



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 151

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HANSARD

Thursday, May 1, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

SPEAKER — Hon. David Laxton, MLA, Porter Creek Centre

DEPUTY SPEAKER — Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake

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Hon. Elaine Taylor	Whitehorse West	Deputy Premier Minister responsible for Education; Women's Directorate; French Language Services Directorate
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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, May 1, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

Withdrawal of motions

Speaker: To start with, the Chair wishes to inform the House of changes to be made to the Order Paper: Motion No. 663, standing in the name of the Member for Watson Lake, will be removed from the Order Paper, at the request of the member.

DAILY ROUTINE

Speaker: We'll proceed with the Order Paper. Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Sexual Assault Prevention Month

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, May marks Sexual Assault Prevention Month. I rise today on behalf of the Yukon government to pay tribute to the many individuals, organizations, agencies and front-line workers who work throughout the year to eradicate sexualized violence.

According to police, in reported crime statistics in Canada in 2011, there were over 15,500 victims of sexual offences nationally, aged 15 years and older, most of whom were women — 92 percent. According to police-reported trend data, the rate of sexual assaults against women increased from 2009 to 2010 and remains unchanged in 2011. That same year, women knew their sexual attacker in three-quarters of incidents — 45 percent as a casual acquaintance or a friend, 17 percent as an intimate partner and 13 percent as a non-spousal family member. Exactly one-quarter of sexual assaults against women were committed by a stranger.

In nearly all incidents of sexual violence against women — in fact 99 percent — the accused perpetrator was male. This overrepresentation of males as accused was more prevalent in sexual crimes than other violent crimes against women. The prevalence of sexual offences, like other violent crimes, is substantially higher in the northern territories. Figures for Northwest Territories and Nunavut indicate that women's risk was nine and 12 times greater in these territories than the provincial average.

Yukon also had a rate of sexual offences against women that was over three and one-half times the provincial average. In Yukon, a number of actions are being taken to improve the response to domestic and sexualized violence, as a result of the good work underway with the review of Yukon's police force. An inter-agency working group was established with representatives from Yukon First Nations, women's organizations, Yukon government, RCMP and the Public Prosecution Service of Canada to share information and

coordinate responses and services related to domestic violence and sexual assault.

Government of Yukon has also been able to provide support for a four-person specialized response unit within the RCMP M Division to better respond to domestic and sexualized violence and improve coordination among other agencies.

The unit provides guidance, assistance and oversight to detachment police officers who are conducting domestic and sexualized violence investigations, and they are the lead investigators in domestic and sexualized violence investigations where specialized services are required. This unit works with service providers and key stakeholders for enhanced inter-agency collaboration and consistency in response across this territory. The RCMP have made changes to their domestic violence policy with the support and input from their community partners and have recently piloted new training for front-line officers.

Yukon government is also continuing its collaborative work with the Canadian Centre for Child Protection to deliver educational materials and resources to youth, parents and educators in order to build awareness of dangerous off-line/on-line behaviours and provide tools for those managing difficult cyber situations, such as cyber bullying and the sexual exploitation of youth. This year's campaign promotes <http://www.needhelpnow.ca> — a youth resource that addresses issues surrounding the distribution of sexual images and videos on-line as a form of bullying.

The social marketing campaign, "Am I the Solution?" is also continuing its work building upon the *Only You Are You* children's book. A play is being produced and will tour a number of the childcare centres and schools this year throughout the Yukon. A Facebook page which was launched back in 2012 is also still going strong, with almost 950 fans reaching 500 to 1,000 Yukoners on a weekly basis.

In addition to social marketing and public awareness efforts, an interdepartmental committee has been established to develop a government-wide approach to strengthening violence prevention through the integration of prevention throughout programs and services. This work builds on successes in the areas of response which is the *Victims of Crime Strategy*, the domestic and sexual assault framework and the work of the sexual assault response committee, and momentum garnered through initiatives such as the "Am I the Solution?" campaign.

In May of every year, women's organizations and communities across the country recognize Sexual Assault Prevention Month as a means of enhancing public awareness of the serious issue of sexual violence against women and girls, and what all of us can do to address violence in our communities. This year, activities are being coordinated by the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre and Les EssentiElles with the support of other organizations and the Women's Directorate.

On behalf of the Yukon government, I would like to thank each and every one of the many individuals involved in each of these efforts everyday throughout the year. I

encourage everyone to participate in a number of these events and to join the voices of men and women who already speak out against sexualized violence in our community.

Ms. Moorcroft: I rise on behalf of the Official Opposition and the Third Party to acknowledge May as Sexual Assault Prevention Month. Today Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre and Les EssentiElles launched their annual campaign, which is funded by the Women's Directorate.

I believe that every member of the House wants to live in a society where no woman, no child and no man is raped, but the fact is that sexualized violence is an epidemic in the north, as Barbara McNerney, Executive Director of the Yukon Women's Transition Home, noted at the launch of this year's annual campaign.

Previously in this Assembly, I have stated that we live in a rape culture. What does that mean? It means that people minimize or dismiss harmful speech and actions that joke about rape, that imply women want it and that blame women for being raped.

Yesterday the MLA for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes spoke about alcohol as the most commonly used date-rape drug. That is a true statement and no laughing matter. Rape culture protects men who rape, by blaming women. Women and their advocates have had a substantial effect on reform to rape law in the *Criminal Code* of Canada. We have fought long and hard at the community level, in the law and in the courts for social and legal equality, and a criminal justice system that does not reflect rape culture.

Madam Justice L'Heureux Dubé, a former justice of the Supreme Court of Canada has written some excellent decisions on this.

The *Criminal Code* of Canada now requires that a person must have explicit consent before there is any sexual activity. Children cannot consent to sexual activity, so it is a violent sexualized assault, not sex, when children are victimized.

Until 1983 when the *Criminal Code* of Canada was amended, women's consent to sex was not required in marriage as it was assumed that a woman who was married was sexually available to her husband without consent. Consent requires a conscious mind, and the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in 2011 that a person cannot give advance consent to sex that is taking place while the person is unconscious.

Rape culture is also found in popular culture — in song lyrics that repeat the assumptions that the way a woman dresses or acts tells me that you want it, that I don't need to ask for consent. These are harmful messages that contribute to the epidemic of sexualized violence we see in our society, in our courtrooms and in our overextended women's shelters.

Mr. Speaker, everyone can be part of the solution. It is encouraging to see men and boys becoming active to stop rape. White Ribbon Yukon is partnering with Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre and Les EssentiElles for a take-back-the-party event on May 31 at the end of Sexual Assault Prevention Month.

Bringing Youth Towards Equality, known as BYTE, is participating in a ConneX event to engage youth in the important conversation about preventing sexualized assault on May 15 at Baked Café. On May 8 at the Whitehorse Public Library, Sexual Assault Prevention Month is hosting a workshop by Marilyn Jensen.

I would like to thank all the women and men who are working so hard to make women safe from sexualized violence. I would ask all members and everyone listening to this tribute today to think about how they can act to end sexualized violence.

In recognition of Yukon/Stikine Territorial Heritage Fair

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to pay tribute to the Yukon/Stikine Territorial Heritage Fair happening today at the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre.

This annual heritage fair brings together students in grades 4 to 9, teachers, parents and mentors from around the territory to showcase quality research on a range of historical and heritage topics.

Participants present their projects to judges and the public and take part in a variety of heritage-related programming with other students from across the territory. It is indeed a unique opportunity for students to explore the many aspects of their heritage in a dynamic learning environment.

This year, approximately 60 Yukon students are participating in the territorial heritage fair. Earlier this morning, the Minister of Tourism and Culture, the Mayor of the City of Whitehorse and I, joined also by the deputy chief of Kwanlin Dun First Nation, had the honour and the privilege of opening up this year's heritage fair. We were able to see first-hand some of the very creative, distinctive and unique projects speaking to Yukon's history and culture.

Some students focus their projects on Yukon or Canadian history or culture while others explore interesting branches or their family tree. Some of the presentations that we saw this morning included Fort Selkirk, the Whitehorse tramway, the history of individual students' family members as well as First Nation art and culture. A walk through the room is indeed a fascinating patchwork of stories both familiar and new. It's really easy to lose track of time while refreshing one's knowledge of a particular historical subject or learning all about the interesting people and stories of days gone by.

Learning about our history helps us collectively to learn more about who we are and where we come from. Our view of history shapes the way we view the present and, therefore, it also helps to provide answers for existing problems or challenges today. Decisions and events that happened generations ago have an effect on all of us today, but by learning more about them, we gain the wisdom and the additional perspective to help us move forward.

There are many benefits to learning more about where we came from and how we got there. Yukon is rich with First Nation heritage and culture. Stories and lessons learned from the traditional way of life in our harsh environment are some of our favourite stories.

Researching a particular topic and presenting it publicly immerses students in their learning. That they get so much from these projects is what we were able to witness first-hand this morning. They invest a lot of time and a lot of hours and a lot of energy into their work, and it does show.

Events such as the annual heritage fair could not happen without a dedicated organizing committee, and I would like to thank the Yukon Historical and Museums Association — and particularly the heritage fair organizing committee — for their ongoing work, as well as the Department of Tourism and Culture and the Department of Education, as a financial contributor — and to the ongoing work of the Yukon Heritage Resources Board. A special thank you also goes out to Jennifer Bowen Allen, the heritage fair coordinator, for all of her hard work in bringing this wonderful event to fruition.

The efforts of these key players help us deliver experiential learning opportunities like these to all of our students. Congratulations to all of the participants and the organizers of this year's heritage fair. We really enjoyed the time we spent there this morning and fully appreciate the continuation of this event for many years to come.

In recognition of May Day

Ms. Hanson: I rise today on behalf of the Official Opposition to pay tribute to May Day — the real labour day. May Day is recognized around the world as a tribute to workers and their fight for dignity and respect. The origins of May Day lie in the 19th century North America.

On May 1, 1886, workers declared a strike across the United States and Canada to press for an eight-hour work day. Their fight eventually resulted in the benefits that all of us enjoy, such as the eight-hour work day, a minimum wage law and safety laws.

May 1 helps us remember that it was workers and the labour movement that brought this about. It recognizes a struggle waged by people for people.

Back in the 1800s, these ideas were considered dangerous. Today they are an essential part of our society and are standards for all Canadian workers. This fight has been a long and difficult struggle and it continues today. Today, workers are faced with new struggles for dignity and respect. They bravely take on battles across Canada against the privatization of services, to retain pensions and other benefits they have gained, and even to keep their jobs in a time of contracting out, cutbacks and bankruptcies. Many of them have taken on financing the corporations they work for through their own paycheques. Some have even paid with their lives.

Organized labour takes on these responsibilities so that all workers, organized and non-organized, recognize their right to decent jobs. Here in the Yukon, workers have a vision that requires us to raise the bar — a vision of quality jobs with a living wage for all people, including the working poor, who cannot make ends meet from one pay to the next. We support and salute in solidarity the men and women, mature workers and young workers, who enter the workforce today. They will

continue to bring to reality a vision of a basic standard of living for all.

Let us demonstrate our respect for their struggles by enacting policy and legislation that support this vision. We in the Official Opposition remember those workers in the 19th century with gratitude. We show our respect for their struggle by remembering this, the real Labour Day, as the day of tribute to the workers who made sacrifices yesterday for the workers of today and tomorrow.

In closing, I honour the spirit of a true friend of Yukon workers and of this House, Steve Cardiff, who penned these words 10 years ago today.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Ms. Hanson: I have for tabling a report, *Task Force on Acutely Intoxicated Persons at Risk Final Report to Minister of Health and Social Services, December 31, 2010*.

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

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?

Is there a statement by a minister?

This brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: FASD diagnoses

Ms. Hanson: The Yukon NDP is deeply concerned that this government has done too little to prevent fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. On April 1, the minister responsible for Yukon Liquor Corporation stated that Yukon is — and I quote: “Recognized as a leader of the area of early identification, diagnosis and support for persons with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.”

Today we would like the minister to back up his claims with some real numbers about Yukon's diagnostic capacity for fetal alcohol spectrum disorder and a real plan to prevent this lifelong disability. In the past two years, how many children have been assessed or diagnosed for FASD at the Child Development Centre and in the school system? How many adults in Yukon's correctional system have been assessed and how many other assessment for adults have occurred?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I'm unfortunately unable to produce those statistics immediately off the top of my head. I can tell the Legislature, however, that the capacity in the Child Development Centre for assessments of children suspected of having FASD is approximately 10 a year. We also have a contract with the Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon to provide assessments during the year. I think that contract runs somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$80,000 a year. I'm not sure how many assessments are done or how many have been done, but I will provide those statistics to the House.

Ms. Hanson: I would be interested to know if that minister will stand by that statement with respect to the contract. The reality is that fetal alcohol spectrum disorder is a permanent disability that is 100-percent preventable. In a recent speech, the past president of the Canadian Bar Association reflected that, in 1994, he saw little yellow warning stickers on wine bottles at the Yukon liquor store. He concluded his speech by saying, “Perhaps I will see the return of those little yellow warning stickers on my wine bottles as an acknowledgement by my government ... that it has a moral obligation — dare I say perhaps even a legal duty — to warn women of the risks of consuming alcohol during pregnancy.”

When the Official Opposition raised this issue yesterday, the minister laughed. Maybe he will take it more seriously coming from the past president of the Canadian Bar Association. When is the minister going to dedicate the necessary resources so the Yukon Liquor Corporation can get serious about its social responsibility mandate?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Again we hear the NDP demonstrating their lack of confidence in the very competent staff of the Yukon Liquor Corporation. As I reminded the member yesterday, the decisions about staffing are made operationally by the president of Yukon Liquor Corporation, in fact, in concert with and in regular communication with other jurisdictions to determine what best practices are in those areas.

The specific focus by members on whether there were some liquor bottles that missed having stickers applied to them simply does a disservice to the great work that is being done by staff within the Department of Health and Social Services, within the Department of Justice, as well as within the Yukon Liquor Corporation to make people aware of the issues.

I remind the member that the NDP did very little on the FASD file. It was this government that stepped up with the five-step FASD action plan that has significantly increased the resources for FASSY, for the Child Development Centre and others and is recognized nationally as one of the leaders in this area. We recognize there is more work to do in this area. We will continue to do that, working with our competent staff and working with the NGOs who provide important services in this area.

Ms. Hanson: We’re not asking about plans on paper; we’re asking about results — about preventing permanent disability. Little yellow stickers on wine bottles are a small yet symbolic step toward the goal of preventing fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. What Yukoners really want to hear from their government is true leadership in the form of a Yukon-wide fetal alcohol spectrum disorder prevention strategy that is developed in partnership with First Nations in the community. To succeed with prevention, root causes like historical trauma, poverty, inadequate housing and lack of economic opportunity need to be addressed. For the fetal alcohol prevention strategy to be effective, the government will have to improve how it is partnering with First Nations and NGOs.

Is the government prepared to implement a Yukon-wide fetal alcohol spectrum disorder prevention strategy in partnership with First Nations and the community?

Hon. Mr. Graham: As I attempted to enumerate yesterday, the department’s Alcohol and Drug Services prevention unit develops and delivers a huge number of universal FASD prevention initiatives throughout the territory. They do it with the intention to not only anticipate and prevent substance abuse, but to promote awareness and influence healthy behaviour among all of our citizens here in the territory. FASD education and awareness presentations, program development and consultation in schools and communities are ways of doing it. They work with the Department of Education to build FASD prevention information right into the school curriculum itself.

We have also developed a pan-territorial FASD prevention media campaign about the importance of supporting women to have alcohol-free pregnancies using territorial health access funding. We’ve also taken on a public awareness campaign about Canada’s low-risk drinking guidelines, entitled “What’s YOUR Normal?” — maybe people have seen those posters around the territory. It has been a very good campaign.

The prevention unit also develops and delivers select FASD prevention focused on populations who are at risk in the territory. They are at risk of substance-related activities. These various initiatives include training and consultation services —

Speaker: The member’s time has elapsed.

Question re: Eliza Van Bibber School

Mr. Tredger: The previous Minister of Education committed to working with the community of Pelly Crossing and the Selkirk First Nation government to resolve situations that led to problems in Eliza Van Bibber School over the past several years, but the problems persist.

In the past year, over 10 teachers have been either fired, transferred, resigned or taken extended stress or sick leave. The community continues to be left out of the loop. When I raised these concerns almost exactly a year ago, the Minister of Education at the time committed to engage with the community to address the problem.

Does the current minister believe that having over 10 teachers come and go during a school year provides the continuity that a community and students need to be successful?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Our primary goal for all Yukon students — all Yukon children — is for students in the community to be successful. Our government and Yukon Education staff are very much committed to continuing to work with school staff, school councils and Yukon First Nations — in this particular case, Selkirk First Nation — to implement the support required to be able to ensure that we have student success in our communities.

We continue to work on a number of fronts and we remain committed to working with the school community as we go forward.

Mr. Tredger: It is a year later and there is still no memorandum of understanding signed. The speed at which this government is reacting doesn't reflect the urgency of the situation. I am asking about the leadership and communications from this government that the community of Pelly Crossing is waiting for.

Over a year ago, after the principal was removed with little consultation or explanation, this government assured the people of Pelly Crossing things would be different going forward. Here we are now, over one year later, and the situation is still ongoing.

Mr. Speaker, has the current minister had any conversations with the Selkirk First Nation chief and council regarding ongoing concerns at the Eliza Van Bibber School?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I am not going to speak to personnel issues on the floor of the Legislative Assembly. The member opposite knows full well that I do not have a legal mandate to really become involved in personnel matters. That is, in fact, tasked to the staff within our Department of Education, through the Public Service Commission and so forth.

What I mentioned before is that the Yukon government remains very committed to ensuring the success of all Yukon students throughout all of our communities in the territory. As I mentioned, we are working with the school staff. We are working with the school council. We are working with Selkirk First Nation to implement a support plan for the actual school and for all of our schools to ensure that we have student success.

That also includes ongoing discussions when it comes to the memorandum of understanding with Selkirk First Nation — very similar to the work that we are currently undertaking with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation. We have been working through the Executive Council Office to ensure that amendments go through, which require the Government of Canada, the Government of Yukon and the Selkirk First Nation to move that issue forward. There is a lot of work underway with the community to ensure student success.

Mr. Tredger: The minister knows full well that she does not need to address the specifics of the ongoing disputes at Eliza Van Bibber School, and that's not what I'm asking for.

I'm sure that the Minister of Education knows from her time spent in Watson Lake that the school often becomes the focal point of our rural communities. The better the school is doing, the better the community does. That is why it's so important that we have stability and continuity in our rural schools. Teachers need the confidence in their position and work to be able to set down roots in a community and get to know the students and parents. The community needs to be engaged and involved in a respectful and timely manner.

Will this minister recommit to meet with the chief and council of Selkirk First Nation to begin to address the concerns raised by Pelly Crossing residents —

Speaker: Order please. The member's time has elapsed.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I have met with many First Nation governments throughout the territory, including Selkirk First Nation. I'll continue to meet personally with Selkirk First Nation and other First Nations throughout the territory, as I will with Yukon school councils territory-wide, as I will with individual parents and students as well, and individual community members.

The success of our students throughout the territory requires the ongoing collaboration and contributions of every single one of us involved. This government is very much committed. In fact, it was only some two weeks ago that we all voted unanimously in support of rural equity initiatives, in support of rural schools.

We understand — and I certainly first-hand understand — the challenges associated with delivering education in more rural and remote communities. That's why we are continuing to deliver additional supports, services and resources and we will continue those discussions with all of our stakeholders.

Question re: Communication infrastructure

Mr. Silver: Last year, the government provided funding for a feasibility study for a second fibre optic line in the Yukon. Yukoners are well aware of what happens when a backhoe down south digs up the one line that we do have.

When the minister announced the project last year, he said — and I quote: "An alternate fibre optic link would improve the availability and reliability of communications services and enable competition and innovation in the telecommunications sector in Yukon."

Mr. Speaker, the funding went to Dempster Energy Services, with no competition. I don't believe that a copy of the funding arrangement has ever been made public. How much did the government provide for the study and what funding envelope specifically did this come out of?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, last year three First Nation development corporations under the aegis of Dempster Energy Services approached the department seeking funding for a study on the feasibility of an alternate fibre link to the south. The proposal met the criteria of the specific funding program and as such, it was supported financially by the department. I believe the financial amount was around \$100,000, but I stand to be corrected on the exact number.

That study has since concluded. I should note that the Yukon government remains very interested in the development of a second fibre line to the south. To that end, we have allocated \$600,000 to take the next steps toward the development of that project in this year's budget.

Both the Premier and I have indicated that this could be an excellent opportunity for a partnership with First Nation development corporations. We remain interested in that possibility and we look forward to exploring opportunities with a number of different development corporations throughout the Yukon to advance this very important project.

Mr. Silver: There is more money for this project in this year's budget. The budget speech did say that Dempster Energy Services is a partnership with three First Nation development corporations. Our government is providing

\$600,000 in this budget, together with \$150,000 from First Nation development corporations, to prepare a business case for building a second fibre optic data cable connection to the south.

On April 17, the Minister of Economic Development said the \$600,000 identified in the budget is not committed to Dempster Energy. These statements are, of course, contradictory. The Premier said in the budget speech that a partnership between Dempster Energy Services and three development corporations was already in place and the development corporations had agreed to kick in \$150,000 of their own money.

The minister backed away from that commitment and said that a decision hasn't been made. So can the Premier explain the contradiction?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: There is a fairly simple explanation. The Dempster Energy Services group of First Nation development corporations was provided funding initially to do the particular study that I answered about in the first case. The \$600,000 that's identified in this year's budget is for the development of this project, but it is not limited to those First Nation development corporations in Dempster Energy Services.

We think that this particular project is one that could be of interest to a number of different First Nation development corporations, and we hope to see their involvement in the future, but we haven't made a decision about what the exact ownership model or business development plan will be for this project.

I'm not in a position to indicate what that structure might look like or specifically which First Nation development corporations will be involved. So to conclude my answer to this particular question, Dempster Energy Services was involved in the feasibility study. The next steps of the project involve reaching out to a number of other First Nation development corporations as well. That certainly doesn't preclude Dempster Energy Services from being involved, and that's indeed a possibility, of course. As was indicated in the budget speech, we understand that Dempster Energy Services has some funding available, and we will look at funding opportunities to partner on this particular project.

Mr. Silver: You can see our confusion. The budget speech says that \$600,000 is already spoken for, and the minister says that is not the case. I would urge the Minister of Economic Development to re-read the budget speech because the Premier has already told him that this money has already been spent. The government started this second fibre optic ball rolling last year with a \$60,000 sole-source contract to Dempster Energy Services. Now this arrangement is being extended with another \$600,000 being spent with no competition. We need some clarification here.

At the same time, other potential players in the industry are being left on the sidelines by this government, or so it seems based upon contradictory statements. Other First Nation development corporations, Ice Wireless and also Northwestel, seem to be sitting on the sidelines looking in.

Why is the government playing favourites on this potentially multi-million dollar project?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I need to correct the member opposite. We have not made a decision about the development of the project yet. His characterization of this that we are playing favourites is simply inaccurate. We haven't made a decision about who will partner with us on the development of this project.

Dempster Energy Services approached the government — the Department of Economic Development — last year with a proposal and a request for funding for a feasibility study. The request met all the funding requirements of the program and as such was funded. That is the conclusion of that particular project.

Moving forward with the development of a business plan for the construction of a fibre line is something that we remain committed to, and have identified funds in this particular budget to the tune of \$600,000 to see that project move forward. We hope, and we intend to reach out to First Nation development corporations because we believe earnestly that this is an excellent opportunity for a partnership between Yukon government and First Nation development corporations.

We have not decided which business model to adopt and we have not determined which First Nations development corporations will be involved. Of course, there is also the possibility that private sector companies, like the two he mentioned, could be involved as well. Indeed, there is also the possibility of public investment in this particular project.

I think that this is an infrastructure project that will be of great importance to Yukon in the future and will be of great importance to our efforts to diversify our economy and develop the ICT industry in Yukon.

Question re: Health care clinical services plan

Ms. Stick: The author of the government's new health care clinical services plan cautioned that — and I quote: "Patient-centred care receives greater reference than implementation in Canadian health care." This means people talk a lot about patient-centred care more than they make it happen. It wasn't long ago that the Yukon Party remained fixated on acute hospital-based care, so we know there is a steep learning curve in shifting to collaborative care. To date, it is not clear how Yukon patient voices and experiences are to be included, yet there is compelling evidence to show that patient involvement in their own care improves health outcomes.

How and when will Yukon patients and family voices be included in the planning and implementation of the government's new clinical services plan?

Hon. Mr. Graham: At the present time, we are in the process of developing that implementation plan that will guide us going forward with some of the changes that we know are necessary within the health system itself. We will not only involve patient organizations — if any exist at the time of implementation — but we will involve the Yukon Health Council, which is a group of people from all areas in the

territory who meet from time to time to provide advice to the minister.

One of the questions that we will be asking them during the implementation phase is how we should be going about involving patients or potential patients in the plan for implementation.

Ms. Stick: Our commitment to collaborative care dates back to the 2008 Yukon health care review. The Yukon Party political decision-makers have not served Yukoners well with their long and expensive resistance to constructive recommendations. In 2012, the Yukon NDP spoke in this House about the success of Alaska's Nuka care. The key to their success is their rigorous inclusion of the patient voice as owner/operator of their own health care system. A born-and-raised Yukoner who has worked in the Yukon health care system has been hired by the British Columbia Ministry of Health to bring patient voices and experience to the same table as the British Columbia Medical Association.

Will the Minister of Health and Social Services agree to build on success in other jurisdictions and implement a Yukon version of the "Patients as Partners" patient voices network in British Columbia?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I think that, in future endeavours, we don't intend to be following other jurisdictions. We hope to be blazing a trail. It's interesting to hear the member opposite talking about decision-makers in the past. We don't want to live in the past any more. We're going ahead. We're moving forward into the future with our clinical services plan and with the implementation of that plan.

One of the very first things we did as a government was to pass legislation on nurse practitioners, something that hadn't been done by any parties before the Yukon Party was elected. We also made a commitment to amend the *Pharmacists Act* to ensure that pharmacists are able to work to the fullest extent of their training experience. We've developed a referred care clinic. We are in the process of implementing the MRI at the Yukon Hospital Corporation. We've done all of these things in anticipation of improving the health system in the territory. It's something we'll continue to do and we look forward to doing a really good job of it.

Ms. Stick: We expect a good job to be done with this. This is our health care. But you can't create collaborative care without collaborating in the planning and in the implementation. The same is true for patient-centred care. It's not patient-centred care if the patient is not involved.

We are already getting calls from some of the communities concerned about what they saw in the plan because they clearly have not been involved or heard from the minister or the department. The minister said that the government plans to shift toward patient-centred care, so it must have a plan to include patients starting now.

Can the minister inform Yukoners which specific mechanisms will be involved in the direction, planning and implementation of our health care system?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Only from the last year can I give you two very solid examples. We undertook a needs

assessment in both Watson Lake and Dawson City, where not only were the —

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Graham: I'll wait until the members opposite are finished commenting, if you would like.

We went ahead with the needs assessment in those two communities. We involved the whole community in those needs assessments. Then, with the recent report released here on Monday, I went through it already. Not only was the medical community involved — the Yukon Hospital Corporation, the Yukon Medical Association, the Yukon Registered Nurses Association, as well as various other medical associations — but mayors and councils were involved, First Nations, the First Nation health authorities, the Council of Yukon First Nations. All of these people were involved in the planning for the clinical care report.

We intend to involve those people and many others in our long-term vision. This is something we actually have: a long-term vision for health care in the Yukon.

Question re: Takhini Haven group home

Ms. White: Since it opened in October 2012, the Takhini Haven group home has been ringed with barbed-wire fencing. The fact that people who are not criminals have to look at this fence from the windows of their home is no different than if you or I had to look at the same 10-foot-high barbed-wire fence while looking out our windows.

This fencing provides no purpose other than to make the residents of Takhini Haven feel like prisoners, which, to be clear, they are not. Has this government made any decisions as to when this fence will be taken down?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: As the member is fully aware, we're in a process right now where we're waiting for the old Whitehorse Correctional Centre to be demolished. Until that building is removed and we look at plans for the future for that area, there are no plans in the immediate future to remove any fencing from the Whitehorse Correctional Centre area. That whole area is designated as Correctional Centre property so the fences for the interim will remain.

Ms. White: When we talk about leadership, I wonder how many other Canadian jurisdictions have group homes behind correctional fencing.

The Takhini Haven group home was set up as transitional housing to help get people with disabilities into independent living situations. It is not, nor has it ever been, an extension of the correctional facility. The fact of the matter is that the fence is a perfect representation of this government's inaction and insensibility when it comes to people living with disabilities. The people living and working there want that fence taken down. Since October 2012, the management of the facility has asked for the fence to be taken down.

Mr. Speaker, why has this government continued to ignore the request of the people living and working at Takhini Haven?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, the building in question is partially in use for Yukon Review Board clients. I have to commend the Minister of Health and Social Services

and his department for the work on that file and working with the Department of Justice to ensure that there is a safe and secure area for those individuals to live in.

The building in question is on the grounds of the Correctional Centre. As I mentioned before, once the old correctional facility has been taken down, we can take into consideration the future use of that —

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Who has the floor?

Then we can take into consideration how we move forward with that property. We'll continue to work with the stakeholders who are involved and we look forward to seeing the removal of the old correctional facility in the near future.

Ms. White: For the minister to keep referring to Yukon Review Board clients is unjust to all those who live at Takhini Haven. If those very same clients had orders to be kept behind fences, they would be at the correctional facility.

This minister has had discussions directly with the manager at Takhini Haven that included a direct request to remove the fence. The symbolism of this fence may be lost on this government, but it's certainly not lost on the residents and employees at the Takhini Haven group home. The people who live at Takhini Haven, including Yukon Review Board clients, are not prisoners and should not be made to feel like prisoners because of this Yukon Party government's inaction. The fence serves no other purpose than to make residents feel like prisoners in their own home and they are far from prisoners.

Will the minister immediately commit to removing this fencing sooner rather than later and to improving the living conditions of the people at Takhini Haven? Or maybe this government would consider moving this group home from the correctional facility site.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: We'll continue to work with the proponent in question that is operating services out of the building on the correctional site grounds. In the interim, we are very much looking forward to seeing the removal of the very old and antiquated correctional facility that has a lot of past in our community. It will be wonderful to see that building removed. I know the Minister of Highways and Public Works has worked very diligently on making that happen. Thanks to him for that work.

In the interim, we do look forward to that building being removed from the property, and once it's removed, as I have mentioned a couple times on the floor of the Legislature, we will make a decision on how we move forward with that property.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has elapsed.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Silver: Somewhere in the Department of Education's video archives there is an excellent video explaining how mathematics can help measure trees that are still standing using trigonometry. The star of that video is in our gallery today.

I would like everybody to help me welcome Ms. Miriam Moore.

Applause

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): Order. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 71, entitled *Act to Amend the Summary Convictions Act*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 71: Act to Amend the Summary Convictions Act

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 71, entitled *Act to Amend the Summary Convictions Act*.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Madam Chair, before I get started, I just want to extend my thanks to Lawrence Purdy from the legislative counsel for his work on this file and to our director of communications, Dan Cable.

They have certainly provided excellent advice and service to the department over the years that I have been minister and I am very grateful to have them here with me today.

The members opposite have stated that they will support this bill and we appreciate their support and comments at second reading. The members opposite have indicated that the bill is providing straightforward amendments, primarily to increase efficiencies in the process of tickets and to require enforcement officers to file a ticket with the court registry, rather than with justices.

The latter is an important amendment. Due to a lack of clarity in the language of the act, all tickets, regardless of whether or not they go to trial, have been sworn by justices. This means that enforcement officers must attend at the court registry for swearing of tickets that really may never go to trial. It also requires that officers attend docket court on

matters that may also never go to trial. Requiring this attendance has been viewed as time-consuming and an inefficient use of enforcement and court resources. By delivering tickets to the registry of the court, instead of justices, the registry will be able to better control and manage how tickets are processed. This will reduce the amount of tickets that justices process and decrease the overall ticket processing times.

The Opposition member asked about the provision dealing with an enforcement officer's ability to compel a defendant to appear in court to answer a charge for which there is an option to pay a set fine. In this context, she asked what guidelines the government has in place for enforcement officers to determine when it is in the public interest to compel a defendant to appear in court, rather than pay a set fine.

I would like to address that particular question here today. We've amended the language in the bill to allow for tickets to be used as a summons where the case warrants it. The amendment would legitimize the current practice where an enforcement officer issuing a ticket determines that the circumstances require a hearing — regardless of the plea — and amends the ticket by hand to use it as a summons. The enforcement officer strikes out the portion of the ticket that provides the option to pay; however, there was no authority in the *Summary Convictions Act* that allowed for this practice. We now have amended the act to include a provision for that practice.

I should note that the Department of Justice does not determine the threshold for an enforcement officer to use the discretionary powers to require a hearing. An enforcement agency determines its own threshold on reasonable grounds.

I have been told by agencies that some of the reasons to compel a defendant to appear in court rather than pay a set fine include an assessment of the reasonable grounds for the charge — perhaps the severity of the offence — and whether the defendant is a repeat offender. In those situations, the enforcement officer may require the defendant to appear in court without the option to pay a set fine. But again, as noted, it is the enforcement agency's decision to decide their threshold.

We have amended the legislation to cover eight policy issues and as well used clear and plain language wherever possible in the legislation to make it easier to read and to understand.

In conclusion, the proposed changes will directly affect courtworkers and enforcement officials on a daily basis. The changes will address inefficiencies in both the issuance of tickets by enforcement officers and the processing of tickets by the court.

I am now prepared to relinquish the floor to the members opposite if they have any further questions.

Ms. Moorcroft: I would like to thank the minister for his response to the question that I raised, and to welcome the officials to the House again. I am prepared to move into the clauses of the bill if there is no further general debate.

Chair: Is there any further general debate? We will proceed with a clause-by-clause reading of the bill.

On Clause 1

Clause 1 agreed to

On Clause 2

Clause 2 agreed to

On Clause 3

Clause 3 agreed to

On Clause 4

Clause 4 agreed to

On Clause 5

Clause 5 agreed to

On Clause 6

Clause 6 agreed to

On Clause 7

Clause 7 agreed to

On Clause 8

Clause 8 agreed to

On Clause 9

Clause 9 agreed to

On Clause 10

Clause 10 agreed to

On Clause 11

Clause 11 agreed to

On Clause 12

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On Clause 13

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On Clause 15

Clause 15 agreed to

On Clause 16

Clause 16 agreed to

On Clause 17

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On Clause 38
Clause 38 agreed to
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On Clause 40
Clause 40 agreed to
On Clause 41
On Title
Title agreed to

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Madam Chair, I move that Bill No. 71, entitled *Act to Amend the Summary Convictions Act*, be reported without amendment.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Nixon that Bill No. 71, entitled *Act to Amend the Summary Convictions Act*, be reported without amendment.

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 71, entitled *Act to Amend the Summary Convictions Act* and directed me to report the bill without amendment.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 71: *Act to Amend the Summary Convictions Act* — Third Reading

Deputy Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 71, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Nixon.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I move that Bill No. 71, entitled *Act to Amend the Summary Convictions Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 71, entitled *Act to Amend the Summary Convictions Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I'm very pleased today to bring forward this *Act to Amend the Summary Convictions Act* for our final reading.

The *Summary Convictions Act* set out the conditions under which tickets for offences can be issued, served and proceed in court and the fines to be paid on conviction. Summary conviction tickets are used for a variety of territorial offences, particularly on contraventions of motor vehicle and highways legislation. The changes proposed in the bill will improve administrative and procedural aspects of how prescribed offences under the act are ticketed, including how they are issued, served, tried in court and fined upon conviction. Some of the language of the act led to inefficient applications of the act and therefore amendments were needed to bring clarity around the ticketing processes.

Amendments to the *Summary Convictions Act* will address inefficiencies in both the issuance of tickets by enforcement officials and the processing of tickets by the court. For several years, enforcement officials have requested changes to the ticketing processes. These amendments to the *Summary Convictions Act* will make ticketing processes easier and faster for enforcement officials and for the court.

Administrative changes will allow enforcement officers to spend less time in court and more time on other priorities. We have consulted with the users of the *Summary Convictions Act* who are supportive that we were moving forward on amending this particular act.

First Nations and stakeholders such as the RCMP, departments with legislation that create offences that can be enforced through ticketing, the Yukon Liquor Corporation and the City of Whitehorse and the Dawson City Bylaw services were consulted on the draft amendments of this act. First Nations and stakeholders were consulted through e-mail, letters, telephone calls and in-person meetings were available upon request during the five-week consultation period.

Public consultation was not required, as the proposed changes to the act are administrative in nature and will not affect the legal rights of justice system participants or the public.

I am happy to say that we were able to address most concerns raised by stakeholders and that stakeholders in general support the amendments. Any requests for

amendments, which were outside the policy mandate for the amendments, are currently being addressed and responded to by the Department of Justice.

In conclusion, I appreciate the support that the members opposite have given this bill and we look forward to drafting regulations that will allow for the provisions of this bill to be implemented.

Mr. Silver: I rise today to speak on the *Act to Amend the Summary Convictions Act*. I support this bill and I thank the officials from the Department of Justice for their work on rewriting it. Legislation that will allow for the modernization of the ticketing system in the Yukon is forward thinking and it will increase efficiencies and will take out human errors found in paper documentation. It also ensures that the ticket is served on-site and takes away any lost fines that may occur when mailing tickets out in the territory. This legislation will give authority to enforcement officers to allow them to summon a repeat offender to court when they have decided that paying the fines will not prevent repeat offences.

I want to say that we are absolutely in support of this bill.

Speaker: Before asking the question, I will remind members that even in a verbal vote, you must be in your normal seat to be able to vote.

Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Madam Deputy Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Barr: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

Deputy Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 17 yeas, nil nays.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.

Motion for third reading of Bill No. 71 agreed to

Speaker: I declare that Bill No. 71 has passed this House.

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 662

Deputy Clerk: Motion No. 662, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Cathers.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader:

THAT the terms of reference of the Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing, as established by Motion No. 433 of the 1st Session of the 33rd Legislative Assembly, be amended by changing its reporting deadline to the House from the 2014 Spring Sitting of the Legislative Assembly to the 2014 Fall Sitting of the Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I won't spend long in introducing this motion, as I am sure all members are aware that this is a request that was made by the Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing and I understand that the decision was made unanimously by all members of the committee to request the extension of this deadline and so, therefore, as Government House Leader, I am presenting this procedural motion to accommodate the committee's request.

Ms. Moorcroft: I rise on behalf of the Official Opposition to support this motion to extend the mandate of the Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing from spring 2014 to fall 2014.

As the vice-chair of this committee, I can confidently say that we have an extensive mandate and we have been working hard to fulfill those demands. Nevertheless, the committee does need more time to fully and responsibly complete the task it has been given. I am also pleased to say that the committee has been working cooperatively and did, as the Government House Leader said, reach a unanimous agreement to request this extension.

The committee has asked for public input and it appreciates and values the comments from Yukoners that have been sent by letter and by e-mail through our website, which can be found on the Yukon Legislative Assembly web page. Interested parties can read all of those comments posted on the web page, along with the many presentations the committee has heard from scientists and others about the technical, environmental, economic and regulatory aspects of hydraulic fracturing.

The committee has, in accordance with its mandate, sent invitations to Yukon First Nations and to mayors and councils seeking their input. They have an opportunity to also appear as witnesses if they so choose.

There is a link on the committee's website where members of the public can request the committee to come to their community to hold a public hearing. The deadline for requesting a public hearing in your community is today, May 1, so it is timely that this motion is being passed today.

Shortly, the committee will meet to determine its initial schedule for public hearings in Watson Lake and Old Crow, the two communities named in the original motion. The committee has also agreed to hold a public hearing in Whitehorse and will shortly be meeting to decide which other communities it will travel to for public hearings. We look forward to travelling to communities to hear from the public their views on the risks and benefits of hydraulic fracturing.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would say that the substance of my remarks can all be found in various letters, news releases and notices on the committee's website. Again, any member of the public who is interested in further participating can go to the website for more information.

Mr. Silver: As the Liberal caucus representative on this committee, I also rise to speak in favour of this motion. I concur with my colleague, the Member for Copperbelt South, with the magnitude of this mandate through the original motion.

It is worth noting that earlier this week, a new report from the Council of Canadian Academies was finally published. The council is an independent, not-for-profit organization that supports independent, science-based authoritative expert assessment to inform public policy development in Canada.

This report was prepared by the Government of Canada in response to a request from the Canadian Minister of Environment. The report is, entitled *Environmental Impacts of Shale Gas Extraction in Canada*, by the Expert Panel on Harnessing Science and Technology to Understand the Environmental Impacts of Shale Gas Extraction. I would urge all members of the public to read this report if they are interested in the issue of fracking.

With respect to the extension of the reporting deadline of the fracking committee itself, our group is set to hold some community meetings after the House rises in the spring. Our final report could not be completed without these meetings occurring, obviously. This necessitates an extension of our reporting deadline, so we will absolutely be supporting the motion that is before us here today. Until the committee completes its work, the moratorium on fracking in the Yukon will continue to be in place.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I wasn't planning on commenting, but I just wanted to add one particular aspect of the committee's work that hasn't been mentioned. The committee will be hosting another set of public proceedings later this month — in the final week of May — and has invited a number of excellent speakers to present to the public, as we did at the previous public proceedings. Our last set of public proceedings was very well-attended and very well-received. I thought the presenters did an excellent job of providing facts to the committee as well as to the public who were in attendance and to any of those who were interested enough to go on-line and review those presentations.

I would like to take the opportunity to encourage all Yukoners who are interested in this to either join us in the

gallery for that particular set of public proceedings or to view those on-line through the various media available.

There is more information available on the subject on-line and they should review that if they're interested. Thank you very much to all members who are on the committee who have done this great work and to those of us in the House who are supporting — other members who aren't on the committee who support us and have been providing us with the support we need.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Madam Deputy Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Barr: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

Deputy Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are seventeen yeas, nil nays.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.

Motion No. 662 agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before Committee is Vote 3, Department of Education, in Bill No. 14, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2014-15*. Do members wish a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 14: *First Appropriation Act, 2014-15* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate in Vote 3, Department of Education, in Bill No. 14, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2014-15*.

We are resuming debate. Ms. Taylor, you have the floor, with 18 minutes remaining.

Department of Education — *continued*

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Madam Chair, I am very pleased to continue on with the debate on the Department of Education.

As I alluded to earlier, the last time that we had convened in debate we were speaking to our \$189-million budget — just shy of \$190 million — for this year's budget for 2014-15.

I believe we were talking to a number of matters, but I did want to reflect on a couple of things, one being Education Week, which we recently recognized and celebrated in the Legislature.

Education Week was a very busy time indeed and it really reflected on a number of different initiatives that were held throughout the week, but it also speaks to many initiatives being undertaken by Yukon schools across the territory. During that week, I was really pleased to be able to join with students, teachers, school councils and representatives from the community in a variety of events celebrating all that we have here in the territory in terms of garnering and working toward student success.

One of those events was the annual wrestling tournament. For anyone in this House who has ever had the opportunity to see this wrestling tournament underway — this incredible feat of talent — 500-plus elementary students from 16 schools throughout the territory competed in the largest tournament to date. As I understand, it was the largest in western Canada when it comes to elementary schools. It is a very wonderful example of how — when you combine academics with sport excellence and are able to engage students in that respective way — it really does equate to student success.

I want to say thank you to Mr. Ted Hupé, the principal of Holy Family Elementary School, and his team for taking on the leadership of organizing that event over the last several years. It has indeed grown in terms of interest and in terms of the actual participants who take part in this major event.

The other event that I also wanted to mention was the robotics challenge. I found that really interesting. It was the first of its kind where you had a number of student teams from grades 5 and 6 that were able to come together for the first time at Porter Creek Secondary School. They were able to demonstrate technical literacy — that is what I would call it

— by designing, building and programming LEGO robots. They competed in a series of challenges, and it was incredible to see the level of enthusiasm, the passion in the students' eyes and the level of detailed work in putting these robots together, by putting them into action in terms of displaying the very merits of sustainable energies. It was another example of speaking to or promoting the teaching of math and engineering, science and technology in a very fun, play-based way. It was incredible to see that level of engagement, to empower the students and to give them the freedom to let their robots work and to challenge themselves, and they did an amazing job.

I think that based on this experience — and kudos to our superintendent, Penny Prysnuik, who, I think, was the person who initiated this challenge — we want to build on that success and be able to incorporate that in a greater way in our schools. We are doing just that, and I think we are talking with the Department of Economic Development about expanding that success.

Whether it was the heritage fair of this morning or the Young Authors Conference that took place at F.H. Collins last week, these are other great examples of how hands-on learning can really promote teamwork, respect for each other, friendly competition — teachings in a very different format, one that continues to empower and engage our students.

I also just wanted to make reference to some other initiatives. One example is the sports leadership programs that are currently being delivered at F.H. Collins Secondary School. Last night I had the opportunity to go to the athletics banquet. I was able to hand out a couple of awards in recognition of two individuals who have really contributed above and beyond and have really excelled as a result of the sport and physical literacy program.

We talk about the importance of physical literacy. We talk about participation in sports and recreation. As I've really come to know over the years, participation in just about any sport or recreational activity does make us all much better people. It speaks to student achievement, teamwork and fair play. It talks to personal discipline and commitment, all of which these students and more — of course, I can only speak to F.H. Collins, as they were handing out many different program rewards last night. These individuals are engaged on a whole different level. As a result, when you combine academics with the physical literacy piece, it does equate to student success.

I think this is one example of another program where those two can be combined to promote physical health and promote success for every student. I want to say congratulations to the two winners of the sport and physical literacy program awards that I was able to hand out last night, one being to Malcolm Muir and the other to Haley Braga. They are two exceptional students who have really made significant improvements throughout the year.

The beautiful thing about this particular program is that it doesn't necessarily speak to one sport. It is about training and excelling in all sports and all aspects — in core inner strength. It's a very regimented school setting, but it does combine that

academic excellence with sports. We are seeing some very positive indicators and great successes thus far.

I also wanted to make reference to leadership education and athletic development, a program that is also currently underway at Porter Creek Secondary School. It is a slightly different sport leadership program being delivered at Porter Creek Secondary. It's more on the leadership and really growing those particular skills. It has been working very well. I just spoke with some officials from the school last week.

The results they're seeing thus far are incredible. It's another program where we've really gleaned some of the successes from the F.H. Collins program and now they're really building according to the interests of their particular school.

It's all about developing personal leadership, wellness, physical literacy skills, as well as those skills such as teamwork, respect and leading healthy lifestyles — all important leadership traits and skills for the jobs of the 21st century as we know it today.

Pretty soon we're going to be hosting another rural experiential model — REM — in the community of Carmacks. I'm really excited about that particular initiative, again gleaned from the great success that Robert Service School hosted in Dawson City last fall, where you had a number of students from several different communities in rural Yukon come together to be able to choose one of several different sessions, according to their passions. It was a great example of what can be achieved.

Students were exposed to specialized, hands-on learning, but they were also able to expand their high school peer group across the communities, which is really vital in terms of making those connections for rural students that they don't necessarily have as perhaps students here in Whitehorse do. It has also enabled teachers from rural Yukon to be able to expand their peer group, be able to enhance their skills in a variety of different ways and means, and be able to build on the connections with those in the know and those who do have access perhaps to other amenities and skills that they may not necessarily have.

We really look forward to being able to host another subsequent program of REM in Carmacks this year. It will be for younger grades compared to the last REM in F.H. Collins. I think that part of the review of the experience at Robert Service School was about really wanting to get at a younger age to be able to reach out where we think it could make an even more meaningful experience for rural students. We're excited about that.

I can't say enough about what is going on in Watson Lake. The blended learning program has been a great success. In fact, at the YTA conference that was held last weekend, I had the opportunity to speak with a couple of the teachers from Robert Service School. They too are looking at rolling out their own blended learning model in Dawson this fall. I know that the Haines Junction St. Elias School is as well. There's extreme interest in rolling out their version of blended learning. In fact, I'm quite sure that when I was visiting St. Elias School, I believe that the principal and the chair of the

school council were looking to go and spend a number of days in Watson Lake to learn about this model and to see it first-hand. It is incredible. For me to talk about it here is one thing, but for individuals to actually see it in action is another thing.

Obviously, Robert Service School — to their credit — are looking at different ways of branching out and reaching out and of course you know our partnership with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation — the bilateral agreement that was signed off last fall — speaks to those very examples of experiential hands-on learning. To their credit as well — I know that the MLA for Klondike spoke yesterday in support of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, the school itself and Yukon College. I just wanted to add the Department of Education has played a role in collaborating with the community as well.

There are some very amazing things going on. The mobile trades trailer that we announced as part of the overall \$11 million investment in the Centre for Northern Innovation and Mining that we announced earlier this year is but an example of being able to expand the delivery of trades to rural Yukon. The mobile trades trailer, which is phenomenal unto itself — to be able to spend the last number of months in the City of Dawson and to be able to be utilized by high school students and also Yukon College students and to see that complement in welding recently graduate is fantastic to see.

I understand that the next stop will be Ross River for the trades trailer, but it's going to spend a little bit more time in Dawson City as I understand. They've just found some additional use of that time while it's there. Congratulations to the recent graduates of CNIM, who just recently completed their program, and to the students of the School of Visual Arts. That's another great example of the community taking the initiative to build on its strengths. Visual arts and the arts in general across the territory are of key importance and are another great example of our government's investment in the school and being able to collaborate with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and KIAC and the college itself to bring that to fruition.

As I mentioned, we continue to work with Yukon First Nations on a number of different fronts — various MOUs similar to what we have been working on with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation — on improving culturally relevant curriculum and looking at developing alternate approaches, especially for our vulnerable learners, which is of utmost importance.

I also just wanted to make mention while I have a few minutes here — another amazing example is the alternative high school program at Chief Zzeh Gittlit School in Old Crow. It's enabling students to remain in their community for secondary schooling, and that's another stream. It's not for everyone, but for those individuals who have been nurtured by a couple of the teachers — one in particular — with the support of her administration and the support of Vuntut Gwitchin Government, Yukon College and the individual families, they are making significant headway — as they are in Teslin — providing an alternate stream of learning.

As a result, I know that the graduation coming up in Old Crow is June 13 — Yukon's birthday — which is very timely. We're looking forward to that graduation to see perhaps the

first time Old Crow has actually graduated a number of students. It's a huge success. I also want to say a thank you to the MLA for Vuntut Gwitchin for sharing the annual culture camp that takes place every spring with the students from the school in Old Crow. It provides them the opportunity to develop their Gwitchin language, culture and traditional land-based skills while achieving learning outcomes and literacy and numeracy and history and science.

It was an amazing opportunity for me — first time ever — to be able to actually learn about trapping and setting muskrat traps and being able to catch them and to be able to dispose of them accordingly — to be able to skin the muskrat. That's right; I did that. That was an experience of a lifetime, and I believe that my colleague had it up on Facebook within seconds — I think it was — before I even knew it was over.

This is just a great example of a program that's really about the leadership of the Vuntut Gwitchin Government coming together with the Department of Education and delivering an alternate stream of learning that is obviously engaging and empowering students in their success in education.

In a nutshell, it is changing the way that students are learning today, compared to how I learned back many years ago. It's exposing our students to new interests, new ways of thinking and new ways of doing and those are all good attributes and all very positive things. Technology in the classroom to learning on the land and exposing our students to innovation every day — it is thanks to the dedication and passion of our educators, our teachers and administrators. I just want to thank them for going above and beyond the call of duty and for offering our students unique experiences inside and outside of the school.

Mr. Tredger: I welcome the officials back and thank them for coming. I thank the member's department, which has been quick to respond to questions I posed. Thank you to the officials and to the department for listening in and responding. I thank the minister for her account of some of the many things that are happening in our schools today. We can indeed be proud of our school system.

The other day when I was at the wrestling tournament — we were helping to set up and I was reminiscing with Mr. Hupé and Mr. Wright. We were talking about the first time he came up with the idea. I happened to be principal at Jack Hulland at the time. We had a conversation and I basically told him he was crazy. We didn't need another sport like this and who wanted to wrestle anyway?

But Ted, John Wright, Pete Harms and Alain Desrochers got together and made it happen. Mr. Hupé had a dream and became a champion of it. It started out in a school gym — a small event. It moved to the Convention Centre, a little bit bigger. Now it's in the Canada Games Centre. He jumped through the hoops. He worked with anybody and everybody. He struggled to find funding to make it happen. He spent a lot of time working with different schools building the program. Hat's off to him and people like Bob Sharp, Pete Harms, John Wright and Alain Desrochers who made it happen.

It's the drive of champions like that who have allowed our system to come up with these innovations, some of which are unique in the world, like Wood Street, Reading Recovery, the land-based learning and the alternative high school. Many of the programs the minister mentioned were driven by the innovation of teachers.

The sports award banquet last night was interesting. One of the comments that I heard was the potential and the possibility of the sports program at F.H. Collins and the drivers of such a program — the innovations. A number of the parents were talking about the possibility of expanding that to a sports school and the opportunity for creative thinking around the old gym — how it could be renovated — perhaps put a cover on it, perhaps include the cafeteria area. It could be a centre for sports innovation and training throughout the year — an opportunity for tourism, hockey camps and volleyball camps. Sport Yukon could use it. We have the Canada Games Centre facility. We could expand the old gym and take advantage of that.

We know that the current plans for the gym at F.H. Collins show it is going to be smaller, but we do have that old gym to expand. It is a possibility and it is a call for creative thinking and thinking for people, as we move forward. I appreciate the things we have, but we must not rest on our laurels. We must keep growing and expanding. We must keep our ears and imagination open to the innovations that are driven by our very competent staff, by teachers, by parents and by community members.

One of the things attempting to drive the education system for many years is our school growth plans. We have talked about that over time and they have taken many incarnations. At their heart, they are an attempt to engage the community and engage First Nation governments in our school system.

If the minister could give me a quick update on the school growth plans — what version are we in now? What are they expected to accomplish? Is it an annual process? How is she ensuring that the community and affected First Nation governments are consulted? How are they being evaluated for their effectiveness, and by whom? What resources have been allocated to the schools, the school communities and the First Nation governments to participate in the process?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I want to thank the member opposite for his comments.

I failed to recognize him at the YTA conference, and I had every intention of actually recognizing his presence there. I wanted to thank him for his contributions to Yukon education over the years, and just as the previous Minister of Education has mentioned, it is great to have him and the MLA for Klondike — to be able to share among themselves their experiences and their expertise.

The member opposite knows full well I'm not an educator. I have had the opportunity to see and to visit the majority of schools around the Yukon, and even though I was born and raised in this territory and grew up here and went to school here, things have changed so much from those days.

For me to actually see all of these schools — it is incredible. It really has opened up my eyes and has given me confidence and optimism for the future as well. That's not to say that there are no challenges in education — there are. There are some big challenges and there always will be. But we're working on a number of initiatives and, as the member opposite made reference to, they are working.

Thanks to that principal and thanks to her team, the school council and the parents' involvement in rolling that out and being able to have that buy-in. It's so much more difficult if you don't have that community grassroots-driven process. As a result, we're seeing many things come to fruition, grow and thrive.

The wrestling tournament — I also wanted to add another name to that and that was Greig Bell. Greig Bell was one of my former teachers in Watson Lake Secondary. He also is a huge advocate and huge champion. Madam Chair, you would know that particular individual I am speaking about. He too has seen potential, and he has helped grow that wrestling tournament. It was great to be able to touch base with him the other day and to talk about what he is up to these days, but really garnering his perspectives on the tournament and wrestling in general.

The sports leadership program, for example, at the Yukon Sport and Physical Literacy Centre at F.H. Collins Secondary School — I also wanted to pay credit to individuals like Bruce Thomson, the vice-principal at F.H. Collins and individuals like Jeane Lassen and Tracey Bilsky at Sport Yukon as well. They worked with the Department of Education and the Department of Community Services, which provided joint funding and resources in support of that program. It was another leap of faith, but it has worked well. It was modelled after a sports school in British Columbia, but it has really been made to fit the school's needs and the priorities. I think that they've done a great job. I've been up there a couple of time over the course of the year since the pilot started, and it's great.

It's fantastic to see so many different students involved with so many different sports. My goodness, there is snowboarding to alpine to free-style skiers. We had soccer players and hockey players. We had people involved with cross country and swimming and so forth, and a number of dancers as well — all subscribing to this program and really developing their core strength on the physical side — and combining that with academic excellence.

It has been a great program and has inspired others. Since then, we have seen the LEAD program come to fruition at Porter Creek Secondary School, and that was an initiative born solely by that particular school, and they have made it work.

I had the opportunity to go to the Polarettes gymnasium for the kick-off of that program and it was fantastic. I got to participate in some of the stretches and exercises. I am pretty sure I failed miserably at that, but it was great to see the students from all walks of life. Their clear interest was to engage in these various activities, all in support of health and

wellness, combined with leadership activities and skills that we are looking to see so much.

Last night I was watching the Alberta news and I saw that the former Prime Minister of Canada, Kim Campbell, has actually just launched a leadership school at the University of Alberta. That is my old university. It is something that we are seeing more and more across the nation as we speak.

We talk about developing, nurturing and mentoring leaders of tomorrow and working on those executive programs. What they're finding, according to Ms. Campbell, was that students would be graduating with degrees of various sorts — masters and undergraduate degrees — and they still were lacking those leadership traits and abilities — not all, but many. So the intent of this program — and we're seeing some of these other programs — is developing the leadership. When we talk about developing leadership, we talk about core competencies in communication, problem-solving and critical thinking — all the very important traits that some of the top employers of the country are looking for from successful students of today and tomorrow.

All of this is to say that programs like what is going on at F.H. Collins and in Porter Creek Secondary School are all about developing leadership in different ways — on the land, experiential learning, and the MAD program at Wood Street school annex. We have the CHAOS program — there are many different examples of programs that we can allude to and look to and see. I continue to have students come up to me who have been engaged in those programs, and they speak huge merits about having those once-in-a-lifetime opportunities of paddling, of being able to climb, about being able to go winter trekking for weeks on end. That's all about inspiring leadership attributes and developing teamwork. They are doing a fantastic job — kudos to those individuals.

Peter Harms is another individual the member opposite referred to, who just recently received an award of excellence in recognition of his leadership on the science and technology side of it. My goodness — he has done everything in so many different, non-conventional ways in terms of inspiring students to develop their love of science and math skills and it is working.

The bison hunt and celebrating with the annual bison feast at the school — those are other examples — and the MLA for Lake Laberge and I will be going to it later on this evening.

As a result of that particular award, that school will be able to engage in even greater experiential learning opportunities. I want to make mention of individuals like Marj Hlady, another individual who started her career in Watson Lake many years ago from Saskatchewan. She has been a principal and a teacher over many years, but was awarded as one of the top outstanding principals of the year, again, for all of her work with English second language learners and bringing in the community — that whole community approach — in terms of inspiring student excellence. She has done a great job with her team as well.

Vanier Secondary School, Takhini Elementary School, Whitehorse Elementary School — those are other examples of

schools taking the initiative to really instill First Nation awareness of their culture, their history and their language. Takhini Elementary School kicks off its week of long activities next week, but Vanier and Whitehorse Elementary did just that earlier this year. It was the first time ever that they have done that and I will give kudos to those schools for taking that initiative to undertake those important activities.

I also want to thank the department, in particular, and the First Nations Programs and Partnerships unit as well, for developing that. There are some key individuals in that shop who are really working hard to bring programs and more activities into the schools as another means of engaging students in terms of enhancing awareness of First Nation culture. Those are all fantastic examples of what schools are doing to engage their students.

In terms of the school growth plans, Yukon Education continues to commit to ensuring that all of the school growth plans — this was one aspect of reporting that was certainly recommended through the Auditor General report and is something that we have undertaken to do. It feeds into our annual planning process.

The school growth process encourages and monitors student performance and school improvements aimed at individual student success, as well as system accountability. In this year's budget, we have \$416,000 allotted to support that school growth process to continue in Yukon Education.

The member opposite asked good questions. It's a process that's a really important avenue for First Nations, school councils, community members at large, parents and families to get involved in identifying and addressing school priorities. It's something that we continue to undertake. I have seen numerous school growth plans over this past year, as I've visited and had the opportunity to meet with each of the school councils over the last several months. They have all identified a number of common elements but also unique attributes that are important to their particular schools.

It's about improving student achievement, success for student literacy, reading, writing, language skills — what I was talking to earlier about developing student social responsibility skills, including self-regulation, positive health, improving the engagement of our students and the school community in terms of the direction of where the school is going, including the development of strategies for how we can improve student attendance, which is vitally important to student success.

I know that a number of our secondary schools have chosen to focus on individual achievement among their students as well. Yes, we have a number of individuals who are tasked with the responsibility of working with the community, school councils and others to put forth and prepare the school growth plans, including our director of student achievement. We also have review teams, which include First Nation representatives. It is an annual process. It's a regular part of business in the Department of Education. I'm really pleased to report that every school does in fact have them.

I also just wanted to say that, thanks to our officials here, the *School Growth Process Handbook 2013-2014* is available on the Department of Education's website so the member can learn about school growth plans, including guidelines and checklists, school review guidelines, assessment frameworks, and reporting and planning templates.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for her answer. I guess my concern arose when I talked to a number of First Nations and they weren't aware of their opportunity to be involved in the school growth plans, especially in rural communities where their citizens make up the bulk of the school population.

I would encourage the department or the minister to ensure that First Nation governments are aware of that opportunity and, in fact, it should be enshrined in the process so that the First Nation governments perhaps have a review of the school plan and have it written into agreements.

I was talking to the RCMP in a couple of the communities, and each month they go to either the town or village council meetings or to the chief and council meetings and have a report. I know there is no such requirement on the part of school personnel but it might go a long way to ensuring that all parties are at least beginning the conversation to talk to one another. I would encourage the minister to continue with the school growth process and not to abandon it and start another one, as has happened in the past — and the importance of having that continuity and evaluating its successes and making changes as necessary.

That is a critical part of education — the evaluation of our programs and finding out what makes them tick so we can replicate them. It is heartening to hear of all of the good things happening at the schools, but the challenge for the minister and for us as educators is: how do we ensure that, where it's not working, we find a way to make it work? We have a lot of success stories, but we also have some situations that really need our attention.

It's important that we rethink our systems and the way that we deliver education in light of the 21st century. It doesn't work, as the minister has pointed out, to keep students and teachers locked into traditional grade levels. It's difficult in traditional classrooms to meet the diverse student needs in small classes with large discrepancies in students' academic abilities — often, three or more grade levels in the same classroom.

The high school at Watson Lake, as the minister mentioned, is to be commended. The blended learning program offers a lot of promise. By all accounts it is a very worthwhile project. My question for the minister is: How will that project be assessed? What criteria will be used to measure this success? How are we going to evaluate the lessons learned?

Are we looking at improved academic performance, attendance? What are the essential components to the program? What are the challenges to the program? Have there been interviews, formal and recorded, with the students, with the teachers involved, with parents involved? It's important that we do these evaluations, not because we doubt the

veracity of the program, but because we need to learn from them and improve on it.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: We spoke to this issue about rural equity, about trying to close that gap between rural and non-rural students here in the territory and also the student achievement gap that exists between First Nation and non-First Nation students. There are a number of initiatives that are currently underway. We spoke at greater length about the rural equity action plan by way of a motion. I would like to thank the members opposite for their support for that motion and that particular initiative.

When we talk about the actions being undertaken under that plan, it calls for enhanced distance learning opportunities, such as what is happening in Watson Lake with the blended learning approach. It also speaks to a number of other various attributes in the plan, ranging from accommodating individual needs of our learners, social and emotional connections and needs, integration of First Nation cultures and perspectives across the curriculum and resource sharing. We talked about resources among students and also among our teaching professionals here in the territory, especially when it comes to professional development, and opportunities for students to work together in larger groups, as I alluded to in the REM initiative.

It's all about building capacity to improve what is working.

In Watson Lake, we have just completed the first semester — we have really had only one semester — that was just recently completed. We continue to monitor that and that will continue to be the case in terms of evaluating all these initiatives. I think I spoke to this earlier in the motion debate, but I would be happy to go over it again in terms of how we intend to continue to work on these initiatives and also when it comes to promoting their evaluation. I think the member opposite has talked a bit about specific goals — how they are set, how they are evaluated — and I do know that all of these initiatives, including the blended learning, have targets for all of their objectives of improving access and outcomes for rural learners.

Again, whether it is looking at increasing student achievement, decreasing student absences or expanding the number of high school course offerings — you know, Watson Lake is a great example of how we were able, through that blended learning approach and ability to expand on the number of courses being available significantly, almost doubling the number of courses, and making it a whole lot more relevant for students. As well, obviously giving flexibility for our teaching professionals is very much welcomed. We will continue to look at ways of evaluating this, as I mentioned, whether it is attendance, individual achievement, graduation rates and so on.

There are a number of performance indicators, such as the Yukon Foundation skills assessments. We do have, when it comes to the B.C. provincials and the graduation rates as I referred to earlier, completion rates, attendance reports and so on. I know that for the blended learning model, for example, we have collected the baseline data thus far according to the

department. The attendance is being monitored on a routine basis and the review of the semester-one data is currently underway. What we do know is that, from what I understand, there have been some very positive indicators. I don't have that specific detail right before me, but certainly we will be trusting the good work of our officials to go over that with the school in Watson Lake — and the school council — ensuring that detailed information and evaluation and see what is working and what isn't working.

I've always said that it's important to continue to try different things, but I do know that in recent reports — I think it was just reported through the media as well with the attendance levels — there has been great attendance compared to where we were about a year ago. That's a very positive indicator. Likewise, we will continue to evaluate, monitor and make tweaks to other initiatives, such as the Dawson rural experiential model and the REM model that will be rolled out in Carmacks here soon as well, later on this month.

We have a number of programs underway I alluded to earlier — alternative learning in Old Crow. We continue to engage with our stakeholders with all of these initiatives as the member opposite made reference to earlier as well. A lot of these are being driven by the communities. They want to make it work. They're making it work. It's really tailor-made for their specific schools — for their school communities. I'm very pleased.

When I visited Watson Lake back in January, I spent a couple of days there at the Watson Lake Secondary School with you, Madam Chair, in your capacity as the MLA for Watson Lake. We were able to see first-hand the blended learning model from the very hour when they first arrived in the school, checking out the laptop, signing off, going to their individual classrooms and then seeing their classes underway. By being able to also collectively learn, listen to parents and the students themselves — we had many opportunities to talk with a number of students throughout the days and also members of the school council. Like for me when it was first being pitched, it was received with a lot of questions about what this was going to look like.

It's not just, "Here's a laptop and go off and learn in a corner." It's a very unique, blended approach. It uses the teacher expertise in the classrooms. In the one classroom we were in, there were a couple of teachers and a number of students — I think there were about 12 or 15 students in the classroom — representing three different grade levels taking about four different subjects.

I've never walked into a quieter classroom but, at times, there were interventions by the teachers themselves, talking to a specific area within that particular subject. They were able to tell if there were any problems being developed around a certain theme in a certain course, and then they were able to group the class accordingly.

Looking at the students, they were tuning in orally. They were looking on the screen first-hand. There were video clips blended with the actual teaching experience. It's quite a sight to see. One would think that there would be mayhem in the classroom with all those different grades and different subjects

being taught at the same time. I remember speaking with a couple of the teachers in that classroom, and the discipline and behaviour-related issues had decreased significantly as well. These are teachers who have been with the school for some time, so they have certainly seen the school evolve as a result of this program.

I had a great conversation with the principal of the school, talking about the transition from elementary — for example, from Johnson Elementary — and going into the high school. Two weeks ago, during Education Week, one of the funding announcements that we made with Victoria Gold Corporation through the Every Student Every Day initiative — it is a great initiative. They announced some \$49,000 in support of student attendance issues.

One of the successful recipients of that fund was Johnson Elementary to receive some dollars for the purchase of, I think, some iPad minis. It is an initiative that other schools have taken to as well. It is a great way to be able to introduce that blended learning approach, or at least getting used to the technology — thanks to the good work of the principal, working with the administration of the elementary school and being able to really narrow the gap between the two schools, and finding ways of integrating those students who are graduating from elementary to secondary school.

It is very refreshing to be able to sit down with that principal and listen to her ideas, her strategies and ways of ensuring that we do have success when they arrive in high school and introducing the blended learning approach at a younger grade. These are all things that we are looking at, to be sure.

In terms of continuing to work with the communities, that's of the utmost importance and I believe I spoke to the initiative. When we talk about rural education and the actions being undertaken, there has been an actual committee, a rural education advisory committee. It's established under the lead of one of our superintendents. Within the committee there are representatives from Yukon First Nation Education Advisory Committee, First Nations Education Commission, teachers from YTA, administrators, schools councils, Department of Health and Social Services and Yukon College, as well as community education liaison coordinators. Staff from our own Department of Education sit on this committee. I understand that they have met a couple of times already to begin work on furthering the development of goals and finding those solutions in terms of reducing those gaps between rural and non-rural students and finding ways to directly involve elders and students with the committee.

The purpose of that committee is to, on top of the individual work going on in the school community, discuss the progress of the actions overall, to review the data collected and to really receive input from each of the respective rural communities and the councils and the schools themselves.

The committee has the ability to make recommendations on how to revise and adjust all of our programs and plans related to experiential education, distributed learning, blended learning, improving language delivery, enhancing family-parent outreach, counselling services — another key area of

importance that we need to strengthen — and high school grade extensions to each community and improving training and support available to our teaching professionals.

The action plan has targets. We are looking at timelines, evaluation methods, measurable outcomes for each of these specific areas. As I mentioned — I don't want to sound repetitive, but just go back into Hansard and my earlier remarks — we have identified that and it is absolutely key to be able to report progress or no progress.

Everything that we do is very similar to any investment in tourism marketing, for example. You need to be able to deliver results, to be able to share those results and to be able to tweak accordingly and to revise according to the outcomes that we receive. Hopefully, that is a bit of added information for the member opposite.

Chair: Prior to taking another question, Mr. Tredger, would the members like to take a break?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now come to order. We will continue general debate in Vote 3, Department of Education.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for her answer on that. I want to reiterate that this isn't necessarily about the blended learning program at Watson Lake. By all accounts it is a very successful program.

In 2009, the Auditor General referred to the need for clear targets, concise reporting and evaluation. What I heard from the minister were some vague references to targets and assessments using attendance. What I was hoping to hear is that there would be a report coming out that these were underway and that they would be perhaps included in the annual school plan. She has talked about extending these to other communities. I know other communities are very excited about the possibility.

In education, good programs come and go rather quickly. If you talk to any educator, people in the department or parents, they talk about the old math and the new math and this program and that program that came through. We are always concerned that we are following the new flavour of the day.

I would like to ask the minister a question. One of our more successful programs has been Reading Recovery. It is an expensive program and it targets a few children — a small percentage. It has often been questioned, it has often been promoted and it has lasted through successive governments. I am aware of it being in operation for at least 15 years.

Can the minister tell me why she thinks this one program, among the many that have value, has been able to sustain itself and receive the funding year after year, government after government?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: When it comes to literacy — I just want to speak a few minutes to literacy — it's the

fundamental skill that leads to the success of our territory, as students, as adults and to the overall success of our territory in general. In terms of delivering programs and reading interventions like Reading Recovery and Wilson Reading, I do know that the Department of Education — in collaboration with all of its various stakeholders and partners in education — has and continues to work to improve literacy rates in each and every one of our schools. We know that this is a continuous point of importance that we need to continue to deliver on better ways of finding reading success.

The member opposite would know that this is a complex task. As with any individual student, no single approach is a solution to the many factors when it comes to affecting reading skills. We have supported, and we continue to support, Reading Recovery and Wilson Reading as literacy programs in the schools. Those are well-received in the schools. Likewise, we continue to provide training for teachers in these particular programs. We continue to deliver a number of other programs also in support of literacy development.

The Yukon literacy strategy — there has been a significant amount of work that is currently underway and continues to be currently underway. This particular strategy really has all of the numerous partners at the table and it will set a new, renewed strategic direction for everything from early childhood to our public schools and adults, speaking to the importance of that lifelong learning continuum.

We're collaborating with all of our respective departments and a lot of various non-government organizations, First Nations, Yukon College and members of the business community, all working toward a renewed strategy and an action plan for the territory and really reflecting on the work that is being undertaken by public schools as well as the Department of Health and Social Services. Literacy is a pillar of the social inclusion strategy that is being led by the Department of Health and Social Services. There is a significant amount of work being undertaken and it's of great priority to all of us to do what we can to enhance those literacy rates.

The Family Literacy Centre is doing some great work that we continue to support — likewise our work with Yukon Learn — both which we fund significantly in support of their activities. They provide — albeit more toward the adult literacy services, when it comes to Yukon Learn — a number of complimentary or free services throughout the Yukon, promoting literacy through advertising and promotional items.

They are also working on some other items. Digital skills for the work world is a new initiative that is being kicked off this year for the next couple of years to assist a number of individuals in various communities outside of the community of Whitehorse to increase their computer literacy. They are also a very active, ongoing participant in the development of our literacy strategy as well.

In collaboration with Yukon Learn, we're looking to undertake — when we talk about performance measures and an evaluation framework, we're doing just that. We're looking at various partnerships with Yukon College and all of the rural

campuses, as well as through Yukon First Nation governments. Through this development of a plan, we're looking to expand the efforts for recruitment, training and retaining community coordinators in our communities — in terms of expanding those various ongoing works. The Literacy Centre is doing some great work. That has been open now for about four years and we're very pleased to provide significant funding in support of their work. They provide parenting and pre-literacy skills training. It houses the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. That's another interesting initiative that has been spearheaded by one of the rotary clubs, of course, but also the Department of Health and Social Services. They provide funding in support of that — support of parents and children to develop early language skills, and offering the drop-in centre — which I have been to on a number of occasions — for reading and showcasing all the resources they have on file. They do have a very large network of resources available to them.

We're quite proud of the work that is being undertaken. It shows that when it comes to delivering literacy, working with the Council of Yukon First Nations and collaborating with them to ensure that all of our initiatives are integrated and complementary to their work in this particular field has been identified as a priority in the joint education action plan with the Council of Yukon First Nations.

There was a great workshop that was held back in January, the first of a series hosted by CYFN. Yukon Education also helped contribute to each of those workshops, pulling in all the various partners — whether it was public schools or advanced education, First Nation representatives from around the territory or working with many of the different partner organizations, community organizations, non-profits, and working with coming up with ways that we can enhance the delivery of services, how we can better work smart or better apply those funds in a smart, more effective manner.

I can't say enough about the assistance of having that specialization in our schools. My son is a case in point. When my son was in grade 1, he had a fantastic teacher. This individual's skills were really specialized in literacy development and this is very significant. What that meant was he was able to work with the school community by being able to host workshops, having literacy evenings with interested parents who would come. I don't think we missed one. It went through why it is so important to read in the home and how you read and what you read and about being able to provide those resources in the home and express to each of us the importance of not only what happens in schools, but what happens in the home and in the community as well.

There are a number of after-school programs — the weekday warrior program, for example — hosted by the Boys and Girls Clubs. This is another example of after-school homework help. It has helped my son out over the past number of months. I'm very thankful for that and those individuals as well.

There is a certain time allotment for reading and literacy development skills, and they do a fantastic job nurturing that,

not just with books, but also physical literacy in the gym, outside of the classroom and so forth. There are so many different initiatives underway. What this new strategy will do is really pull on successes that are going on right now and see where the gaps are and see where we can better improve our services and better work together as an integrated team of organizations and government departments and other orders of government as well. It's really critical to be able to report progress. That is also currently underway.

I wanted to say that the individual who was part of my son's grade 1 class is now in the Department of Education. He has really been a pivotal force with his team in working with public schools to be able to work on the early learning front, especially when it comes to learning together and the expansion of those programs, but also providing mentorship and coaching other teachers in other communities, so being in the schools. He is one of those identified persons in the department, among many others, who are sharing their expertise with other classrooms all around the Yukon.

In fact, I think they are spending the majority of their time in the classrooms. I know we have had this debate before and it is so very vital to be able to support our teachers in a better way and to provide them with more training and expertise to be able to develop their skills, where they may not necessarily have those skills or that specialization.

Again, it speaks to the rural equity piece and it is just as important for our teaching personnel as it is for individual students to be able to provide that ongoing training. I also wanted to make reference to home tutoring programs being delivered, funded largely by the Yukon government. That is another example of how we are supporting students in the classroom, but also outside the classroom, as I mentioned before, and in many different organizations.

It is important and, as I mentioned, we're very pleased to continue to work to improve literacy in our schools by way of delivery of these particular reading intervention programs, but there are also many others as well.

We continue to evaluate all of our programs. We continue to look at the long-term outcomes of our students and continue to make improvements and adjustments as we go along the spectrum.

Mr. Tredger: My question about Reading Recovery was to try to understand the process that is happening. Reading Recovery is a wonderful program and is one of the few programs that has survived, as I said, successive governments and successive budgets. One of the reasons for that is that it has clear goals and objectives. It has established targets and has an established clientele. It is subject to an annual assessment. In fact almost monthly, each lesson is assessed by the teachers. They collect anecdotal evidence, empirical data and they follow the students long-term so that they can see the effects it has on them. They have developed action plans to meet the risks and perhaps most importantly, they have an annual report that is shared with the students, teachers and the parents.

I think that is the kind of thing that the Auditor General was looking for. I think that is the kind of thing that will make

our good programs last. That is what I am hoping for when we have programs that are successful, like the rural experiential model — that we are assessing the risks involved, that we are considering long-term plans, that we are following the students.

If I could just go back to the blended learning for just a minute — I know that a number of communities have expressed an interest in following up on it. I know also that one of the reasons it hasn't gone to many communities is that there is a lack of bandwidth.

Can the minister tell me if she has consulted with the Economic Development minister, advocated and let him know that schools in many of our rural communities don't have adequate bandwidth to deliver a potentially game-changing program?

Does she have timelines as to when communities like Pelly Crossing, Mayo, Dawson City, Haines Junction — which she mentioned — and other communities like Teslin and Carmacks will have adequate bandwidth to deliver such a program?

Can she share that timeline with school councils in those communities? Can she continue to advocate with the Economic Development minister to ensure that our rural communities have adequate bandwidth to deliver 21st century educational programming?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Yes, we recognize that there are challenges when it comes to expanding our IT capacity in the territory. In fact, that's why this government continues to invest significantly in expanding our broadband access. We work with our partners and that includes Northwestel. In fact, in this year's budget, which we're currently debating, for the Department of Education, as part of the rural equity action plan, we have actually — I'm just trying to find the actual line here — enhanced resources in terms of personnel and delivering school-based information technology.

There have also been dollars allotted when it comes to ongoing upgrades to computer labs. I can say I have been to pretty much every computer lab in this territory. Between maintenance and support — there's filtering, splitting, bandwidth usage, connectivity — we're actually expending close to \$1 million in support of that connectivity. I don't have at my fingertips the actual schedule of communities, but I have asked and had a number of discussions with the department in terms of when — because I heard this first-hand in Pelly Crossing. I heard it first-hand in Faro. I heard it first-hand in Ross River. I have heard about some challenges in the Town of Watson Lake as well. It's not just the schools. It's the communities as well, but obviously the schools are very large users of bandwidth in our territory.

Yes, I have raised this with the Minister of Economic Development and, yes, the departments are working together. We're working with our organizations. I know that the Economic Development minister can provide that overarching expansion plan for the entire territory, but when we're working on dealing with individual schools, which lies within our purview, we're also working the Department of Highways and Public Works as well to expand that connectivity.

There are timelines in terms of the rollout. I just don't have those at my fingertips. We recognize the very importance of being able to deliver, and technology is such an important tool for expanding students' access to schools.

I just want to give a couple of anecdotes here. In Watson Lake, for example, thanks to this new approach and the use of technology, we've actually been able to provide students with access to some 58 different course options compared with 33 last year. That's pretty significant. As I mentioned, as a result, students are becoming a lot more involved in directing their own learning and they're developing those personalized graduation plans with the help of their parents and their families and their school staff.

I also want to put a big plug in for Watson Lake where, I understand, there will actually be over 22 or 23 students who are graduating and participating in the graduation ceremonies in June, if I'm not mistaken. That is staggering. That's an unbelievably high number for Watson Lake. Back in my day, there were about 11 to 14, tops, so this one of the largest — could be even the largest — graduating class in Watson Lake's history.

This was not just simply due to technology, but again being able to blend this technology with the expertise of our teaching professionals in supporting students is a fantastic way. We recognize the importance of that and we're seeing those results.

As I mentioned, the Robert Service School is also looking to roll out their own blended learning model. Haines Junction — the St. Elias Community School — was also looking at that. There is tremendous interest.

As we mentioned, I believe the member opposite was also present at the fall assembly of the Yukon Association of School Councils, Boards and Committees — I believe it was last fall. The coordinator for many of these initiatives spoke at great length about how every community is very different and how Old Crow really has to rely on satellite technology, for example, whereas Watson Lake has experienced challenges with access to broadband. They have received a couple of upgrades but we also recognize that there are other glitches involved. We're working those out.

Our capacity in the department has grown significantly too, to meet all these challenges. Rolling out this plan does take extra human resources to be able to have that capacity. We've been able to grow the complement of individuals in our department to work with each of the individual communities. It is a work in progress. There is a plan. There are some proposed timelines. I don't have that information at my fingertips.

The other example — I just wanted to say — is when I was in Ross River and the MLA for Pelly-Nisutlin and I had an opportunity to tour the actual schools in Faro and Ross River and meet with all the stakeholders. I actually met one of the teachers in the Ross River school, and he brought me into his classroom. It was interesting — I got to learn first-hand about this remedial math program. It's really as a result of this new initiative — this Aurora Virtual School initiative — that the department has been rolling out as part of the rural equity

action plan. The Aurora Virtual School delivers a number of topics and subjects, and it is all part and parcel of home schooling and the expansion of technology in our schools. It's really interesting because part of the challenge for this individual teacher in math — I believe was his expertise in that particular school — was he identified, to his credit, working with the school and the department that students going into grade 10 just were having a really hard time. They weren't meeting the grade 10 expectations in math. What he was able to do is work with the Aurora Virtual School through the use of technology, recognizing that there are some logistical challenges with delivery of technology, but still being able to make it work and come up with a remedial math program for grades 7 to 9.

It is being able to deliver the instruction live within that virtual environment but also with active teacher support — his support — throughout the course. It has been working very well. I believe I was right there when that course was underway. It is another opportunity for us to be creative in how we identify issues or challenges or problems in the classroom among students overall and be able to tailor those programs accordingly. By using technology, it has really helped facilitate those issues.

We are hoping that it will increase the number of students who will be able to make their own choices in the math programs offered for when they get to grade 10, rather than be forced into a particular stream because they didn't earn a particular grade and so forth.

It is another way for teachers in rural Yukon to supplement and augment their own math instruction according to their classes. I know that under this program — thanks to the good work of our people in public schools — they were able to offer various class times for the students. The classes would be delivered in sync with one another, according to these specific times. You are able to plug in various schools at the same time on this remedial math program that we have identified overall, through all of our evaluations and our assessments that we do every year and throughout the year.

It is another way of filling in the skills gaps that some students experience in their intermediate year so they are better able to experience success in the pre-algebra and algebra that are essential for grade 9 and 10 math. That is underway right now. We know that there have been some initial challenges on the Mac computers, that can be frustrating, and I have spoken with some of the teachers personally about that. We are working out the bugs, so to speak. We have identified what those bugs are and are trying to walk our instructors through it all. We have really enhanced our capacity in the department when it comes to IT.

I want to thank the Department of Education for being creative and, thanks to our teaching professionals in our schools, they are identifying issues and we are working with them. Thanks to the rollout of technology, we are able to be really creative and are garnering some great results. Those are just a couple of examples.

Mr. Tredger: I am glad to hear that the program is working so well in Watson Lake. I want to congratulate the

staff, the students and the community for the work that they have done, and for the relationships that they have built and that are the centre of education, using the available technology and available resources in the community.

I would ask the minister if she could table timelines when other communities can expect to have the bandwidth that would allow them to participate in such a program. I know they are asking about it. They are interested. They have seen the success it has had in Watson Lake and they would like to participate in that. If the minister could table the expected timelines, I would appreciate that very much.

I would like to move on to a couple of questions about Gadzoosdaa. Gadzoosdaa has been a very successful program. Can the minister tell me the number of people currently attending Gadzoosdaa, the number who have been turned away or dissuaded from applying because they are from the wrong community or because their programs don't fit, and the number who have found other accommodations? I heard recently that Gadzoosdaa residents are not allowed to attend the Individual Learning Centre. Many students from rural communities, whether they have high schools or not, would like to attend Wood Street programming, specialty courses. Sometimes a high school in Whitehorse has a wider variety of general courses.

Could she indicate the number of students who have been turned away because they do have a high school in their community? I know that applies to several students in Pelly Crossing. It would also apply to students in Dawson City or Mayo.

I received an indication just recently that there were only going to be seven or eight beds available for next year. How is the minister going to determine who is going to be allowed to attend Gadzoosdaa? What are the criteria for attending Gadzoosdaa? How is it determined which communities they are going to come from? What does a parent do if their child is not able to attend Gadzoosdaa and they want them to participate in Wood Street programming or in the ILC, or just, in general, to attend a high school if they have special needs that can't be met in the communities? Is there any consideration to add to the residence or build the residence? It is a very successful residence. I know a number of students, personally, who have attended and done very well by it.

I guess I would like to hear a little more about how decisions are made and what decisions are being made around Gadzoosdaa and what alternatives there are for parents. If a student from a rural community cannot get into Gadzoosdaa, are there options for a living allowance or assistance that way?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: With respect to the residence the member opposite just made reference to, we do provide support for rural Yukon in support of students who aren't able to successfully complete their high school in their respective communities. Those individuals — I don't have the policy here in front of me — who happen to live in a community that does not have an actual high school — and so they don't have the ability to complete their high school — are still able to subscribe to the residence. However, the priority has been and

will continue to be for those communities that do not have a high school.

What I can also say is that, when we talk about some of these alternate learning processes, one of the benefits of offering initiatives such as the alternate high school in Old Crow or the alternate high school in Teslin is that we're able to provide those students with an alternative so they don't have to come to Whitehorse to finish their high school, which we hope, in the short and the long term, will also help provide that added capacity at the residence in terms of meeting the current needs as well as the future needs for student populations.

I do not actually have the numbers. I am very familiar with the particular — I received an e-mail yesterday from an individual who had expressed concerns about the residents. I have asked our department to look into it and to have our department follow up with the individual directly to discuss their family's needs. We are doing that, as I understand. There is that commitment out there. I do not actually have the specific numbers. I wish I had the numbers in terms of the actual overall trend in terms of boarding at that particular residence — what the numbers were and where they are today.

I do know that the priority has been and continues to be facilitating the needs of those students in those communities, who do not have the ability to complete their high school because of a lack of a high school in their communities. That will always continue to be the case. Beyond that, I am not able to provide too much more information, other than there are allowances also enabled for student accommodation and for boarding allowance. I think that in this year's budget, we have \$141,000 allotted in support of those allowances being paid directly to the parents or the guardians of rural students who are living away from their home communities. That also includes airfare for students from Old Crow.

As I understand it, there are some 38 beds available at the residence. As to what is the estimate for 2014-15, I can't actually answer that with any accuracy. I do know that our department has certainly continued to work with all of the families to ensure that there is accommodation made for families, especially for those students who have to come in from rural Yukon.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for that answer. I don't know if it applies to Old Crow and Teslin, but I know when a high school was built in Pelly Crossing, a number of students tried to come into the residence and were told that because schooling was offered now — there is a difference between some of the courses offered in Whitehorse and in our smaller communities. So I would hope that because there is an alternative high school in Old Crow and Teslin that they are not being told that there's a high school in their community, because that is what happened in Pelly. I know a number of students ended up not being able to come to school.

There are programs offered in Whitehorse, not only at Wood Street, and a lot of students with exceptionalities need the resources of Whitehorse. I would encourage the minister to make it very clear to parents that if there is no room in the

Gadzoosdaa residence, there are other ways of supporting them and providing support. I know it was to the extent that Selkirk First Nation at one point was considering getting their own house in town to provide a residence.

It is a concern and I hope that the minister will consider looking at the numbers — the number of students who are turned away and the number that end up maybe not being able to live on their own or in accommodations in Whitehorse, not having relatives or family friends who are able or willing to keep them. Some of them end up dropping out of school and that is a concern.

French language programs — I noticed in the budget that \$2,213,000 is allocated to French language programs. I guess my question is: How much of that funding goes to the francophone school board? How much is allocated to French language programming in the schools? How much is allocated to the French immersion programs?

Now we have intensive French programming being offered in many of the schools, so there's an increasing demand for that. I know many, many parents are very interested in French, as evidenced by the registration for French immersion kindergarten, which opened at 9:00 a.m. and was closed by 9:10 a.m. — a process that left many parents very frustrated.

I'm wondering where the money is going, how it is being allocated, how the minister is determining the level of French programming, especially in the French immersion — the intensive French programs — and how much more will be needed by the French school board to continue to operate l'École Émilie Tremblay with the increasing amount of money that is necessary to run a school.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I can say that when it comes to the delivery of French language education, there are a number of different streams ranging from French first language, French second language, French immersion and options plus French. The delivery of French language education has grown significantly over the years.

It's due in part to a very vibrant francophone community here in the territory. As a result of that — I always attribute and it has been attributed, if you ask members of the francophone community, one of the reasons that makes us such an attractive destination to call Yukon our home is because of the quality of education programming being delivered by the respective governments.

I can say that the appetite for delivering French immersion, for example, is really strong, as is our commitment from the department — whether you're talking about French second language core programs or immersion programs or French first language programs. We have a five-year plan to support the development of the programs. That particular five-year plan speaks to how we can actually actively commit to ensuring that our children are fluent in both languages, whether they choose core or immersion. It's through having that choice — and every school is very different and the school community is very different — but we have been able to expand a number of programs, even this year, for intensive French to schools like Hidden Valley,

Robert Service School, as well as Selkirk — I could be wrong. There are two or three schools, I believe. We continue to work with individual communities.

Overall, when you look over the last five years, enrollment has been pretty stable in terms of French immersion. It has really run as high as 420 and as low as 397. It can run in the middle of the range, but it has generally been by and large a pretty steady and pretty stable.

When you look at Whitehorse Elementary School, for example, they're delivering some fantastic programs there. We have been very pleased. My son has attended Whitehorse Elementary School since kindergarten, so he's in his fourth year. We have been very pleased with the level of immersion provided through the Department of Education.

When you talk about other streams, like late immersion in grade 6, there are a number of individuals and schools also looking to delivering this late immersion program. I think last year we had 17 who started in the late immersion program, and this year — as of about a year ago — I think there were 15 to 17. It really varies from year to year, as I understand it, depending on the interest of the students who come in at grade 6 before they go into secondary school. It's a little different from when students actually start up right in kindergarten and grade 1 and then they carry through to secondary school.

Intensive French was also brought into place. When we looked at core French — whether that was basic French, the French that you and I probably took back in school when we were reading and writing it — we're looking at a different model that is also being delivered that focuses more on the oral, the skills and the communication, first in oral language and then moving to writing, speaking and comprehending French. That is outlined in our five-year plan as well.

We continue to evaluate those varied programs. Those in particular can start as early as grade 4, but it usually is in grade 5 as a pre-intensive — so getting students ready for intensive French — and then in grades 5 and 6 for the intensive program, which is half a year in French, except for math, with a focus on oral language and communication with each other. After that, they do post-intensive French.

Back to my reference to the schools, it was Hidden Valley and Selkirk Elementary that were the two schools added in terms of the intensive French — not Robert Service. They already have that as well. They are taking that on as their core French programs, for example. It's not intensive, it's not immersion, but it's a core French program. It's a different way of doing core French, as I mentioned.

Looking to our professionals in the department, they are doing a great job in terms of working with each of the individual school communities rolling out those individual programs, depending on where their student population is and what their school growth plans speak to as well.

We also provide some very great exceptional experiential opportunities in French at the secondary level. We continue to look at ways to make French as interesting and as active as possible as it was in the elementary schools. One example — when you look to the French first language stream, such as l'École Émilie Tremblay — their Académie Parhélie has been

delivered for a number of years now. It's geared to do just that — to provide that experiential, hands-on learning.

As I mentioned, when it comes to delivering French language education, as delivered by the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon, we have — and it is reflected in this year's budget, and I believe the Budget Address speaks to that — provided a total of just over \$6 million in support of this 2014-15 school year. Basically that's in support of teaching professionals and in support of their operational budget, as delivered by the Commission — secretary-treasurer, resources, teaching materials, travel for recruitment, school operations budget — as I mentioned earlier — renovations — a small pot of money for that as well. It is also in support of direct expenses including teacher staff salaries, transportation costs and facility maintenance costs.

We are continuing to work with CSFY and — as I mentioned earlier in Question Period — we are committed to achieving the best possible educational outcomes for every student in the territory. We continue to work on developing a very positive and strong relationship between the Yukon government and the francophone school board. I believe it has improved significantly in recent years, as we have jointly negotiated solutions for delivering French first language education in support of our students.

I have met with the board on a number of occasions, since taking on this particular Cabinet post, and we remain committed to continuing our dialogue. Basically we are carrying on with the budget that we had in place one year prior. It is continuing to provide stability with the delivery of their programs that they have nurtured and generated over recent years. Our funding has increased significantly over the last number of years in support of French first language education and other programs as well.

I just want to say that it's a great school — École Émilie Tremblay. It's Yukon's only French first language school in the territory. There has been a huge growth in population at the school, especially on the elementary side of the school. They have added a couple of additional portables, and that was not part of the court order, but it was basically to accommodate the significant growth in student population at École Émilie Tremblay. Those portables are now open and underway, and I believe that funding was approved in the last supplementary budget that was delivered last fall.

They also operate their junior kindergarten program and we've seen significant enrollment at that particular program. As I mentioned before, Académie Parhélie, is but another opportunity to find creative ways to attract and retain students to their school and to be able to combine academic studies with hands-on experiential learning opportunities, integrating learning in the outdoors and the fine arts.

I was just at the YTA and I ran into one of the teachers from École Émilie Tremblay. They were about to embark upon a visit to France for two weeks, visiting Normandy and being able to take in the history of Canada's involvement in our military efforts in years past and many other aspects. It is one example of how l'École Émilie Tremblay is not only

looking to deliver hands-on education, but they are doing a great job and I can't say enough about their school.

We continue to work to grow our French streams. I think approximately 48 percent or close to half of our student population is enrolled in some type of second language program or some first language programs. This is significantly high. If you were to reflect on the population numbers Statistics Canada released back in 2011, it showed that the number of individuals who are bilingual or who can speak fluently in French and another language — we are right up there. There is Quebec and then New Brunswick and then there is the Yukon. It has really got Canada talking about our successes.

I do attribute that to quality education being delivered to each of our streams of students and demands. It is indeed a great investment. As we continue to invest in the delivery of expanding our French language services as a government as well, we will be looking to hire more individuals who are bilingual, working with the Public Services Commission through designated bilingual staffing guidelines in our commitment to help deliver and actively offer to make simultaneous language services available. It's a good thing and it makes our territory all the more competitive in terms of attracting and retaining professionals from all aspects of the territory.

In addition, as I mentioned, for French first language we do have the core French. It's offered in most Yukon schools, depending on the school community's uptake — desired interest in taking that up. It can involve students from grades 1 to 12. Intensive-post-intensive French — as I mentioned earlier, grades 5 and 6 receive all but the math instruction in French over the full semester, followed in grade 7 by a full hour per day of French classes and so forth. Intensive-post-intensive French instruction is currently offered in five of our elementary schools — Robert Service, Selkirk, Hidden Valley, Holy Family and Christ the King — and one of our secondary schools, that being Vanier. French immersion — options plus French — is a French enrichment program that has been operating for a number of years at Vanier. These are just but a few examples of how we're working to expand the delivery of French language education in the territory.

Seeing the time, Madam Chair, I move that you report progress.

Chair: It has been moved by Ms. Taylor that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 14, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: 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. Monday.

The House adjourned 5:27 p.m.

Written notice was given of the following motion on May 1, 2014:

Motion No. 670

Re: Paving Dawson City Airport runway and other capital upgrades (McLeod)