yukon today want a greater voice in the operation of their schools. They want to be more involved in developing and choosing the curriculum. They want to see stronger ties between the school, the family and their communities. The people of the Yukon today want their children to have stronger ties to Yukon history and culture and especially to the Yukon environment.”

I think that's what they were seeking to do. Power to them at the time — and I think it doesn't mean that things haven't changed in the interim and that there isn't more that we can and should do. I won't quote from everybody, but I do know that almost everybody spoke to it, and many of them talked about the importance of local curriculum.

There's one more quote that I'm just hunting down. It was by the MLA for Old Crow, Norma Kassi. Again, I will quote: “As my colleague, the Member for Tatchun, has already pointed out, education does not mean just regular classroom study. My people were educated long before schools were brought into the north. The *Education Act* recognizes that, and it also has made provision for self-government initiatives in the future, which gives us more flexibility for the education of our own children.

“It is important to develop the human part of the child at an early age. We cannot expect children to develop into capable, self-assured adults if we work simply on the facts of reading, writing and arithmetic. Lifeskills and communications are important. A holistic approach in a child's development is really important. The earlier children begin to learn and work together in harmony, the better prepared they will be for adult life.”

For Hansard for today, I am quoting on April 30, 1990. That's where I have pulled those quotes, and the preamble was from the act itself, the current *Education Act*. I think it's important that we just recognize that our predecessors here in this House — when they brought this act in, they were looking to do this very thing that we are trying to enhance today.

The other point that I wanted to try to raise today — and a few people, the Minister responsible for the Public Service Commission, the Minister of Health and Social Services, as well as the Member for Whitehorse Centre, have talked about experiential learning. I just wanted to reference quickly some of the programs here.

When I'm in town, I stay right across from the Wood Street school. So, we have Outdoor Pursuits and Experiential Science 9; Achievement, Challenge, Environment and Stewardship 10; Community, Heritage, Adventure and Outdoors Skills 10 & 11; Plein Air et Sciences Expérientielles 9; French Achievement, Challenge, Environment and Stewardship 10; Experiential Science 11; and Music, Art and Drama 9 to 12 — so, seven different experiential learning programs.

First of all, if the limit is 20 percent, how do any of these programs exist? So, one of the things that I understand from the department is that, over time, this 20-percent threshold has been surpassed many times over. I think that the minister, when she stood to give remarks, talked about some of those differences with respect to elective courses and mandatory courses or core courses. It seems to me that, under other provisions of the act, there is a lot of opportunity to provide more local learning. I also think that British Columbia's new act has moved in that direction as well to allow for more local learning. I think they made their changes last fall in their Assembly.

So — good to have — this clause itself may not be a limitation, but that doesn't mean that we shouldn't change the clause. I do think that we need to understand why that limit was there previously and what its intention was to make sure that we are not having some adverse impacts right now, but I agree with everyone who has spoken so far today that there is a distinct advantage in local learning. Of course, we need to make sure that we are still preparing our students so that they can go on to other things. Whether that is the trades or whether that is to universities now here in the Yukon but also across Canada or beyond, we need our education system to show that it is developing those core competencies and those learning outcomes just as well as other places through our local content.

To just come back to my very first point, whenever we set up learning for our students in a way in which they are more engaged, it has been my experience that students learn more and learn how to learn better when they are excited about the things that they have in front of them. When they have meaning for them, it becomes a relevant part of their lives. They practise their skills more; they are proud about their skills more, and this goes from kids in early learning right through to post-graduate work — lifelong learning is the way I would think about it.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the bill in front of us today. I certainly need to figure out a couple of things about what is there now, what this change will mean. I am certainly on board

with the intent; I just need to make sure that there aren't other issues arising. I don't think that the limit is practically in use at the moment — the 20-percent limit — but we can sort that out. I do think that there are obligations that we have around the issue of consultation that we need to ensure are fulfilled. Mostly, what I would like to say is that I appreciate this initiative being brought forward, because I think it is important for our education system and certainly for the betterment of our students.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: This afternoon, we are discussing education and the importance of locally developed courses — of pushing that boundary in the Yukon. I think my colleagues and I have been quite clear; if not, I will be over the coming few minutes — we support this. Some issues have been raised, a few, and we will have to deal with them, but we support the expansion of locally developed courses in the Yukon. The changes will broaden educational opportunities in the territory, and this is good for students.

I also want to note this afternoon that drafting legislation is tough. I was around when the *Education Act* was drafted, debated, passed, and proclaimed in 1990. I remember, dimly, the euphoria of the team led by then-Education Minister Piers McDonald when the legislation finally passed. I ran into him, actually, in the hallway with his team just shortly after that happened, and we had a chat about it.

It was an incredible achievement on behalf of that early government — the Penikett government back in the 1990s. The legislation was heralded by some as perhaps the best, most progressive education legislation in the country. That's what I remember, anyway, from 30-odd years ago.

In preparing this afternoon, I very quickly, like my colleague, reviewed the Blues — the Hansard, actually, from that time — to assess the tone and debate about the Yukon's *Education Act*. It was an interesting foray down memory lane. The drafting of the legislation marked a change in how things are done in the territory. It empowered students, faculty, communities, education partners, and First Nations to be involved in this revolution in the Yukon's education system. It was built upon a broad consultation; it was less about the legislation than the process, according to the minister at the time. As Piers McDonald put it in Hansard on April 24, 1990: “‘Partners in Education’ is the slogan used during the last two years of the *Education Act* consultation process. It sums up the act's intent to fully involve teachers, parents, students and the community in the goal of developing the ‘whole child’ so all students may develop a love of learning and become productive, responsible and self-reliant members of society while leading personally rewarding lives.”

Today, Mr. Speaker, approaches like that are taken for granted, but that is the groundbreaking nature of that incredible effort by McDonald and his team back in the 1990s. Getting that progressive act in place was a battle back then, as I recall, and today we are looking to tweak that nation-leading legislation to reflect the modern education environment that legislation, in fact, created. Think about that for a minute and consider how far we have come.

Now, as I have noted, we are, in principle, supportive of this change. In fact, here we are, mere days after the amendment was delivered in the House, debating it here today. That is incredible and incredibly fast. I hope the speed with which this is coming does not lull members into thinking that it is easier done. In the spirit of the original act, we should honour the work to draw in the sizable number of stakeholders in the education system. Today, tweaking such an important piece of legislation should be no less involved or onerous than it was back then.

So, I will be looking to see how deeply the members opposite have spoken with educational partners in drafting their amendment and, as a result, how much work my colleague will have to do to make the amendment palatable to the community, should it pass.

That is because, Mr. Speaker, as I have seen working on this team, getting legislation to launch seamlessly only looks easy because of the work of talented politicians like my colleagues — because of the hard work of talented politicians before us like McDonald. That talent, backed by the expertise, abilities, and deep knowledge of the professional civil service, makes things happen. More often than not, my colleagues on the Liberal bench make something incredibly hard look very easy, and it decidedly is not. There isn't a day that goes by that I don't marvel at their skills at successfully shepherding change through the House, especially when bare-knuckle politics enters the mix. That needs to be recognized and appreciated for what it is. I also want to laud the work, professionalism, and advice of our civil service who support our work on behalf of Yukoners every single day. I think that incredibly important work implementing and embracing change has to be noted this afternoon.

Okay, on to the subject. We are discussing the value of experiential learning in our territory, and — let me be clear — such programs are of extraordinary value and are still rare in the country, and few are as incredible as those that we see in the territory. Throughout my life, I have had the privilege of witnessing first-hand the transformative impact that hands-on, real-world learning can have on the lives of Yukoners. My sons participated in these beloved programs, and their education, their understanding of the world, their place in it, and their confidence navigating it was greatly enhanced by the experience. Having seen that first-hand, I know the importance of such learning — such coursework. I know that we must seize these opportunities with both hands.

Yukon is a land of unparalleled natural beauty — from the towering peaks of the Mackenzie Mountains to the pristine waters of our countless rivers and lakes. Through experiential learning programs, our young people have the chance to connect with this land in a profound and meaningful way. Whether it is learning the art of trapping from seasoned elders, mastering the techniques of wilderness survival, or exploring the rich history of our First Nations, these hands-on experiences instill a deep appreciation for the Yukon's natural and cultural heritage.

As others have noted this afternoon far more eloquently, one of Yukon's strongest advocates for experiential learning over the years has been Bob Sharp. I have known Mr. Sharp for

decades, although not well. We have spoken several times, and I may have interviewed him once, maybe twice. He is a champion of experiential learning — the hands-on, student-focused approach that emphasizes the practical application of knowledge and skills in real-world contexts.

Through his work in developing and implementing experiential learning programs across the territory, Sharp has witnessed first-hand the profound impact this approach can have on student engagement, skill development, and educational outcomes. We have staff in our office who benefited from his groundbreaking approach to education here in the Yukon through the experiential sciences program. I have permission to say this: Imagining those particular staff as unruly teenagers running amok across Vancouver Island studying salmon aquaculture, I can only imagine the courage and fortitude it takes to be one of the teachers committed to experiential learning.

Part of Sharp's philosophy is that learning should not be confined to the four walls of a classroom but should instead be deeply rooted in the rich cultural and natural heritage of the Yukon. Our territory is a living, breathing classroom, he has explained, filled with opportunities for students to connect with the land, explore traditional knowledge, and develop a deep appreciation for the unique challenges and opportunities of northern life.

One of the key strengths of experiential learning in the Yukon, according to Sharp, is its ability to foster holistic, culturally relevant education that speaks to the diverse needs and experiences of Indigenous students. For too long, our education system has been rooted in southern and colonial models that fail to recognize the value of place-based knowledge and the importance of community-driven learning, he said. Experiential programs allow us to centre Indigenous ways of knowing and empowers students to become active stewards of their own cultural and environmental legacies.

Through initiatives like the experiential learning programs, students have the opportunity to engage in a wide range of hands-on activity. From studying ocean ecology to the shores on the beach in Juneau to studying old-growth forests while in an old-growth forest, experiential learning opportunities have raised Yukoners who are curious, informed, and passionate about what they are learning. These experiences not only deepen their understanding of academic concepts but also help them develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork, skills that are essential for success in the 20th century job market.

When students are given the chance to apply their knowledge in real-world settings, they don't just memorize facts; they gain a deep practical understanding that sticks with them long after they leave the classroom, Sharp has said. By working collaboratively with their peers and community mentors, they learn how to communicate effectively, resolve conflicts, and build the kind of trusting relationships that are the foundation of healthy, vibrant communities. As I said earlier in my remarks, I have seen this first-hand in my own family.

The benefits of experiential programs extend far beyond the individual student. These programs are helping to

strengthen the social fabric of communities across the territory, fostering a renewed sense of pride, belonging, and collective responsibility.

Ultimately, Sharp has demonstrated the true power of experiential learning in the Yukon and that it lies in its ability to transform not just individual lives but the very fabric of northern society.

By empowering our young people to become active, engaged citizens who are deeply rooted in the land and culture of the Yukon, we are laying the groundwork for a more sustainable, equitable, and prosperous future for all, he says. And that, to me, is the most important learning outcome of all. That is really what we are talking about this afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

In legislative terms, we are removing section 43(2) — the limit on locally developed courses — and thereby allowing locally developed courses to fulfill high school graduation credits. Like my colleagues, I agree with the intentions of this bill put forward by the Third Party, and most people will agree that more locally developed courses would be a good thing here in the territory. They are valuable in meeting diverse local needs of students and in helping school authorities respond to local interests, values, and resources.

I look forward to hearing more debate and moving into Committee to learn more about the implications and scope of this amendment. Thank you very much for allowing me to speak to you this afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to respond in second reading of Bill No. 307, standing in the name of the Member for Takhini-Kopper King.

I will be relatively brief because I know there are other members who wish to speak; however, the government is a strong supporter of including locally developed courses in the school curriculum to ensure that the education our children receive is diverse and relevant while remaining loyal to the cultural and educational needs of our community.

Through partnerships, we are reinventing our school system. We are doing so in collaboration with Yukon First Nations, educators, students, and their families.

My colleague the Minister of Education is working hard on the continuous development and improvement of the resources, training opportunities, and curriculum. We are doing so to uphold localized, culturally inclusive programming and, most importantly, to strengthen the understanding of Yukon First Nations culture, history, and centrality among all K to 12 students.

Listening to my colleague the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, it dawned on me that I would definitely be remiss in this debate to not acknowledge that I have been surrounded by educators, by teachers, all of my life, and I would probably get a bit of a talking to if I hadn't acknowledged that.

In any event, my mother and father were both teachers in Toronto and Etobicoke for all of their careers. I just want to also acknowledge that my mother passed away quite recently in her 92nd year. I certainly have been influenced by their guidance

over the years and the experiences that they have provided to decades of students.

Also, for me, as far as experiential learning, having sort of the whole immigration wave in southern Ontario that I witnessed over about 20 years ago or so — whether there were English language students from Vietnam, from Afghanistan, later from Myanmar and Eastern Europe — that certainly taught me lessons about empathy, compassion, generosity, and support that is sort of the bedrock, in my view, of Canadian culture.

So, a shout-out to both my parents, who have now passed away, but they certainly were a huge inspiration in my life. My spouse is the teacher-librarian at St. Francis, and she has been a huge supporter of experiential learning in her approximately 20-year career in Yukon education. Most recently, she shepherded the robotics team at St. Francis and helped with the team at Mercier and Porter Creek. That's also, in my view, sort of lifelong learning as well. This is not a locally developed curriculum — although I would imagine it could be — but those eight students at St. Francis have been absolutely dogged in their enthusiasm with respect to pursuing robotics since before Christmas, throughout the Christmas break, and into the New Year. They were at St. Francis working there and they were in two competitions. They ended up in Surrey competing against 25 teams, working on a daily basis. Their enthusiasm was absolutely infectious.

I was participating in a small way in moving what they call “the field” — you learn things — lifelong learning — the operational area for the robot is called “the field”, and they're building that at Porter Creek secondary, at Mercier, and at St. Francis, but their enthusiasm is incredibly infectious. I certainly see the benefit of that being in the nature of locally developed curriculum. One of my brothers is a teacher as well. So, as I said, I would be remiss in this debate today to not acknowledge all of the educators that have been surrounding me during the course of my entire life.

As the Minister of Community Services indicated as well, he and I both have two adult sons respectively, and my children were involved in the FACES program, the sports school, and various other programs as well, and I certainly know that they are positive and character building. I have certainly heard about heroic bike trips between Haines Junction and Haines over the pass where it was either torrential rain with intermittent snow, seeking refuge at a elementary school in Haines, Alaska with our very generous and accommodating friends — American friends at that. An elementary school — I recall that vividly and them coming back over the pass from Skagway to Whitehorse — all to say that I am absolutely in favor of locally developed programming and supportive of this initiative.

I would have a lot more to say on this, but I believe that the time is running a little bit short. Kudos to Bob Sharp, who is in the gallery. I certainly had the opportunity to speak to him with my spouse over the years. I thank him for his leadership in a lot of the programs and, of course, as the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and the Minister of Community Services have indicated, the ACES, FACES, and CHAOS programs, sports school, MAD, and others — as the Member for

Whitehorse Centre indicated — some of these names may now be showing my age if the names have changed.

In any event, the one program that I was going to specifically point out was the Yukon climate change 12th national global action — and I will just briefly note that this course provides a national and global focus to inform students about climate change processes and related political, economic, and social issues and encourages students to become active in addressing the issue through technical know-how, political will, and personal responsibility by recognizing the importance and urgency of climate change to make changes in our own lives and to empower community, government, and business leaders to take a key role in our communal effort so we can creatively rise to the collective economic and social challenge.

In any event, as many of my colleagues and members opposite have indicated, there is certainly general support for this proposed bill. I look forward to hearing future questions and answers in Committee of the Whole. Once again, kudos and a shout-out to all of the teachers in my life and to all Yukon teachers and educators.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I want to take an opportunity to put a few comments on the record in support of the proposal here for a policy change to this Yukon act. I want to thank the NDP for bringing this forward. I think that this is a very important and substantial change that we can see happening over the course of this spring. I will reflect on a few different experiences quickly here that would speak in support of what is trying to be accomplished with this particular amendment.

First, I will just point out that if we look at the last number of decades in the Yukon education system and the great pioneers such as Mr. Sharp, who is here with us today, and Mr. Boyd and others — they really led the way on building an education structure and system in the Yukon that met so many students where they are. I think upon having an opportunity to work within the education system about 25 years ago in the public school system here. It was so refreshing to be able to see this level of innovation inside the structure and the system. It's something that I certainly wish I had an opportunity to have experienced in my own days in the high school system or even in the junior high or elementary system, but the innovation that we see here just wasn't present in other parts of the country and certainly not where I was going to school.

My initial week in the Yukon was spent backing up a series of teachers who were actually going on an experiential land-based trip, and that gave me an opportunity to backfill at that particular time and then quickly learn about this incredible work that was started by some of those individuals I just touched upon — but the next generation of instructors who were coming through the system.

It really ignited a passion toward this style of education — experiential work — and it really gave an opportunity for me to see just how valuable it can be. After that experience, I had the opportunity to work at Yukon College, the precursor to Yukon University, and to work with youth — primarily vulnerable youth. And I had an opportunity to do that for about a half a decade.

During that time, the instructors I had a chance to work with were consistently building curriculum in post-secondary. It was a unique program that was building core competencies and skills in vulnerable youth at the time. The program was called “Learning to Lead”, and as we integrated in ways of learning and knowing but also taking into consideration curriculum that was based on the Yukon context, we were continuing to see more success for students.

By the time that program was at year 5 or year 6, we were seeing some of the best success of any of these types of programs anywhere in the country. I do think it was because of that ability to be agile, to be able to take some risk in what you were doing with the curriculum — but really, in many cases, getting our students not just into the classroom but also out on the land. It gave us the opportunity, through this program, to do that on a daily basis. You would spend a portion of the day, usually in the morning, in land-based activities, and then in the afternoon, you would move toward the classroom activity.

As I say, I am not going to speak long, and I will conclude my comments, but my experience of working with a lot of different instructors on this type of work has really led me to understand the importance of having Yukoners build curriculum — understanding, of course, the integration of the core competencies that you want to have completed using not just the classrooms that are inside our institutions but the classrooms that are all around us — making sure that we support a Yukon that leads and making sure that we support our instructors in a way that respects the fact that they know their students best.

I hearken back to the comments today by the Member for Klondike and just those concepts and ideas of understanding how you meet the student — as he gave that example of: What would a student from Selkirk First Nation be drawn to? And, of course, having members of the community who have come before them is certainly something that is going to not just draw them into the curriculum but also motivate them and inspire them. I think that is what this work that we are talking about today can do.

So, with that, I will take my seat, and I look forward to the next step of this process as we move toward Committee of the Whole.

Speaker: If the member now speaks, she will close debate.

Does any other member wish to be heard?

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, it has been an enlightening afternoon, and I thank my colleagues for their comments and thoughts. Some definitely resonated with me, and some did not, but that is neither here nor there. There are a couple of things — Mr. Sharp probably deserves an award for the fact that he sat here for a good portion of the afternoon and has now left the Chamber.

Let me say first off that this is not something that I pulled out of the *Education Act* myself. I didn't sit down and read through the more than 205 clauses or portions of the *Education Act* and say: This is what I want to focus on. So, Mr. Sharp was

a teacher when I was in school, and I didn't go into the ACES program; I did not make that cut, but I know how important it was for my friends who did go into it. So, when Mr. Sharp sends you an e-mail and says: Hey, Kate, I have something that I want to talk to you about — pardon me; I'm not supposed to my name — Hey, Member for Takhini-Kopper King, I have something that I want to talk to you about — you say yes; you say: Sure, I would love to have that conversation with you. When you have someone — and we have heard different references across the point about someone who is so passionate in making sure that education meets students where they are, and he says: You know, we need to do better, because if we can get kids interested in school or looking forward to what could happen or what they could learn or what classes they can take, that will be successful.

I actually think about being in your home community this summer, Mr. Speaker, and meeting with the master carver who is working on the panels for the First Nation office. He shared with me this story of working with a young person and how that young person was so tuned in, so interested, and so keen on learning, but when school started, because it couldn't go toward graduation credits, they lost that connection because there wasn't that ability to meet there, but it's a perfect example of an arts course toward graduation. This is a perfect example. You are learning from an artisan, from an artist who has this traditional knowledge.

It's examples like this that I think about. I do think that the Member for Klondike, when he talked about escalators — I didn't see an escalator until I was in the double-digits, to be honest. There are so many things. I remember those exams. Sometimes the questions we had about exams weren't anything to do with the curriculum; it was to do with a description of what we were supposed to try to explain, and it was because it wasn't relevant. Those are all those things that tie in and talk about the importance of relevance and how, if education could be relevant and meaningful for people, it could be so much more effective.

I think that is what we all touched on in different ways, so on that, we agree. There are definitely some things — I look forward to the questions, because I can't answer them all now, but in British Columbia, you can't just take BAA or FNA courses into perpetuity. There is a maximum number of credits, but you can continue to take those locally developed courses to that maximum of 28 credits toward graduation, so it's not that this is replacing the core subjects. That is what everyone has been very clear about, including the president of the YAEP. In discussions with me, he said that he was supportive, but he wanted to make sure that this didn't take away from a student's ability to continue on in education. It's always making sure that we raise that bar and we invite people.

I do want to say that I actually, in full disclosure, and again, in honesty, did initially have my office reach out to the Minister of Education on February 19 to say that I would like to have a meeting. It was because, at that point in time, when we finally met on March 4, I gave the minister the information package I was using and the draft of the bill that we have here. I can say right now that it hasn't really changed. I'm sorry if the minister

is saying — anyway, I shared that information because I was keen; I was like: This is what I'm working on.

I met with YFNED on January 17. I met with the First Nation School Board on February 2. I met with the director of education from the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in on March 8 because I was really interested in knowing how 17.7 — the drawdown on education — could be affected. What I learned was that they were actually keenly supportive and it's making its way toward council. There was a backlog of information, so there was no chance of getting a letter of support, but what I was told by the director is that this aligns with what they are trying to do, which is making sure that education is relevant and specific to the learners in their community. They were excited that other people would have that opportunity, and they did indicate that other nations had been discussing and wanting to draw down education as well. I think that's a real opportunity.

I met with the Association of Yukon School Councils, Boards and Committees just on March 26 and with the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon on March 22. With all of that, what I will say is that the initial outreach that I made — I learned it from IRP actually when they told me that, if you are reaching out to a First Nation, you can't just reach out one time; you have to go six times. Now I have gotten over my discomfort, and I often send the same e-mail multiple times when I am trying to reach someone — just so that I can be, like: I'm still interested in having this conversation.

All of these folks I communicated with multiple times over a multitude of months in my efforts to communicate with them in large part because if it didn't make sense, if this amendment didn't make sense and it wasn't relevant or useful to whom I view as the education champions in the territory, then it didn't make sense to move it forward. Really, I was ground-truthing that.

Just before we move on, in an excerpt from an e-mail from the president of the YAEP sent today to me and others — it just says, “The YAEP supports changes to the legislation which promote the creation of Yukon-specific courses that count towards graduation and emphasize the value of local and Indigenous content.”

From the First Nation School Board, out of their letter: “... I offer this letter of support from the First Nation School Board for the Yukon NDP's proposed amendment to remove clause 43(2) of the Yukon *Education Act*.”

From the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate, an excerpt says, “The Yukon First Nation Education Directorate wholeheartedly supports the removal of clause 43(2) of the Yukon *Education Act* so that we can allow more locally-developed courses to count towards graduation.”

And finally, from the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon, it says:

“Cette modification serait bénéfique puisqu'elle alignerait le Yukon avec les changements législatifs récents apportés par le gouvernement de la Colombie-Britannique à leur Loi scolaire, lesquels permettent plus de flexibilité aux commissions scolaires et aux Premières Nations pour l'offre de cours à leurs élèves.” So, this is also a support.

I thank members today for their comments, and I will do my best to answer questions. Of course, as we have now seen numerous times when we're in this position — unlike ministers who have the benefit of having the drafters and department heads with them, I'll be here on my own, so I will do my best, through e-mail and other communication, to get the answers as quickly as I can.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Ms. Clarke: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

MLA Tredger: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 17 yea, nil nay.

Speaker: The yeas have it.

I declare the motion carried.

Motion for second reading of Bill No. 307 agreed to

Speaker: Bill No. 307, entitled *Act to Amend the Education Act*, has now received second reading and, pursuant to Standing Order 57(4), stands ordered for consideration by Committee of the Whole.

Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), the Third Party designated Bill No. 307 as an item of business today. The Leader of the Third Party is therefore entitled to decide whether the House should resolve into Committee of the Whole for the purpose of continuing consideration of Bill No. 307.

I would ask the Leader of the Third Party to indicate whether she wishes the House to resolve into Committee of the Whole.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the House now resolve into Committee of the Whole for the purpose of continuing consideration of Bill No. 307.

Speaker: Pursuant to the request of the Leader of the Third Party, I shall now leave the Chair and the House shall resolve into Committee of the Whole.

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Deputy Chair (MLA Tredger): Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 307, entitled *Act to Amend the Education Act*.

Is there any general debate?

Ms. White: Thank you, Deputy Chair, and I thank my colleagues. I am foregoing the ability to take additional time, and I look forward to questions.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Deputy Chair, I am happy to be here today in Committee of the Whole to continue the discussion of Bill No. 307, which we have had lengthy debate on today. I appreciate all of the information that was exchanged, and my colleagues and I will be working forward to provide additional questions to the member. Some of this may be redundant, but I really want to, in Committee of the Whole, for the purpose of having a thorough debate around this bill, ask the questions that we normally would ask if this was a bill that we were bringing forward or we would expect questions coming to us and questions that I may be asked as a result of this bill at a later time from partners or Yukoners in general.

My first question is: What is the member's rationale for bringing this bill forward, and what problem is it trying to solve?

Ms. White: Deputy Chair, section 43(2) right now lays out very clearly that locally developed courses can only count to 20 percent of a semester or a year's worth of curriculum. This is very specifically just removing that one part so that it doesn't cap it off.

Right now, as an example, there are two high schools in Whitehorse that only have four classes per semester. That is Porter Creek and F.H. Collins. St. Francis and Mercier both have five classes, and in rural Yukon, it varies. What it is trying to do is make sure that it goes in line with what British Columbia has done, which is to allow for more ability to make that choice. In BC, you can take BAA or FNA courses, and you can take more than one, but you can't take it to the maximum of the credit.

As an example, in British Columbia, it says that students may earn elective credits toward graduation by successfully completing the BAA or FNA courses; there is no limit to the number of BAA or FNA courses that may be used to satisfy the 28 credits of electives required for graduation. In some cases, at the grade 11 level only, BAA or FNA courses may be used to satisfy the arts education and/or applied design skills and technologies requirement. It is specific that locally developed courses can be used and can be accessed. More than one can be used toward those graduation credits, but again, it is either as electives or, unless you are in grade 11, to the arts education or applied design skills and technologies requirement.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Is the member aware that the Yukon has fully adopted BC's changed approach — from my comments earlier today — that this changed approach has rendered the language in section 43(2) of the *Education Act* somewhat unnecessary, as the curricula for the education system as a whole encourages localization and Indigenization and students can take locally developed courses of study to earn credits toward their graduation program?

I have a couple more questions in there, but I will just sit to hear some of the answers first.

Ms. White: So, right now, what we have in the *Education Act* is considered the law; it is legislation. That legislation says “20 percent”, which is a ceiling. Although practice may be different, the law says that there is the maximum of 20 percent per semester or per year, and therefore, that starts the cycle. So, really, I appreciate that the intention may be different, but it is still written there in law, so that is what I am trying to remove.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Thank you for those answers. Further, is the member also aware that the Yukon has a formalized process in place to evaluate and approve locally developed courses of study, credit courses for use in Yukon schools, and to be included as part of the graduation program?

Ms. White: Yes, I am well aware of the secondary curriculum consultants and the process in which locally developed courses can be done. As part of the briefing yesterday, I handed out the paperwork that has to be gone through, and so, as per that discussion yesterday, it highlights what is required and the steps that are done.

It's important, and I think it's why the First Nation School Board was pretty adamant about it when they said that they realize that there are concerns and criticisms that locally developed material does not set our learners up to be competitive and successful in society. They say that they shake their heads at that, and the reason for that is that all of the locally developed courses, just like the minister has said, have a framework and a template. Again, it's pretty clear. It talks about what is required, whether it be special training facilities or equipment. It asks for the course synopsis and the goals and rationale. It asks how it includes Yukon First Nation perspectives, which I think is really important when we talk about Yukon education.

In my opening comments, I referenced the “big idea” section, which I think is really important, where it takes a world view and brings it down to the local eye. There are lots of really good things, and as the minister mentioned, this template already exists, and it would continue on into the future, would be my guess.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Thank you for those answers.

I referenced today a handbook that the board authorized — the *Board/Authority Authorized (BAA) and First Nation Authorized (FNA) Course Requirements and Procedures Guidebook*, which was updated in 2023. I am just wondering if the member has any familiarity with this document.

Ms. White: I did get a chance to look at the 30-page document but not at great length.

Hon. Ms. McLean: I also had some questions about if the member opposite can provide any cost estimates of these changes that are proposed — costs that may be associated with new courses that might have to be organized, created, et cetera — that will come from these. What are the costs that the member may be able to provide today?

Ms. White: Looking at the information that's available online from the minister's department, at this point in time, there are only 23 approved courses. I'm just going through them right now. As an example, Esthetics 10 goes back to May 2019, and so I think she's probably best able to answer the question about the cost of those programs, but knowing that currently there are only 23 approved in the Yukon — and again, this doesn't take away the ability from the Department of Education or the minister herself to not approve. There's an entire vetting process, and unless things change going forward, I'm not currently involved in that process.

Hon. Ms. McLean: What work was done to analyze how removing section 43(2) would affect other aspects of the *Education Act* or other acts within Yukon law? How will these be addressed?

Ms. White: So, we utilize the services of a drafter, and the drafter considered that and did not highlight that as a concern.

Hon. Ms. McLean: The member opposite shared earlier today that they wished they could have completely opened up the *Education Act*. What areas of the act does the member believe require updating?

Ms. White: Based on the meetings that I had with those professionals I highlighted earlier across the board, at this point in time, all of it. Section 205 of the act, as it's written now, says: “On or before 10 years from the proclamation of this Act, the Minister shall establish a process for a review of the Act.”

It's my understanding that the last time a comprehensive review was done in the territory on the *Education Act* — it started in 2000 and ended in 2002. I believe, at this point in time, we're a couple of decades out.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Thank you for those answers. BC's curriculum reform, which includes board/authority authorized courses and First Nation authorized courses, allows an unlimited number of locally developed courses to contribute to the 28 elective credits required for graduation. Yukon mirrors this approach, enabling students to potentially fulfill all 28 elective credits in locally developed courses, constituting up to 35 percent of their total course load.

That we're aware of, there have been no documented cases of students being unable to take locally developed courses due to the current restrictions under section 43(2) of the *Education Act*. So, again, why does the member opposite feel the need to change legislation when Yukon mirrors BC's approach allowing for an unlimited number of locally developed courses to contribute to the 28 elective credits required for graduation?

Ms. White: Deputy Chair, it actually has to do with minister's own legislation. It does say in section 43(2) that there's a maximum of 20 percent per semester or per calendar year, and that is the limitation. Again, this was a suggestion that was brought by one of Yukon's education champions, and it

has been echoed by those I have listed already: the First Nation School Board, the First Nation Education Directorate, the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon, and the YAEP.

Again, this is not something that I pulled out of the air on my own. It's all about trying to make sure that education can be relevant and interesting for students and making sure that it can work the best it can for Yukon students.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Deputy Chair, I will move on to some questions around engagement. Can the member elaborate on why the decision was made to not do a public engagement on this amendment?

Ms. White: It really would have to do with the finite resources in opposition offices. I don't have access to the public service. I don't have access to the Department of Education. I don't have access to the Yukon Bureau of Statistics or the funds to pay for those things, so it was targeted. It was very much based on the education professionals. That made sense.

I appreciate that the minister has sent out a letter to the First Nations and I look forward to seeing that tomorrow. Again, in conversations with the education director at TH, it just really adds.

So, I look forward to additional questions.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Can the member opposite tell me their understanding of section 17.7 of the Yukon First Nation self-government agreements and why this is an important section for Yukon First Nations?

Ms. White: It was actually on the suggestion of the minister that I actually did reach out to TH to learn more about 17.7 and the importance of that for the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in government and their drawdown of education. It was an incredibly enlightening conversation and one that is incredibly inspiring. I think that is actually how we should be looking toward education.

TH is leading in a way that I knew but I didn't fully understand until I had that conversation — so to know and to understand the breadth of what that First Nation has been able to do for their community and for their school community and how they have been able to wrap around and provide additional supports and how they really have been able to do locally developed courses that are really interesting and engaging for their students. What I did learn is that they would like as many First Nations as possible to emulate the work that they have done — the lessons that they have learned. But they also want to really make sure that it's an opportunity for all Yukon students and all Yukon schools, so if there was a way that I was able to empower that right now across the board and add my voice of support — I am. But that, again, was really just informative and enlightening.

I would suggest to anyone who is interested in education to reach out and learn more. I can only describe it right now with hand actions, which aren't very helpful to Hansard, but it was like having fireworks go off. It was so exciting, so I do thank the minister for that suggestion.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Thank you for those comments. I certainly have had a lot of experience working with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and working toward those amendments to other self-government agreements, so we all certainly see more

of these types of arrangements in terms of local control over education, which I think is the spirit and intent of the self-government agreements.

I guess one of the questions I had about this particular engagement is — I know that there were some comments made today about conversations with the director of education for Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. I am curious if there was a letter sent from the member opposite.

I have already heard a statement that there hasn't been a letter received yet. I would be curious and want to ask the member opposite, if such letter or correspondence is received, that it be provided to the House as well.

Ms. White: In my enthusiasm to answer the question before, I could have taken a break and used the electronic tools at my disposal just to answer a bit more.

I have pulled up 17.7 now and the www.yukon.ca *Pathways: Co-governing education in Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Traditional Territory*. It does lay it out more.

I think ultimately I would be happy to share the e-mails, but I just need to get consent. I don't think I can share something without the permission of the person who is included. I did reach out today and got an "out of office until tomorrow" e-mail, so I will follow up. With that consent, I am happy to share it with both the minister and the Education critic for the Yukon Party. If others want to see, I can see about tabling it, but I will have to ask permission first.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Thank you for those answers.

I am also just wanting to talk a little bit about the process and the member's understanding of how amendments are normally made to legislation and what the steps are in working toward either an amendment or a new bill.

Ms. White: I have been a member of the opposition for 12 years, and this has only been an opportunity that has been able to go anywhere since 2021. I did table a floor-crossing bill between 2011 and 2016. The previous Member for Riverdale — I'm not going to get the right Riverdale, but Jan Stick tabled and we debated an amendment to the *Ombudsman Act* to remove the clause there. To be perfectly frank, the minister has not sat on the opposition side, so maybe she doesn't also understand the role or the work that happens on this side. I would never be so presumptuous to say that I understand what happens on that side.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Deputy Chair, I am just wanting to know the steps that would normally be taken in proposing an amendment to legislation or an act or the steps that the member has taken.

Ms. White: I'm sorry. I missed the question. Could the minister repeat it?

Hon. Ms. McLean: I'm just wanting to ask the member to elaborate more on what the normal steps would be to take to pose an amendment or a new bill or the steps that the member has taken to bring this bill forward.

Ms. White: Deputy Chair, again, I can't be so presumptuous as to say what ministers or government does, as I have not been a minister or in government. I can say that, from the position of being within the Third Party with this situation of keeping the Liberals in government with the confidence and

supply agreement, one of the important things included in that was the ability to get something to third reading, whether or not we have seen it before.

The minister's government did not support the amendment to the *Oil and Gas Act* that I proposed, so we have seen two successful ones move forward — of course, the safe spaces in schools and truth and reconciliation day as a statutory holiday. Again, when the Yukon NDP are looking at possible pieces of legislation to bring forward, honestly, it has to be targeted. There is a finite amount of money for the drafter; there is a finite amount of money for, like, resources. We have an office of six. I think we're pretty good, but there is a finite amount of resources.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Deputy Chair, did the member opposite send a letter to or have any conversations with the Carcross/Tagish First Nation on their proposed amendments to the bill? If so, did the member opposite receive any correspondence in reply? If so, what was brought forward by this Yukon First Nation?

Ms. White: I didn't, but if the minister would like to share her response, I'm looking forward to hearing it.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Deputy Chair, did the member opposite send a letter or have any conversations with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations on their proposed amendments to the bill? If so, did the member opposite receive any correspondence in reply, and if so, what was brought forward by the Yukon First Nation?

Ms. White: I maybe will just answer this as a whole right now. I did reach out directly to the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and their education director, as that made sense as the first point of contact. I did not reach out to the Liard First Nation, the Ross River Dena Council, the Teslin Tlingit Council, the Carcross/Tagish First Nation, the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation, the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, the Kluane First Nation, or the White River First Nation. I did reach out to Vuntut Gwitchin, but they have not taken me up on that yet. I lost count of where I was, which I apologize for now, but the minister can fill in the blanks — oh, Kluane First Nation — I was doing a map — Selkirk First Nation — thank you to the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes. But whatever nations — I apologize right now for missing — I should have written it down as I started, but I was doing a mental map.

The only nation I reached out to very specifically was the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, and it was because I had questions about 17.7 and how this could affect either adversely or positively. Really, what I was told was that it was pretty much going to be neutral but that it would open up opportunities for others. Again, I will share that exchange when I get permission to do so.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Deputy Chair, I will just ask the question then on the ones that are remaining. Did the member opposite send a letter or have any conversations with the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, the Kwanlin Dün First Nation, or White River First Nation on their proposed amendments to the bill? If so, did the member opposite receive any correspondence or reply, and if so, what was brought forward by the First Nations?

Ms. White: I did actually hit White River. I did not reach out to them. Of course, out of all the nations I would miss, it is those whose territory I live on, so apologies to Ta'an Kwäch'än and Kwanlin Dün First Nation. I also missed Na-Cho Nyäk Dun in my initial list, so I did not reach out directly to any other First Nation except for the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in.

Deputy Chair, seeing the time, I move that you report progress.

Deputy Chair: It has been moved by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Deputy Chair, I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Deputy Chair: It has been moved by the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

MLA Tredger: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 307, entitled *Act to Amend the Education Act*, and directed me to report progress.

Speaker: You have heard the report from the Deputy Chair of Committee of the Whole.

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: 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 now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

The following documents were filed April 3, 2024:

35-1-191

Support for the establishment of Shāw Kwä'a/Health and Wellness Yukon/Santé et mieux-être Yukon via the proposed *Health Authority Act*, letter re (dated March 26, 2024) from Chief Robert Dickson, Kluane First Nation, to Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee, Minister of Health and Social Services (McPhee)

35-1-192

Support for the establishment of Shāw Kwä'a/Health and Wellness Yukon/Santé et mieux-être Yukon via the proposed *Health Authority Act*, letter re (dated March 28, 2024) from Eric Morris, Naa Shaade Hani, Teslin Tlingit Council, to Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee, Minister of Health and Social Services (McPhee)

35-1-193

Support for the establishment of Shāw Kwä'a/Health and Wellness Yukon/Santé et mieux-être Yukon via the proposed *Health Authority Act*, letter re (dated March 27, 2024) from Sean Uyenets'echiā Smith, Chief, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, to Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee, Minister of Health and Social Services (McPhee)

35-1-194

Support for the establishment of Shāw Kwä'a/Health and Wellness Yukon/Santé et mieux-être Yukon via the proposed *Health Authority Act*, letter re (dated March 27, 2024) from Chief Amanda Leas, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, to Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee, Minister of Health and Social Services (McPhee)

35-1-195

Teaching Profession Act consultation section 19, letter re (dated April 2, 2024) from Ted Hupé, President, Yukon Association of Education Professionals, to Hon. Jeanie McLean, Minister of Education (McLean)

35-1-196

Private member's bill – locally developed courses of study, letter re (dated April 3, 2024) from Hon. Jeanie McLean, Minister of Education, to Ted Hupé, President, Yukon Association of Education Professionals (McLean)

35-1-197

Amendment to *Education Act*, letter re (dated March 22, 2024) from Melissa Flynn, Executive Director, First Nation School Board, to Kate White, Leader of the Third Party (White)

35-1-198

Support for amending the *Education Act*, letter re (dated March 26, 2024) from Melanie Bennett, Executive Director, Yukon First Nation Education Directorate, to Kate White, Leader of the Third Party (White)

35-1-199

Modifier la *Loi sur l'éducation* afin d'offrir plus de flexibilité pour l'offre de cours développés localement, letter re (dated April 3, 2024) from Jean-Sébastien Blais, président, Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon, to Kate White, Leader of the Third Party (White)

35-1-200

Proposed amendments to the *Education Act* — Advisory Committee for Yukon Education, letter re (dated April 3, 2024) from Ted Hupé, President, Yukon Association of Education Professionals, to Hon. Jeanie McLean, Minister of Education (Kent)