



**PROVINCE OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR  
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

First Session  
Forty-Ninth General Assembly

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**Proceedings of the Standing Committee on  
Social Services**

June 25, 2019 - Issue 4

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

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Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Assembly  
Honourable Perry Trimper, MHA

## **SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

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Chair: Derek Bennett, MHA

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Elvis Loveless, MHA  
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Appearing:

### **Department of Education and Early Childhood Development**

Hon. Brian Warr, MHA, Minister

Eldred Barnes, Associate Deputy Minister

Steve Barron, Manager of Budgeting

Elizabeth Churchill, Assistant Deputy Minister, K-12 & Early Childhood

Bob Gardiner, Deputy Minister

Mary Goss-Prowse, Director, Early Learning & Child Development

Jacquelyn Howard, Director of Communications

Margot Pitcher, Executive Assistant

Tracy Stamp, Departmental Controller

### **Also Present**

Derrick Bragg, MHA

Craig Pardy, MHA

Sandy Collins, Researcher, Official Opposition Office

Brad Russell, Director, Research & Policy, Official Opposition Office

Susan Williams, Researcher, Third Party Office

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Derrick Bragg, MHA for Fogo Island - Cape Freels, substitutes for Scott Reid, MHA for St. George's - Humber.

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Craig Pardy, MHA for Bonavista, substitutes for David Brazil, MHA for Conception Bay East - Bell Island.

The Committee met at 9:02 in the Assembly Chamber.

**CHAIR (P. Parsons):** Good morning everyone.

I guess we're ready to start now for the Estimates for the Department of Education. We'll start on this side by everybody introducing themselves and then we'll carry on over here to this side.

**MR. WARR:** Brian Warr, Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay and Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

**MR. GARDINER:** Bob Gardiner, Deputy Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

**MS. STAMP:** Tracy Stamp, Departmental Controller, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

**MR. BARNES:** Eldred Barnes, Associate Deputy Minister, Education and Early Childhood Development.

**MS. PITCHER:** Margot Pitcher, Executive Assistant to Minister Warr.

**MS. HOWARD:** Jacquelyn Howard, Director of Communications with Education and Early Childhood Development.

**MS. GOSS-PROWSE:** Mary Goss-Prowse, Director of Early Learning and Child Development Division.

**MS. CHURCHILL:** Elizabeth Churchill, Assistant Deputy Minister, K-12 and Early Childhood Development.

**MR. BARRON:** Steve Barron, Manager of Budgeting.

**MR. RUSSELL:** Brad Russell, Director, Research and Policy with the Official Opposition.

**MR. PARDY:** Craig Pardy, MHA, District of Bonavista.

**MR. J. DINN:** James Dinn, MHA, District of St. John's Centre.

**MS. WILLIAMS:** Susan Williams, Research for the Third Party.

**MR. BENNETT:** Derek Bennett, MHA, Lewisporte - Twillingate.

**MR. BRAGG:** Derrick Bragg, MHA, Fogo Island - Cape Freels.

**MR. LOVELESS:** Elvis Loveless, MHA, Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

**CHAIR:** I'm Pam Parsons, MHA for Harbour Grace - Port de Grave, and I'm your Chair this morning.

The minister has 15 minutes to introduce his estimates and the member speaking immediately in reply also has 15 minutes, and all other Committee members will have 10 minutes to speak. We can certainly address each other by name rather than portfolio or district today. And a reminder, to please introduce yourself before you speak.

Minister, would you like to start?

**MR. WARR:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good morning, everyone. I'm privileged to be joined by my colleagues here from the department this morning. We'll just take a few minutes to provide an overview of the budget for Education and Early Childhood Development and some highlights of activities this past year.

The total gross budget for the department is \$836,307,500, and this is comprised of: Executive Services, \$1,069,800; Corporate Services, \$3,487,800; Kindergarten to Grade 12, \$771,890,800; and Early Childhood Development, \$59,859,100.

The Education Action Plan has been the primary focus of our work over this past year and will continue to be so for kindergarten to grade 12. *Budget 2019* has increased funding to support the implementation of the plan by just over \$6 million, for a total budget this year of \$13.2 million.

This includes: \$9 million in teaching services; \$2 million in professional learning for teachers; \$975,000 for other additional human resources; \$550,000 in learning resources; \$238,000 for youth apprenticeship and co-operative education; \$180,000 for a new case management system; and \$40,000 in bursaries for teachers to upgrade math.

Just to provide more detail in terms of what this means directly in our classrooms: there are 21 new reading specialists this current year, increasing to 104 over the next two years; 54 teaching and learning assistants hired this current school year, increasing to over 200 the next two years; 13.5 additional teacher librarians this current school year, increasing to 39 over the next two years.

As mentioned earlier, the budget this year for Early Childhood Development is just over \$59 million. Our work has been guided in recent years by the Early Learning and Child Care framework; \$22 million was allocated over three years through this bilateral agreement with the federal government, supporting improved accessibility and affordability of child care for low- and middle-income families. More specifically, the funding is supporting expanding and enhancing the Operating Grant Program, changes to the child care services subsidy, and enhancing the child care capacity initiative.

We are also improving the quality of early learning and child care by enhancing grants, bursaries and professional learning for early childhood educators; establishing the Capital Renovation Grant and establishing the Quality Improvement grant Program.

There is an overall increase in the budget for teaching services for 2019-2020 of just over \$1.4 million. And, as noted, we have additional teaching and learning assistants, reading specialists, learning resource teachers, and English as a second language teachers.

That's a brief overview of the budget this year. I hope it's helpful as we get underway this morning, and we look forward to your questions.

Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Okay.

Clerk, please, broadcast.

**CLERK (Hammond):** 1.1.01 to 1.2.01.

**CHAIR:** You can go.

**MR. PARDY:** I, off the top, ask for your forgiveness if I breach any protocols or procedures; this is all new to me. It's good to see Eldred, again.

I'm just wondering, if possible, if we could obtain a copy of the binder, the minister's binder or briefing binder?

**MR. WARR:** Absolutely.

**MR. PARDY:** Okay.

This year's budget had an increase in salaries of \$28,400 over what was spent last year. I think last year it increased by \$3,500. This year it would be by \$25,000, if I'm not mistaken. I just wonder, what would account for this increase?

**MR. WARR:** The revised was \$26,600, and the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour assumed the responsibility for Education and Early Childhood Development, and the salary was covered off by AESL for the portion of the fiscal year.

**MR. PARDY:** That portion of which salary?

**MR. WARR:** The responsibility for EECD was covered off by the Minister of AESL. He was handling the two positions. That's why there was a decrease over the year.

**MR. PARDY:** Okay.

Just for clarification, in the Estimates last year there was a question that was posed to the minister then that the budgeted amount for Salaries was \$818,000, but the actual expenditure was \$1.8 million. The minister then

replied that it was due to the reduction of three executive members: The former deputy minister, the former assistant deputy minister and the secretary to the ADM.

I was just curious and just roughly looking at if it was just those three figures and the difference was a million dollars, would the severance have been as high as in excess of \$300,000 in those positions?

**MR. WARR:** Are you into 1.2.01?

**MR. PARDY:** 1.1.01.

**MR. WARR:** Okay so that's the –

**MR. PARDY:** I'm just referencing last year. I'm sorry if that –

**MR. WARR:** Yeah, I'll defer that to Bob.

**MR. GARDINER:** Last year, it would have been severance and redundancy pay or payout for the deputy minister, the assistant deputy minister and one of the secretaries. The deputy minister and the assistant deputy minister would've been severance and, again, payout because the contracts were ended. As well as then, the secretary would've been through the attrition management and the restructuring of management at the department.

That's why the number seems higher than just severance. That would've been leave payout, as well as payout for ending the contract and then severance as well.

**MR. PARDY:** Thank you.

I noticed throughout the previous Estimates last year it often referred to the term – and the then-minister referred probably on three or more occasions to a Flatter, Leaner exercise. I would assume that would be continuing in this budget as well? That was the term that he had used.

**MR. WARR:** I'll defer that to Bob.

**MR. GARDINER:** The Flatter, Leaner exercise was a one-time thing that happened last fiscal year, whereby some of the senior management would have been reduced. For example, in the department there was a reduction of three

directors and there were some administrative positions, as well, at the executive level that were reduced. That was a one-time exercise.

The Attrition Management Plan, which is different, goes on this year, which we can speak to later on. That would be done through retirements and people simply leaving. The Flatter, Leaner was targeted at senior management and it was a one-time thing last year.

**MR. PARDY:** Thank you.

Are we still applying the zero-based budgeting?

**MR. WARR:** Yes, we are.

**CHAIR:** We're good. For the time of your duration you can say your name and, then, you know you're good for that time.

**MR. PARDY:** Okay, so I don't need to say my name each time?

**CHAIR:** No, that's right.

**MR. PARDY:** Good stuff.

I'm wondering how many retirements have occurred in the last year? I apologize if I'm jumping around.

**MR. WARR:** You're speaking –

**MR. PARDY:** The department.

**MR. WARR:** We'd have to get that for you.

**MR. PARDY:** Okay.

Can you inform us of the current student-teacher ratio and if there are any changes to that this year?

**MR. WARR:** I'll defer that to Bob.

**MR. GARDINER:** I don't have the exact number in front of me, but it's normally around 12.3 students per full-time equivalent teacher. Typically, that would be in the top two or three in Canada – or the lowest two or three in Canada. That's been pretty consistent over the past three or four years.

**MR. PARDY:** Does that include now just the classroom teachers, but that's the myriad of all the staff that the school system would have? Are reading specialists included as well in that?

**MR. GARDINER:** That would include all teachers, so that would be administrators, reading specialists, learning resource teachers, special education and instructional resource teachers. That would be a common measure across all provinces and territories in Canada, so it would be comparable.

**MR. PARDY:** Okay, just those who work within the schools that we have?

**MR. GARDINER:** Correct.

**MR. PARDY:** Good. Thank you.

1.2.01, we can move to that section?

**CHAIR:** Yes.

**MR. PARDY:** Last year, the department had a substantial overrun of \$139,000, yet this year they are budgeting less. I wonder if you can clarify that.

**MR. WARR:** The revised \$139,200 is salary contingents for an abolished administration support position, plus severance, which ended May 23, plus backfill for an existing administrative support position; salary continuance for the director of communications until March 29, 2019; a special advisor related to the Education Action Plan assigned to Education and Early Childhood Development effective 2019-01-21; and the other part was a deputy minister severance payout.

**MR. PARDY:** Thank you.

Is it possible to move on to 2.1.01?

**CHAIR:** No, we're not going to do that now. We'll stay within this subsection. If you're finished questions about this particular subsection, we can move on to the next speaker. We're just going to finish this section first, okay?

**MR. PARDY:** Yeah.

**CHAIR:** Mr. Dinn.

**MR. J. DINN:** No, I think it's safe to say that my colleague to the left has addressed our concerns in that section.

**CHAIR:** Okay.

If there are no further questions for this particular section, we can call the subheads.

**CLERK:** 1.1.01 to 1.2.01 inclusive.

**CHAIR:** 1.1.01 to 1.2.01 inclusive.

Shall those carry?

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against?

Carried.

On motion, subheads 1.1.01 through 1.2.01 carried.

**CHAIR:** Okay and moving on now.

**CLERK:** 2.1.01 to 2.2.01 inclusive.

**CHAIR:** We'll start with our first speaker.

**MR. PARDY:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Last year, the department had a substantial overrun of \$129,100, yet this year they are budgeting less than what was spent last year.

**MR. WARR:** Yes, it was for severance and leave payouts for an employee. So in budget 2019-2020, there is \$62,500 related to the department's attrition management savings that were budgeted in this activity in 2018-2019. However, the attrition management savings were achieved in other activities, partially offset by \$24,800 related to new incumbents at lower levels than predecessors.

**MR. PARDY:** Would this be the branch of government that would oversee the expenditures related to the school board district, in some degree?

**MR. WARR:** No.

**MR. PARDY:** May I ask which branch that would be?

**MR. WARR:** School Board Operations.

**MR. PARDY:** Okay.

**MR. WARR:** It's under 3.1.02.

**MR. PARDY:** Okay.

The Employee Benefits, last year there was \$17,000 less spent compared to what was budgeted.

**MR. WARR:** Yes, workers' compensation expenses were lower than anticipated. You can note that these expenses can vary significantly from year to year and are determined by the number of injured workers and the services they require. Workers' compensation expense was \$12,000 in 2017-2018, \$28,500 in 2016-2017 and actually \$36,400 in 2015-2016.

**MR. PARDY:** And that is from the reduction of employees, I would assume – the benefits saved as a result of the reduction?

**MR. WARR:** No, it's just based on the injured workers.

**MR. PARDY:** Okay.

In Transportation and Communications, last year there was \$10,000 less spent compared to what was budgeted.

**MR. WARR:** Yes, that has to do with the department's usage of postage and courier services was lower than anticipated. Savings were partially used to offset Property, Furnishings and Equipment and Professional Services.

**MR. PARDY:** I guess the electronic domain helps in that department.

**MR. WARR:** Yes.

**MR. PARDY:** In Supplies, last year there was \$5,000 less spent compared to what was budgeted.

**MR. WARR:** The department's usage of copy paper was lower than anticipated.

**MR. PARDY:** In Purchased Services, \$15,000 less spent compared to what was budgeted.

**MR. WARR:** The amount of printing done by the department was lower than anticipated.

**MR. PARDY:** The final question, under Grants and Subsidies, last year there was \$5,300 less given out in Grants and Subsidies compared to what was budgeted, yet this year you are budgeting the same.

**MR. WARR:** These are for minister's discretionary grants. And they are paid out based on requests received by schools. It is difficult to predict when these requests will be received. Less requests were received and approved this fiscal and, therefore, savings were realized.

**MR. PARDY:** Were any requests unapproved?

**MR. WARR:** No.

**MR. PARDY:** And if I'm mistaken, these grants and subsidies, they vary from year to year?

**MR. WARR:** Yes.

**MR. PARDY:** Like playground equipment and IT needs?

**MR. WARR:** Yes.

**MR. PARDY:** Okay.

Is it possible we may obtain a list of those grants that were approved?

**MR. WARR:** Sure, absolutely.

**MR. PARDY:** Thank you.

I'm sorry, I misspoke before, if I can squeeze in one more question. The Revenue – Provincial, last year the department took in \$40,000 less revenue than expected. I wonder if you can clarify that.

**MR. WARR:** The revenue to this account can be highly variable, as it is mostly related to repayments of prior year expenses. Revenue is

recovered from payroll overpayments, accounts payable overpayments, overpayments of early learning and childhood care supplements, and the repayments of grants to students and teachers for educational travel that did not occur for various reasons. These repayments were lower than anticipated.

**MR. PARDY:** Thank you.

That's the last question I have for that section, Madam Chair.

**CHAIR:** Okay, thank you.

And we'll move on to the next speaker.

Mr. Dinn.

**MR. J. DINN:** So we're doing it section by section, as in 2.1.01. Okay.

So with regard to this, Transportation and Communications, can I have an idea of what's included with transportation and communications? What are the services?

**MR. WARR:** It provides for travel and telephone costs of personnel whose functions come under the activity, and all postage costs for the department. Actually, the figures were made up of \$127,400 for postage, \$100 for travel and \$8,100 for telephone.

**MR. J. DINN:** I'm sorry, how much for travel again?

**MR. WARR:** One hundred dollars.

**MR. J. DINN:** Just \$100 for travel?

**MR. WARR:** Yes.

**MR. J. DINN:** And for postage?

**MR. WARR:** The postage was \$127,400.

**MR. J. DINN:** Really? And \$100 for travel, and the remainder was for what, sorry?

**MR. WARR:** Eighty-one hundred for telephone.

**MR. J. DINN:** So what would be involved – what exactly are we mailing out that would cost \$127,000?

**MR. WARR:** Public exams and the assessments.

**MR. J. DINN:** Okay.

The operating grants, we notice that, again, from last year, the revised budget was down significantly. Is there a reason why the Operating Accounts were under spent?

**MR. WARR:** I'll defer that to Bob.

**MR. GARDINER:** So, Jim, the operating grant is down by about \$45,000. And each one of those are articulated up above, which the minister went over with MHA Parady, in terms of the reduction for Employee Benefits, Transportation and Communications, Supplies, et cetera.

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you very much, Sir.

And that would be it for 2.1.01.

Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Are there no further questions on this particular section?

**MR. PARDY:** I'm not sure if this is the right one to ask. The student population, in 2016-2017 it was 66,323 and 2017-2018, 65,398. I was wondering what it would be this current year.

**MR. WARR:** Student population – 64,336.

**MR. PARDY:** A drop of about 1,000 a year.

**MR. WARR:** You're correct.

**CHAIR:** Okay, you're good?

Mr. Dinn, do you have any more for this section?

**MR. J. DINN:** 2.1.02?

**CHAIR:** Yes.



**MR. J. DINN:** With regards to Grants and Subsidies, is it possible to have a breakdown of the organizations, the amount disbursed to each in 2019?

**MR. WARR:** Absolutely.

The Murphy Centre is \$866,400; the Cultural Connections strategy was \$250,000, that has artists, tradition bearers and heritage professionals working with students; \$60,000 was for community-based fine arts and cultural festivals; \$100,000 for student travel to fine arts and cultural events; \$24,400 for cultural resources; print and non-print for students and teachers, that was \$434,400; Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training, \$119,000; Council of Ministers of Education of Canada, \$100,400; Learning Disabilities Association, \$25,000; Encounters with Canada, \$21,600; and the Federation of School Councils was \$21,200 for a total of \$1,588,000.

**MR. J. DINN:** I noticed there in last year's, and it seems to be the case here, I could be wrong, but last year's budget, the Federation of School Councils was the lowest at \$21,200. Any reason why it's so low?

**MR. WARR:** I'll defer that to Bob Gardiner.

**MR. GARDINER:** There's no particular reason. That's what it's been over the past two to three years. There's no particular reason why it's \$21,200. It has been reduced over the past number of years, but it's been \$21,200 for, I think, three years now.

**MR. J. DINN:** Actually, it's been reduced since 2015, when it was at \$30,000. It's interesting, that coincides with the introduction of a Liberal administration. In 2015, it was \$30,000, and it seems to have been reduced significantly by about almost \$8,800.

I'm trying to get an understanding as to why that Federation of School Councils – a democratic organization – has had its budget cut by the Liberal administration. That's what I would really like to know, especially since they are so integral to the school system. Any thoughts on that, please.

**MR. WARR:** It's probably part of the budget process, Jim. Certainly, I'll take a note of it and see if I can get you a better explanation.

**MR. J. DINN:** Actually, I think, too, in the leadership debate at the NLTA in 2016, the Premier committed to actually increasing the grant to \$50,000 per annum. So, I'd really like to know, not only why that promise hasn't been fulfilled, but why in successive years your department, your government has deemed it fit to reduce the funding of an organization such as it. That would really be helpful, because I think a government should be looking at supporting an advocacy group and a not for profit. That would definitely be important to get.

Thank you.

**MR. WARR:** I've taken a note of that, Jim, and I'll get back to you on it.

**MR. J. DINN:** If I could, just a follow-up with regards to the Cultural Connections strategy to make sure I'm getting the number correctly, did you say that the amount being given out this year was for \$250,000-plus?

**MR. WARR:** It was a total of \$434,400, of which the Cultural Connections strategy was \$250,000.

**MR. J. DINN:** Last year, the Cultural Connections strategy had a budget of \$872,000, almost \$873,000. I'm just more or less trying to line up last year's budget with this year's.

Council of Ministers of Education has not seen a decrease, Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education has not seen a decrease, Federation of School Councils has seen a decrease and Cultural Connections strategy has seen a decrease. I'm just trying to get – make sure that when I'm looking at last year's budget line for Cultural Connections strategy and I'm reading the amount, I'm reading the same one.

So, \$872,900 last year, and, if I understand you correctly, \$434,000. Are we talking about the same thing this year?

**MR. WARR:** With regards to the Cultural Connections strategy, there's no change in the budget year over year.

**MR. J. DINN:** Okay.

The T. I. Murphy Centre, \$866,400, still, yes?

**MR. WARR:** Yes.

**MR. J. DINN:** Encounters with Canada and all the rest of it seems to be the same. Okay, those are the two. I'm just trying to make sure that – the numbers don't line up.

Thank you.

**MR. WARR:** Thank you.

**MR. J. DINN:** I think that's if for 2.1.02.

Thank you.

**CHAIR:** You have some more questions? Okay.

**MR. PARDY:** Just wondering if we can get a spreadsheet showing the expenditures in each of those applicants since 2015? Are they the same group since 2015 with no exclusions? Would it be the same amount that's granted each year?

I know the change that my colleague has stated, I brought that one. Would the others have remained the same since 2015?

**MR. WARR:** So you're talking about the Grants and Subsidies?

**MR. PARDY:** Yes.

**MR. WARR:** We'll get you a copy of that.

**MR. PARDY:** Okay.

Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Okay, we're all good? Okay.

I think we'll call the subhead now for the vote.

**CLERK:** 2.1.01 to 2.2.01 inclusive.

**CHAIR:** 2.1.01 to 2.2.01 inclusive.

Shall those carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

**CLERK:** 3.1.01 to 3.6.01.

**MR. WARR:** Is that 2 point ...? It should be 2 point ...

**MR. GARDINER:** No, she called all the twos.

**CLERK:** Did I miss one?

**CHAIR:** Yes, I think we did. Yeah, we should have went to 2.1.02.

**CLERK:** We just voted on 2.1.01 to 2.2.01?

**CHAIR:** Yeah (inaudible).

Moving on now to section 3.

**CLERK:** If the Committee (inaudible) agree.

**CHAIR:** But if you have further questions on the (inaudible) we can certainly go back if there are more questions to that subhead.

**MR. J. DINN:** If I may.

I was of the understanding that we'd be going through it section by section right now, as opposed to the whole – we're moving to 3. I stopped at 2.1.02 because, based on what we've been doing already, we've been going through each section by section and alternating. So, are we now changing so that we can ask questions on all of section 2?

**CHAIR:** Yes, that's the objective. We go the whole entire section of 2 before we move on to 3. So, if there are further questions you can certainly go ahead.

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you. That's why I stopped at the end of 2.1, because I was assuming we're going back to 2.1.03, and Mr. Parady. So, are we carrying on, then, with 2.1.03?

**CHAIR:** Yes.

**MR. J. DINN:** Okay. So I'll just finish all that, if I may, Mr. Parady, just 2.1.03?

In 2.1.03, with regard to Salaries, it's a significant under expenditure of \$160,300.

**MR. WARR:** They were savings resulting from vacant positions for portions of time, step changes for new incumbents and reclassification of one position.

**MR. J. DINN:** How many positions would that be? One?

**MR. WARR:** Did you ask how many positions?

**MR. J. DINN:** Yes.

**MR. WARR:** Twelve.

**MR. J. DINN:** Twelve. Thank you.

Is it possible to have what those positions were as well when you get a chance if you have them there? If not, later on is fine, too.

**MR. WARR:** It's a director of Policy and Information Management, clerk typist III, information management analyst, manager of information management, program and policy development specialists – there were three of those – two information management analysts, two information management tech IIs and an electronic content management coordinator.

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you.

With regard to Professional Services, I notice that was not spent in 2018-'19?

**MR. WARR:** Hiring of outside expertise was not required this fiscal for initial work on the legislative reviews and other policy functions; for example, the EAP Schools Act review and the PeopleSoft consultant.

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you very much.

That's it for 2.1.03.

**MR. PARDY:** If I may go back to the Salaries again, those 12 vacant positions, they added up to \$160,000?

**MR. WARR:** They weren't vacant positions, they were current positions.

**MR. PARDY:** Oh, they were permanent?

**MR. WARR:** Yes.

**MR. PARDY:** The loss of those positions added up to \$160,000 less – there was more?

**MR. WARR:** I'll defer to Bob Gardiner.

**MR. PARDY:** Okay.

**MR. GARDINER:** Yes, the positions that the minister read off, those are current positions within that division. The vacant positions resulted from the amalgamation of the Information Management and the Policy Divisions into one, so it took some time then to fill some of those positions. There weren't 12 vacant positions, the 12 positions are the current structure of that division.

**MR. PARDY:** All right, thank you.

Just a quick question on the Property, Furnishings and Equipment. Last year, the department spent \$6,700 more than what was budgeted. I'm wondering if you can explain it.

**MR. WARR:** Yes, it was the purchase of two laptops, tables, chairs and shelving for the registry.

**MR. PARDY:** For the registry?

**MR. WARR:** Yes.

**MR. PARDY:** From my position, I'm done with 2.1.03.

**CHAIR:** You're finished? Okay.

Mr. Dinn, do you have further questions?

**MR. J. DINN:** In 2.2.01, with regard to Youth Interns, these positions, I take it, were created under the now defunct federal Community Access Program for computer training in schools and libraries and the province took over funding for them. It looks like the funding for interns is discontinued here. Will the interns be funded under another program?

**MR. WARR:** Yes. In January 2018, EECD was notified that the Youth Interns Program had changed to the Digital Skills for Youth Program with significantly different eligibility criteria. Due to the program changes, EECD determined that it would not be participating in the program any longer as it falls outside of our mandate. This budget was transferred to AESL.

**MR. J. DINN:** Perfect. That's it, I think, for section 2 from me.

**CHAIR:** Okay.

If there are no further questions on this particular subhead, we will vote.

**CLERK:** 2.1.01 to 2.2.01 inclusive.

**CHAIR:** 2.1.01 to 2.2.01 inclusive.

Shall those carry?

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against?

Carried.

On motion, subheads 2.1.01 through 2.2.01 carried.

**CLERK:** 3.1.01 to 3.6.01 inclusive.

**CHAIR:** Okay and we'll have our first speaker, please.

**MR. PARDY:** Salaries; last year the department spent \$19,000 less than what was budgeted, yet this year the budget would be the same. You can clarify that?

**MR. WARR:** That's Allowances and Assistance.

**MR. PARDY:** Sorry, Allowances and –

**MR. WARR:** Yes, that's \$19,000 a year. These are application-based bursaries related to math under the Education Action Plan. Less bursaries were applied for than budgeted during the fiscal year.

**MR. PARDY:** This bursary program was in place for the past couple of years?

**MR. WARR:** I'll defer to Bob.

**MR. GARDINER:** Last year would've been the first year for this particular bursary program as part of the Education Action Plan. We did have significant uptake on the bursary program, in excess of 50 teachers applying. The problem becomes in terms of when we reimburse the teachers for doing the courses at university after they complete.

While they were approved, they had a year to complete. The uptake was significant – 50-plus teachers – but the payout never happened in the last fiscal year, so that will happen in this fiscal year.

**MR. PARDY:** These are teachers that can avail of math classes at MUN?

**MR. GARDINER:** Correct.

**MR. WARR:** Yes.

**MR. PARDY:** Is it during the school year or would it be in their off time?

**MR. WARR:** I'll defer to Bob.

**MR. GARDINER:** There's no restriction on when they do the course. In some cases, they may be doing it at MUN in the evening time, or it could be during the summer, or it could be online. It's not restricted to Memorial, although most of the applications for the bursaries were for a MUN program, but it could be at any university that would be approved.

**MR. PARDY:** In the 50-plus that applied, was the bulk in one component of the school system, like elementary, intermediate, high school?

**MR. WARR:** I'll defer to Bob.

**MR. GARDINER:** These are targeted for only primary and elementary teachers, based on the recommendations from the task force report.

**MR. PARDY:** Under Regular Teachers, an increase of \$1,171,000 and some over the last

year. If you can provide the details that would account for that increase?

**MR. WARR:** We had savings of \$2,125,000 related to declining enrollment. Then there was an increase of \$1,384,400 related to the Education Action Plan. There was an increase of a little over \$1.9 million related to reprofiling of funds for teaching and learning assistants from School Board Operations to Teaching Services.

**MR. PARDY:** Were these initiatives in the Premier's Task Force?

**MR. WARR:** Yes, they were.

**MR. PARDY:** Substitute teachers –

**MR. WARR:** I'm just going to defer to Bob Gardiner, please.

**MR. GARDINER:** Mr. Pardy, just to provide a little more clarification. In terms of that particular budget, there was a decline of 49 teaching units because of declining enrolments, but then added in to the budget would've been the extra English as a second language teachers – four of those – an extra reading specialist allocation, learning resource teacher allocation, as well as teaching and learning assistants.

When the minister referenced the reprofiling of the funds for teaching and learning assistants, prior to last budget we had the money for teaching and learning assistants – we weren't quite sure where those individuals would be placed. Subsequent to our discussions, they actually are now NLTA members and they are covered by the teachers' collective agreement. So we originally had the money in School Board Operations, but because they are now considered teachers, based on the NLTA collective agreement, we actually moved the money from School Board Operations over to Teaching Services.

**MR. PARDY:** Okay. So when you gave the figure before, based on the number of teachers that we have in the system that work in our schools, then this would be a new entity.

**MR. GARDINER:** Correct.

**MR. PARDY:** The TLAs, and they would be falling under regular teachers.

**MR. GARDINER:** Correct.

**MR. PARDY:** The only thing that would jump out at me – I know that if I went back six years ago, the class or the allocation class size in intermediate was 27. My understanding now it's 31. If it is 31, then I would say to you then I know you can speak to declining enrolment is why there's a reduction in the number of teachers, or in the Salaries. But when I see the class size go up, I'd almost like to see as to – I'm not sure what data can be provided to indicate if in fact that ratio has changed.

You mentioned 12.5 before per student of the allocation for the teachers that would be working in our school systems, and it's been 12.5 for the past six, seven, eight years – I can't recall. I don't know if that answer can be provided.

**MR. GARDINER:** So, yes, the 12.5 would be the – and, again, it's a ballpark figure. I haven't got it right in front of me, but it's typically between 12 and 12.5, and it's been that for the past five or six years. That would be the pupil-teacher ratio, based on the data from Stats Canada.

The 31 that you're referring to would be the class cap in intermediate seven, eight and nine. And, yes, that has gone up from 27 with the introduction of the new teacher allocation model in 2007 or '08, I think, and it's now 31.

**MR. PARDY:** Can we speak to the practice of the soft cap? You said it's a new term that I wasn't aware of, but my understanding now is the soft cap for these intermediate classes would be two students? So, conceivably, if you have 31 students in a class and 33 may not lead to an extra teacher being provided?

**MR. WARR:** I'll defer to Bob Gardiner.

**MR. GARDINER:** The concept of a soft cap has always been in place since the new teacher allocation model was introduced in 2007-2008. Basically what that is, is if we're dealing with, for example, a grade two class where the class cap is 25 – so if there are 25 students in June, or I should say May 7, because that's when the

teacher assignment is done based on the NLTA collective agreement, then there's one teacher assigned for that grade two class. If there are two additional students that show up in September, unanticipated, then the class cap can go to 27. So that's where the soft cap comes in. If there are 27 there on May 7 and there are 27 there in September, then there would be two teachers.

In the recommendations from the Shortall report back in 2007, it acknowledged the fact that there may be unanticipated students show up in September. So it allows for the cap to be exceeded by up to two for the September. If it goes to three extra, then, yes, an additional teacher would need to be assigned.

**MR. PARDY:** Thank you for that answer.

I know that one school currently in the District of Bonavista has a class size now in June of 33 for September, but the school district has held back the deployment of that extra teacher. So that is contrary to the soft cap explanation that occurred that makes good sense, that if you get two students come in in September you may not get that teacher in September, but here we are now in June, would be the case where a teacher is being held back when in fact they do have 33 students exceeding the 31 that would be the allocation.

I know this is a practice of the school district; the only thing I'd like to speak to is the fact of the hardship that it causes within the school system. I can speak as an administrator in a school system, that if you hold back a teacher in May and June, at a time when the resources and the selection would be the greatest in the professional staff that you look to hire, it's a radical difference back in September and October if ever that second teacher is allocated, and I would think it puts the school system under great hardship.

**MR. WARR:** You and I have had this conversation. I'll defer to Bob just for his explanation of that.

**MR. GARDINER:** In terms of the soft cap, hard cap discussion; if, in fact, as you know – if, in fact, the 33 students are there in September then the extra teaching unit would be deployed.

The practice of the school district is in terms of maximizing resources, and I realize – they realize it's an inconvenience for the schools in question but, again, if there are not 33 students there in September and they have – based on the NLTA collective agreement – assigned a second teacher, then they can't reassign that teacher in September. So, they basically would hold the unit back.

If there are not 33 students, if there are only 29 students there in September, then they may very well put that teacher in that school or they may decide to put the teacher somewhere else where the need is greater. But if there are 33 students there in September then the second teacher would be deployed, and the school district realizes that that is an inconvenience but, again, it's managing the resources to the best of their ability.

**CHAIR:** Okay. The Member's time has expired for this particular section.

We'll move on to Mr. Dinn, please.

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you, Chair.

I want to pick up on something that my colleague referred to, and I just want to clarify. Was it stated that in 2008, I think it was written that the class caps were increased or the class size was increased? I think it was Mr. Gardiner who made that comment and I just need to clarify.

**MR. GARDINER:** No. In 2008, with the implementation of the new teacher allocation model, the class caps were actually introduced. At that time the class cap for intermediate was 27. Subsequently, over the past number of years it was increased to 29, and more recently, I think three years ago, to 31; whereas the class caps in K to three have remained at 20 for kindergarten and 25 for grades one to three.

So, 2008 saw the introduction of the class caps based on the teacher allocation report from Brian Shortall and, subsequent to that, some of the class caps, in particular grades four to nine, have increased.

**MR. J. DINN:** In fact, in 2016 we saw, under the Liberal government, an increase in class

caps, the introduction of combined grades, the loss of availability to French immersion for a number of students. We saw the introducing of the lottery for intensive core French. So, we saw the introduction of a lot of measures. In 2008, actually, we saw the decrease in class sizes even in some multi-graded situations, just to clarify that.

I also note that in 2016, the Auditor General noted, despite being directed by Cabinet to evaluate the teacher allocation model three years after it was implemented in 2008-2009, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has not completed the assessment and has not reported back to Cabinet. So I'm curious as to if a review of the teacher allocation model has been carried out since that time or is it going ahead – just to follow up on it before I get into my own questions on it, please.

**MR. WARR:** I'll defer that to Bob.

**MR. GARDINER:** Mr. Dinn, you're absolutely correct. There was a directive to review the teacher allocation model three years after its implementation. That wasn't done. I can't speak to why it wasn't done, but that would have been 2011.

Right now, with the introduction of the Education Action Plan and the increase in resources for teachers both from reading specialists, learning resource teachers, English second language, as well as teaching and learning assistants, we're going into year two of that. Year three will see an addition of 350 extra teaching resources. At that point in time, I would think that it would be prudent then to do a review of the teacher allocation model, once all those new resources have been added to the system.

**MR. J. DINN:** So, if I may, am I hearing a commitment to do, as opposed to it would be prudent to do – am I hearing a commitment that a review of the teacher allocation model will be done?

**MR. WARR:** Once the additional resources are put in place, absolutely.

**MR. J. DINN:** May I ask another question? With regard to zero-based budgeting, is the

whole notion with regard to zero-based budgeting looking at the needs and then building a budget to accommodate the needs? Is that not the purpose of zero-based budgeting? At least in your Way Forward document that's what I noticed.

**MR. WARR:** With regard to teachers, there's no zero-based budgeting.

**MR. J. DINN:** However, a teacher allocation review will be a good start as to determining what the needs are in the system. I'll come back to that with regard to student assistants in a minute, but that would be a good start as to determining what teachers are needed, what resources rather than add – at least you'll have an idea what your targets should be.

**MR. WARR:** Agree.

**MR. J. DINN:** So I would have that now – this is recorded in *Hansard* that there will be a teacher allocation review when this is done. Thank you.

So with regard to 3.1.01, Teaching Services, just out of curiosity, in last year's Estimates Committee meeting there was a discussion with Mr. Kirby around the definition of what a TLA is and what their role is and some determination about credentials and criteria. I'm just curious: Has the role of the TLA been defined as we go forward?

**MR. WARR:** Did you say defined?

**MR. J. DINN:** Defined – what exactly does a TLA do? I know there was some discussion last year, and there was no clear consideration, I think. The comment was that – some general discussions of what they are, but no clear role, definition as to what exactly they are. They're going to be assisting teachers, but has that been clearly defined?

If I'm an English teacher, I know what my role is. If I'm a special needs teacher, I know what my role is. If I'm an administrator, like Mr. Pardy to my left, he would know exactly what his role is. I'm just curious. TLA is a new position coming in, has there been any thought to firming up the definition and defining what

the roles of the TLA will be? Or is that an ongoing process?

**MR. WARR:** Thank you. I'll defer that to Bob Gardiner.

**MR. GARDINER:** So this time last year, Jim, the roles and responsibilities weren't quite defined. And again, as I mentioned earlier, we weren't really sure where they would fit within the system. With the discussions with the NLTA, it was determined that they would be best suited as teachers. So they actually now are part of the NLTA collective agreement, and they are placed on the salary grid at certification two, level two.

Basically, they have two years of post-secondary education, somewhat related to education. It could be, actually, an early childhood education program, two-year program at CNA. Or, in many cases for this current school year, many of them are actually certified teachers at certification four or greater. In many cases, five or six.

There has been a position description developed. Again, this time last year when we were doing Estimates we had just gotten approval for the teaching and learning assistant positions in the budget, so the position description wasn't finalized. But there is a position description that we can certainly provide you, and the school district is currently actively recruiting the complement of teaching and learning assistants for next year, because the number will increase from 54 this year to just over 100 next year, and 200 in year three.

So in terms of the roles and responsibilities in a nutshell, they are teaching assistants. They work under the direction of a classroom teacher and they do take part in instruction in the classroom, again under the instruction or the direction of a classroom teacher, but the position description we can certainly provide you a copy of that.

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you.

Are TLAs – and I presume – included in the budget line under Grants and Subsidies for two regular teachers? They would be included in that?

**MR. WARR:** Yes, they are.

**MR. J. DINN:** Are they also included in determining the student-teacher ratio – the 12.3-1 that was quoted earlier?

**MR. WARR:** I defer to Bob Gardiner.

**MR. GARDINER:** So in that case – and again, Jim, the 12.3, I'm just going from memory; it's somewhere between 12 and 12.5. Those would be numbers that would be provided by Stats Canada. Those numbers would be a couple of years dated, so they wouldn't be included in that number right now. I would suggest in the future when Stats Canada looks for the data then they likely would be included. But, right now, they wouldn't be because of the fact the statistics would be a couple of years old.

**MR. J. DINN:** So I guess that information on Stats Canada would be provided by the department. How would Stats Canada get a hold of that information, I'm curious?

**MR. GARDINER:** They would look for data from the various departments across Canada in terms of the number of teachers, the numbers of students, et cetera.

**MR. J. DINN:** So is it at that time that the department is intending to include the TLAs as part of the ratio? Will that be factored into it since that information is to come?

**MR. GARDINER:** That would be based on the Stats Canada definition in terms of what they want to include in terms of teachers. For example, student assistants would not be part of that ratio, but I would suggest that teaching and learning assistants likely would be. I'd have to confirm that, because we've never had them before, but based on other provinces in terms of what they include and not. But that would again be based on the Stats Canada definition in terms of what they want in and what they want out.

**MR. J. DINN:** I also understand that TLAs, reading specialists and learning resource teachers or teacher librarians are not available to schools with less than a population of 50. Is that true?



**MR. GARDINER:** Basically, based on the recommendation from the task force report, they suggested that schools with 51 or greater would have reading specialist allocation of .5, and 200 and greater would have a full-time reading specialist. They didn't reference any allocation with respect to teaching and learning assistants for any of the schools.

Based on the consultations and discussions with the phase-one schools, the 40 phase-one schools, it was recognized that in order for them to be able to do what was expected – because the task force basically said that the duties of a reading specialist and a TLA or extra teacher-librarians, would be taken over by the instructional resource teachers at the school.

Recognizing that was probably a little ambitious for this first year – and will carry into next year – there is an additional quarter unit of instructional resource teacher assigned to those schools with 51 or less students that are on phase one. Again, we'll carry that into phase two.

**CHAIR:** Okay, the Member's time has expired for this section. We'll move into further questions.

Mr. Pardy.

**MR. PARDY:** If I may, I just want to follow up on the discussion we had previously. I think when it was stated about schools are inconvenienced with the holdback practice, I know speaking from the school experience that we had, it was more than an inconvenience. We always looked at it educationally as a very negative factor in our programming and delivery of the education within our school if we could not get a teacher that was a specialist in the area that we were looking for.

It was a drastic difference in trying to seek a specialist teacher in language or math or science in September and October than what it was in May and June. Even though the word "inconvenience" was used, I know where it's coming from and I respect that, but I would think that in the system it is a negative impact, this holdback practice.

The TLAs, if their training in the two years somewhat relates to education, I would say that

it is not a teacher that were accustomed to, to have within the system, that would be now packaged together. I would suggest that if the classes weren't as high in numbers as what they are in a lot of them, the need for the TLAs may not be as great.

If the allocation was close to what Brian Shortall – and you can correct me if I'm wrong. Was Brian the author of the Teacher Allocation Commission back in May 2007? But just to share what Brian Shortall came out and what he suggested: Kindergarten, 18; grades one to three, 20; grades four to six, 23; grades seven to 12 – I probably should change seven to nine because I know the intermediate seven to nine was 25 students.

I'll go to the question now but just to make the point on the holdback. I think educators and assistants feel strongly on the holdback concept.

I'd just like for the Chair to remind us now as to which section we are. 3.1.01 still?

**CHAIR:** Yes.

**MR. PARDY:** Yes?

**CHAIR:** Yes, we're all on the section 3. Everything pertaining to 3 we can discuss.

**MR. PARDY:** Fantastic.

Substitute teacher leave; it is the same as last year. Generally the same? I know the NLTA had stated that I think the amount of sick leave by teachers has risen. I didn't see that data but I was aware of the comment. I think, probably, the genesis of the comment was stating that as the classes grow larger – I guess they were equating sick leave with the stress of conducting the class in large sizes. Would the department have data that would track the amount of sick leave that would be in substitute teachers?

**MR. WARR:** Yes, we would.

**MR. PARDY:** Is it possible we can look at that for the past four or five years?

**MR. WARR:** Yes.

**MR. PARDY:** Okay, thank you.

I know that in the Estimates last year the minister spoke quite a lot about the importance of Professional Development and I think we would all concur. There's \$102,700 more budget this year than last year?

**MR. WARR:** For Professional Development?

**MR. PARDY:** Yes. Can you indicate as to what areas the Professional Development is for?

**MR. WARR:** It's related to the Education Action Plan.

**MR. PARDY:** Okay.

Are there specific areas that we're focusing on in that education plan?

**MR. WARR:** I'll refer that to Eldred.

**MR. PARDY:** Okay.

**MR. BARNES:** Yes, targeted primarily on the implementation of the responsive teaching and learning, which is a new policy that's replacing the special education policy. Also, those new entities, the reading specialists, TLAs, learning resource teachers – because alongside the teacher librarians is a new learning commons libraries approach. So the focus of most of the professional learning are in these areas – the additional professional learning.

**MR. PARDY:** Thank you, Eldred.

Just as a point of clarification, I know we're talking about the TLAs and the teacher librarian. I know that in a school system we always look at the teachers who are leading the class as being the core group when we administer our professional development within the school system. I'm sure that's still part of the picture, the only thing is that we have the others included as well.

The Employee Benefits, there was a large overrun of \$2.3 million last year compared to what was budgeted.

**MR. WARR:** As a result of early severance payouts.

**MR. PARDY:** Okay.

In '02 the Revenue - Provincial; last year we had more revenue than was expected, yet this year the budgeted revenue is the same. I wonder if you could explain as to where the revenue comes from and why the increase?

**MR. WARR:** Yeah, this account can be highly variable as it mostly relates to repayments of prior year's expenses. Revenue is recovered from payroll overpayments, teacher salary overpayments and miscellaneous unit expenses repaid by school districts and teacher billings from previous school years. The majority of these payments should have been received early in the fiscal year but some still may come through EECD's unallocated account.

**MR. PARDY:** Would we have many experiences of teacher payroll overpayment?

**MR. WARR:** No.

**MR. PARDY:** I had never heard of it until now.

That would conclude my questions for that section.

**CHAIR:** Okay, thank you.

Moving on to Mr. Dinn, please.

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you.

Just to make sure I heard correctly, with regard to the schools that are less than 50, did I understand that there would be some allotment for learning resource teachers? I just want to make sure I heard exactly what was involved in that and TLAs.

**MR. WARR:** We'll defer to Bob Gardiner.

**MR. GARDINER:** No, just to be clear, Jim, the recommendation from the task force actually didn't have any recommendation with respect to increased resourcing for schools with less than 51. Listening to the administrators and staff from the 12 or 13 schools this year – so this would have been last summer when we had them in – they expressed some concern with respect to being able to move towards a new model, with the responsive teaching and learning in particular that Eldred referenced, without the additional resources.

The decision was made for the phase-one schools – and, again, we'll carry it through for the phase-two schools next year – that we would increase their instructional resource teacher allocation by a quarter unit. The expectation then would be that would help with the reading specialist and TLA duties, so to speak, but it would be an increase of instructional resource teachers of a quarter unit.

**MR. J. DINN:** So, to be clear, because the report didn't recommend that they do get them. They made no comment on that. They're not getting them. By way of compensation, they are instead getting an increase in the IRTs, the instructional resource teacher allocation, is that how I understand it?

More or less, there's no increase of TLAs, library and learning resource teacher, or TLAs for that matter, for schools less than 50; but, by way of compensation, there was a recognition that they would instead get an increased allocation of IRTs and that would make up for the lack of those resources. Is that how I understand it?

**MR. GARDINER:** That would be correct, Jim. The thinking was if we were to allocate reading specialists or TLAs, you'd be talking about 0.1 of this and 0.15 of something else and really it doesn't work. So, the thinking was that with a quarter unit, and in many cases these schools would already have maybe a half unit or three-quarters of a unit, so you would increase the allocation by a quarter unit, which would help alleviate some of the work that would be required.

**MR. J. DINN:** So it is possible for a small school to have a half unit of IRT and that would be increased by a quarter unit?

**MR. GARDINER:** That's correct.

**MR. J. DINN:** Again, this is a common problem, so you have a three-quarter unit, which it happens, you have these fractional units in many of the small schools and that's the difficulty in getting teachers there at all.

To me, it would make better sense, especially since we're in the mode of adding teachers as part of the Education Action Plan and then

planning to do a review, I would suggest it's just as well to make sure you have a full unit, not fractions of units, and then worry about it after.

Either that or do the review right now and find out what is needed. If it's zero-based budgeting, I'm trying to figure out how you'd determine if a quarter of a unit makes sense in the school and how that responds to the need. Because, in fact, what you've done, is there has been a group of schools that has been totally left out of the picture with regard to the Education Action Plan and, by way of a Band-Aid solution, you're applying a quarter of a unit and really that's just inadequate.

To me, if you're planning to add teachers to the system by way of the Education Action Plan and then possibly do a teacher allocation review, then I would suggest why not do the same for the small schools. If it's unreasonable to add a fraction of a TLA, a fraction of this, make sure that you have a full unit, that there are no fractional units in a small school so that they can do the job properly, and then do your review. I'm having trouble reconciling the two – just as a thought.

With regard to sick leave – and I'm interested to pick up what my colleague said with regard to sick leave. I'd also be interested in knowing, as well – I'm assuming that the breakdown in leave would also capture the amount of leave that teachers have taken as unpaid leave. Probably because of the fact that they've run out of sick leave – and I'm talking about younger teachers here. That they run out of sick leave and that they're probably actually on long-term disability or availing of short-term disability.

Would there be a capturing of the number of teachers who accessed unpaid leave, related to sickness? I'm looking here at \$31 million plus, almost \$32 million.

**MR. WARR:** That wouldn't be included.

**MR. J. DINN:** That would be included?

**MR. WARR:** Wouldn't be.

**MR. J. DINN:** So if a teacher takes unpaid leave, if it's short term, that wouldn't be captured there, because there'd still be a

substitute that would be required to fill in for them?

**MR. WARR:** Yes, we're not paying the teacher's salary is what it is, Jim.

**MR. J. DINN:** Okay. So there's no way of capturing, really, the effect of just – if they're on sick leave, that would be captured there in that number, correct?

**MR. WARR:** Yes, it would.

**MR. J. DINN:** Okay.

**MR. WARR:** Yes.

**MR. J. DINN:** But if that teacher uses up his or her sick leave – and I'm thinking about younger teachers here, those who started teaching since 2006 – if they end up exhausting their sick leave and they're forced then to go on some sort of unpaid leave, that would not be captured in that.

**MR. WARR:** No.

**MR. J. DINN:** Okay.

Right now, how many full-time learning resource teachers are there in the province, or a school has a full-time learning resource teacher – not fraction, but how many schools actually have a full-time learning resource teacher? I know that Holy Heart, for example, did when I went there, long before this Education Action Plan. I'm trying to get an idea of the number of schools that have a full-time learning resource teacher.

**MR. WARR:** We allocate to the district, Jim, and they deploy the units.

**MR. J. DINN:** Is there any way of finding that out from the department? I'm assuming that if the department asked the district, they would be able to tell them. I can think of a few schools offhand, but I also think of a number of schools where a teacher has, in the run of a week, a period. I'm just trying to think how that's going to actually help make the Education Action Plan work. I would like to get an idea of just the number of schools there that actually have a full-time learning resource teacher.

**MR. WARR:** We'll get that information for you.

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you very much.

Onward and forward then to 3.1.02, I think I have looked at that one. With regard to Purchased Services, there was a significant overrun in 2018-2019 by some \$602,000 but I notice that this year the budget amount is actually \$100,000 less than what was originally budgeted for in 2018-2019. I'm just wondering the reason why.

**MR. WARR:** With regard to the \$100,000, insurance premiums for property and liability were renewed at a lower rate and reprofiled to regular operating grants.

**MR. J. DINN:** And that's insurance for the schools and building?

**MR. WARR:** Yes.

**MR. J. DINN:** Okay.

With Allowances and Assistance, I'm looking here at a decrease of \$15,000. How many students got bursaries to attend school away from home in 2018? There's a significant decrease there.

**MR. WARR:** We'll get that information for you.

**MR. J. DINN:** Perfect, thank you very much.

Grants and Subsidies, why the overruns in the Operating Grant and Student Assistants grants in 2018? I noticed that there was a significant increase there and a decrease this year.

**MR. WARR:** With regard to the increase, it was pay out of severance as a result of the new collective agreement; that was just under \$11 million. Savings resulting from delay in some components of the teacher professional learning for the Education Action Plan was actually \$352,000. Cost of severance payout for executive, management and non-bargaining, non-management staff was just over \$2 million.

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you.

One last question: I'm just trying to understand, with regard to Student Assistants, in determining the student assistants, the numbers that are needed – how do you go about budgeting for that or determining that?

**MR. WARR:** Can you just repeat that question?

**MR. J. DINN:** Sorry. In 3.1.02, Student Assistants, I notice there was an increase in 2018-2019 and then there was an increase of \$300,000 for this year. I'm just wondering: How is the budget of student assistants determined? You're looking at Student Assistants.

**MR. WARR:** With regard to the \$5,346,400, it was a payout of severance as a result of the new collective agreement. The extra \$300,000 was additional hours that were added.

**MR. J. DINN:** Okay.

I'll come back to that. Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Okay, the Member's time has expired.

We'll move on now to the next speaker if you have any further questions.

Mr. Pardy.

**MR. PARDY:** Three hundred extra hours added? Sorry, I missed that.

**MR. WARR:** No, that was \$300,000.

**MR. PARDY:** Oh, \$300,000.

**MR. WARR:** In Budget 2019-2020 there was an extra \$300,000 and that was for additional hours.

**MR. PARDY:** Just on the student assistants, in no way the TLAs in their role would have anything to do with the student assistants? They're totally exclusive to each other and will remain?

**MR. WARR:** Yes.

**MR. PARDY:** Good.

**MR. WARR:** That's correct.

**MR. PARDY:** Yes, I expected such.

Just to follow up on what my colleague stated – the fractional and staffing. As far as working in a school, you create a timetable and you have a teacher for a quarter time. But sometimes that quarter doesn't fit the span of the timetable and you can't expect people to spend a full day on a schedule when you have created your timetable.

It's hard to create a timetable and structure it to capture one-quarter of the day where you have a quarter of a unit so, really, they're restricted in how they can be utilized. I know that it's probably easier said than done, the full unit concept which speaks volumes, but I would concur that in small schools to eliminate the fractional units.

School Board Operations – the question I was going to ask earlier, I know that the Auditor General in September 2018 said there was widespread misuse of funds. Without going through what was listed, or I think may have come out in the media, there was inappropriate usage of funds. What measures have we taken, as a department, to make sure that would never occur again? I know there was a budget submission, I think, that they had made and there was an action plan? I'm just wondering if you can speak to that to assure the taxpayers that it ought never happen again.

**MR. WARR:** With regard to that, I mean the school board continues to implement actions and provide a full update and report to the Public Accounts Committee. We continue to explore cost-effective ways to improve the district's financial processes, such as integrating them into government's core financial management system under a shared-services model.

Government's current system has the capacity to address a number of issues identified with the district, for example: centralized purchasing, accounts payable, including quality controls, inventory control and asset management.

**MR. PARDY:** Any purchases made through the school board will circulate and find its way through the department somewhere?

**MR. WARR:** Eventually, yes.

**MR. PARDY:** Okay.

If I may just make one quick comment on the student assistants, I know in the school system if we didn't have the student assistants – and the amount of time we had to deploy a teacher or we had to deploy an administrator. There are times that we would have to go in where there was a lapse of a student assistant.

I think sometimes we might miss that when a school puts in an application; remember they may all need to be scrutinized. I'm fully aware of that but I know sometimes in the absence of a student assistant, there's a cascading effect where other staff members, teachers, have to step in there to fulfill that need in the absence of a student assistant.

Transportation of School Children; last year there was a million dollars less spent on school busing compared to what was budgeted.

**MR. WARR:** Yes, the cost of tendering to replace expiring contracts were lower than anticipated at the time the budget was prepared.

**MR. PARDY:** We have a scattered weather day in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. In that event, does the busing contractor still get paid for those days where the buses do not run?

**MR. WARR:** Yes, they do. It's part of their contract.

**MR. PARDY:** Yes. Is there any limitation as to, say, a school that misses 14 days or 16 days of school where it's closed, that that's consistent?

**MR. WARR:** Yes.

**MR. PARDY:** Okay.

I know that we had discussion in the House at one time on efficiencies and I look at that. I'm not sure, I'm probably overextending my reach now, but I know that if I were doing it privately I would look at that and say that may not be – and it may be an area where efficiencies may be able to reach in the future because we have more than a scattered day where the system doesn't run; take a school with 14 buses that would be running.

Those areas on the 1.6 busing, the cut-off, they seem to be very significant in certain areas. Not in all areas. I would say the District of Bonavista is not. There are areas where we have parents, schools and representatives lobbying for the 1.6 to be reduced.

What scenarios have the department modelled regarding the 1.6-kilometre busing issue and if you can give us the analysis. Is there anything that was done? I know you mentioned the courtesy busing. We've used courtesy busing, I think, more than probably across Canada or up there, but in these contentious areas, can the department look at those areas which stand out?

**MR. WARR:** I think the department's messaging on that has been consistent. If there are areas of concern, bring them to the department and we'll certainly deal with it. I have said that many times, I'm sure, as did other officials.

Again, we have 649 courtesy stops implemented to date and that's an increase I think. When we started last September we were somewhere around 70. Again, busing of school children is – their safety is paramount to us. If there's a concern, bring it to the department.

**MR. PARDY:** That's fair. Thank you.

Seventy last September and now we're at 649?

**MR. WARR:** Yeah, 649.

**MR. PARDY:** If we could move on to 3.1.03.

**CHAIR:** Yeah, the whole section of 3 is fair game.

**MR. PARDY:** Good stuff. I missed that before.

Can you explain the mandate of the Learning Resources Distribution Centre, what it would be? It might be pretty basic but I just –

**MR. WARR:** I'll defer that to Bob.

**MR. GARDINER:** Basically, the Learning Resources Distribution Centre is a warehouse down in Pleasantville. For all intents and purposes, it receives goods and then ships them out to schools. So textbooks would be the

primary piece, but anything that's purchased by the department to be shipped to schools would be funnelled through the LRDC in Pleasantville.

**MR. PARDY:** Okay, good. Thank you.

3.1.04, School Supplies, Transportation and Communications – \$8,400 less was spent last year compared to what was budgeted.

**MR. WARR:** It's the result of shipping expenses related to school supplies was lower than anticipated.

**MR. PARDY:** No change in the allocation of school supplies? Now, say, if you got a drop of 1,000 students each year, maybe conceivably there's going to be a drop, and that would reflect that. But whatever school supplies they were entitled to would be the same.

**MR. WARR:** Actually, when you look at Supplies, it's up \$400,000. It was as a result of increased funding for reading resources related to the Education Action Plan.

**MR. PARDY:** Okay.

**MR. WARR:** And that was for social and emotional learning material.

**MR. PARDY:** Was it mentioned earlier that the Arts and Culture Strategy was transferred to AESL? No? That would still be, I guess, part of the supply network.

**MR. WARR:** I'll defer that to Bob.

**MR. GARDINER:** No, the thing that was moved to AESL was the youth intern program, which was a federal program which changed its mandate to Digital Skills for Youth, so it better fit under the Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour. The money that was in our budget as federal revenue now would show up in AESL's. That was youth interns.

**MR. PARDY:** Good, thank you.

I think my time is up. I defer.

**CHAIR:** Yes.

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you very much.

I just want to pick up with regard to 3.1.02, the Student Assistants budget line of \$23,536,600. I'm just curious – again, where I was going with this when I ran out of time is: How is that budget line determined? How do you determine the number of student assistants that are needed? Where does that come from?

**MR. WARR:** Consultations with the school district. It's based on need.

**MR. J. DINN:** Okay. And that's what I was curious about. Because I have here information that basically in 2018 – and this is where I'm trying to go, and I'll be upfront. I'm being critical because I come from a teaching background and as former president of the Teachers' Association where I didn't see a whole lot of needs-based allocations going on, and I will be critical of that.

In 2018, the NLESD program specialist for student support services assessing student profile information from the schools determined that required hours for student assistants support for the English language school district was something about 4,002 hours per day for September 2018. The NLESD allocated 3,583.5 hours per day. That was a shortfall of about 418 hours per day less than the documented needs.

Eventually, I know that the NLTA did raise concerns and it was reinstated 100 hours per day, but that still falls short. I say this because when I was president of the Teachers' Association, I ran into countless examples – and I'm sure Mr. Pardy can verify this – where the needs of the children were not being met and it took often the threat of going public – and the board had no money, but usually it had to go to the department who held the purse strings.

I've been trying to get some idea if indeed, in 2018, the district gave the numbers, why the budget for that line was so much less. Obviously, the consultation process seems to be breaking down. We're introducing the new Education Action Plan and I would submit that there's a world of difference between what's put forward and the reality in the school system. I found that out through my 32 years of teaching and my four years as president, big time.

I'm just trying to get an idea, this year, is it indeed based on that and why the shortfall again in 2018 that there were 418 hours per day in the school system that were not being addressed.

If you don't have the answer to that, Minister, that's fine but I would like something going on here. I can tell you from my own experience in teaching that was the case, and my four years as president of the Teachers' Association, province wide, that was the case.

**MR. WARR:** The only point I'll make, Jim, is the fact that it's a yearly discussion and there was \$300,000 increase this year.

**MR. J. DINN:** So my question, then, if there's a \$300,000 increase, if I were to go to the district and put through an ATIPP request will I find, in fact, that the recommendation of the district, the needs of the district are now being met, or will there be a shortfall. That is going to be the question.

I would assume, then, that you would have that information as to what the district has pointed out. Without having to go through that, I'm trying to figure out, right now, will that \$300,000 meet the needs as determined by the program specialists at the district, by the experts who are there to assess the needs of children or will I find a shortfall? That's what I really want to know. If it happened in 2018, I'm concerned it's going to happen again this year.

**MR. WARR:** Certainly that'll be determined in September.

**MR. J. DINN:** Am I to understand, then, that the district has had no discussions as to what their needs will be in September? Usually those assessments would be done by now. I'm trying to get an idea. Like, they don't wait until September to say, oh, we need this. My knowledge of IRTs and program specialists, that would be done in advance of the budget. Here are the needs we're going to need next year. Certainly, that was my experience in the school system.

So I would like to know, basically, if there's a shortfall, and how much of a shortfall with regard –

**MR. WARR:** I'll get that information for you.

**MR. J. DINN:** I appreciate that. Thank you very much.

So with regard to transportation of schoolchildren – actually, before I go on to that. With the new NLESD, the building it's currently in, is that a building that it has bought, or is that a building that it has leased?

**MR. WARR:** TW would own that building.

**MR. J. DINN:** Okay. TW? Is the board paying a lease to TW?

**MR. WARR:** No.

**MR. J. DINN:** No?

**MR. WARR:** No.

**MR. J. DINN:** And that's the current building there on – make sure we're talking about the same one, the old Johnson's building on Elizabeth Avenue? Okay.

So who pays insurance on that?

**MR. WARR:** That would be a part of government's insurance.

**MR. J. DINN:** Okay, so government does pay an insurance company on that.

With regard to last year's account – and I can't find the line in it this year – there was a line called Administration Grant, which Ms. Michael referred to a \$650,000-plus savings. Mr. Kirby, the minister at the time, indicated that there was savings due to hiring in-house legal counsel.

Where would I find, with regard to the legal services by the district, in what line? Because there doesn't appear to be any administration grant listed here in the heading. I'm just trying to get an idea; where would that be accounted for, legal services?

**MR. WARR:** It's rolled into the operating grant.

**MR. J. DINN:** Has there been any indication as to what the legal services – they saved \$600,000,



almost a million. Well, \$650,000 last year. I'm just wondering what the legal bills were this year.

**MR. WARR:** You'd have to ask them. We wouldn't know that.

**MR. J. DINN:** However, the answers seemed to be supplied by Mr. Kirby last year. He was able to indicate that there were savings, so I'm just curious. Actually, there was some discussion that basically government was dealing with using that service as well. Maybe I misread that. But, with regard to the department, do you use an in-house legal services or do you contract out?

**MR. WARR:** I'll defer that to Bob.

**MR. J. DINN:** Okay.

**MR. GARDINER:** Two different things, Jim. The department itself would use its solicitor from Justice and Public Safety that would be assigned to us. So everything for us would be in-house.

In terms of the school district, in the previous budget they actually were expending \$600,000, \$650,000 on legal fees. They actually submitted a proposal whereby they would hire in-house legal, similar to the college and the university, and then they would need to contract out less legal services.

So, basically, it was a reduction from \$650,000 required for legal services – they reduced that by, I think, \$200,000, \$250,000 because now they have an in-house legal representative. Obviously, with legal there are certain levels of expertise on different files. So they still do need to avail of external legal advice but they certainly reduced their costs by hiring an in-house legal.

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you very much.

I know the association, NLTA, basically has it in a contract. Their services go up, there's a base amount. Actually, it saves the association in the long run as opposed to paying on a contract out for legal service. I suggested that to Minister Byrne as well, that maybe that's an idea for government to look at that as opposed to paying

on a case by case. There could be a savings there.

With regard to revenue, has there been any revenue realized from the sale of school property? Or has that mostly gone to maybe the denominations that own the land? I'm thinking of a number of school sites that were owned. Has there been any revenue realized as a result of that?

**MR. WARR:** I'll defer that to Bob.

**MR. GARDINER:** The short answer is yes. In many cases, when the school board is disposing of school properties there is a denominational interest, and then they need to work out the details in terms of what funds are realized by the denomination versus the school district.

In recent past in the city itself, Booth and Bishops in particular were sold by the school district. The funds realized from those sales are currently with the school district. The minister has to give approval for the sale of the properties, and when the sale goes through the district holds the money. Then that money will be spent typically for educational purposes, but with the ministerial permission.

In many cases, the school district will dispose of properties simply by turning it over to a municipality or a local charitable organization and there would be very little realized in terms of a sale.

**CHAIR:** Okay. The Member's time has expired.

At this time now we're going to take a quick bathroom break. So say about five minutes, five or 10 minutes we can return. Okay?

**OFFICIAL:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** Okay.

Thank you.

### Recess

**CHAIR:** Okay, we can resume.

We're still in section 3. Mr. Dinn was the last speaker so now we'll move to Mr. Pardy.

**MR. PARDY:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

A couple of questions or points in 3.1.03, it's just related; I don't think it's anything specific. I realize the tangle with the sale of schools or property in relation to the denominational system. I'm assuming we'll wean through that eventually, that it will no longer be property that will be tied in with the denominational system. But I'm surprised that we don't have an agreement in moving forward that when the school does become open that we can have a process that may be able to use a shorter period of time.

When I think about it, I look at the Clarendville primary school; I mentioned 10 years. I realize it's not straightforward, but if you look at 10 years it's an awful long time to be in a – so if we looked at the figures of what we get in return of the sale of these buildings, I would assume that it would be a small amount. That's not a question, just a point.

Is it conceivable that the school district, when they apply the student assistants and they apply it on needs to the school district, would they expend all their budget that would be provided for them? Is there ever an occasion where they do not expend their entire budget that is passed on from the government?

Why I ask that, just as a clarification I know that if what we do with the holdback, if ever that practice is utilized for the student assistants, I can see that at the end you'll find that you have a large, or maybe some, that may not be expended because of that holdback necessity or mentality. Would there be a case where the budget wasn't spent on student assistants by the school district?

**MR. WARR:** Not typically.

I'll defer the question to Bob.

**MR. GARDINER:** In terms of student assistants and their pay, there's no holdback for student assistants. They get paid an hourly rate and then at the end of the school year, actually, I think they're laid off and then get rehired in September. Unlike teachers that would, as you would know, have holdback during the summer.

**MR. PARDY:** No, I'm sorry, I wasn't clear on the question. My apologies.

**MR. GARDINER:** Oh sorry.

**MR. PARDY:** When they deploy the student assistants – I'm sure that holdback principle, like they do with the teachers, not wanting to use them all up so in case of an emergency or a need that arises down, if they followed that same practice. If they did for student assistants, I'm just wondering at times do they have a capacity that wasn't expended that you might have afforded them, but through that holdback provision they may not have expended it.

**MR. GARDINER:** Unlike teachers, whereby the school district has to assign teachers or can't change a teaching assignment past May 7, with student assistants it's a little more fluid. They actually budget differently for student assistants. Likely, there would be some holdback in September, October, but they keep an eye on the budget and they typically spend all the allocated funds in the fiscal year.

**MR. PARDY:** Okay. Thank you very much.

I'd like to move on to 3.2.01.

**CHAIR:** Yeah, I'll agree. Go ahead.

**MR. PARDY:** Good?

**CHAIR:** Yeah.

**MR. PARDY:** Curriculum Development; a question with a little bit of preamble. Is there an initiative to change the way we develop curriculum and roll it out to schools? We always contended in the schools that sometimes when we receive curriculum it is outdated, and we know how fast change occurs.

I'm just wondering: Is there any vision to do it differently, like electronically, that would be more current? I spoke before. I think of the intermediate health curriculum and the resource we used was back in '93. I know that curriculum guides direct instruction. I know that, it's the curriculum guides that we follow, but I know that there are a lot of people who really adhere and they teach to the text.

I'm just wondering: Is there any vision to do curriculum different or development differently and to roll it out?

**MR. WARR:** I'll defer to Bob.

**MR. GARDINER:** As you're aware, the curriculum development process is typically a two- to three-year process that involves many committees of teachers from a variety of different backgrounds. To your point, yes, we are looking at – early stages – alternative methods for curriculum development and curriculum itself.

We've actually had a couple of good discussions with Alberta, who is moving forward with a program which basically digitizes the curriculum. Again, they've been exploring this option over the past couple of years and we have had a couple of discussions with Alberta in terms of how that's working out for them and if we can actually become part of that program. So, the short answer is, yes, we are looking at that.

**MR. PARDY:** To be commended for that initiative. I'm pleased to hear.

Salaries, 01, last year the department had an overrun of \$68,600.

**MR. WARR:** That's as a result of severance payout related to two positions.

**MR. PARDY:** Once we were on Program Development, if I looked at the active staff, am I correct in stating that of six potential program development specialists, and all were denoted P, that we have two currently? That there are four not filled?

**MR. WARR:** I'll defer to Bob.

**MR. GARDINER:** Basically, those positions are filled. The reason why it's showing up as zero dollars is because they are actually seconded teachers. So they are coming from teacher payroll as opposed to civil payroll. When that report is run, it runs off civil payroll. They're not captured in that particular extract, but they are filled positions.

**MR. PARDY:** Okay, good.

Thank you.

The Estimates last year spoke to a greater need for professional learning. I think the minister had stated that several times throughout. He referenced the new special services model. I think he might have referenced that sometimes it takes 10 years but this time it's going to be three years.

Where can this greater professional development be demonstrated in our budget? When he said it's usually 10 years and now it's three, where would that be found in this budget? And I'm sorry if I got you jumping around.

**MR. WARR:** I'll defer that to Bob.

**MR. GARDINER:** The reference to three years would be the phase in of the Education Action Plan. Again, we're in year one right now where we have 40 schools on phase one. Next year that will increase to 80 schools, and then year three would be full implementation.

There are a bunch of moving parts here in terms of professional learning, and it can be found throughout the Estimates document. In particular, 3.1.01 where we have substitute teachers, professional development – 3.1.01. There's almost a \$5.5 million budget, and there are a number of other spots through the Estimates document that would have portions of that.

Last year there was an extra \$1.9 million allocated for professional learning, and that's also in the budget this year. So they're over and above the normal professional development budget that would have occurred in previous years. There's an additional \$1.9 million that was in budget '18-'19.

**MR. PARDY:** Okay. And 3.1.01, Bob, you're saying in which category would that be subsumed in?

**MR. GARDINER:** Substitute Teachers - Professional Development.

**MR. PARDY:** Okay.

**MR. GARDINER:** Then there are other sprinkling of funds from Transportation and

Communications for travel for teachers to get the professional development and some substitute money as well, but that's the bulk of it there.

**MR. PARDY:** Good.

Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Okay. We're moving on.

Mr. Dinn.

**MR. J. DINN:** I just want to follow up with a few last questions going back to 3.1.01. I know it was mentioned there, it might have been 3.1.02 actually, with regard to the sale of property.

Is it possible to have a list of what those sales were, whether it was in the last year, since it started? It's certainly going back a couple of years. Anyway, I'm just curious as to what the value of the land was and the money received. If that's possible.

**MR. WARR:** We should be able to get that for you, Mr. Dinn.

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you very much, Sir.

With regard to leave, and I'm looking in terms of substitute teachers, professional development, and that's leave for professional development. I don't know if you're aware of it, but on June 3 a memo did go out from the NLTA to its members that apparently at a principals' meeting the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District announced its decision to discontinue the district's long-standing practice of approving additional professional development days during the school year over and above the minimum number of days provided in article 28 of the provincial collective agreement.

Has there been any discussion between the department and the district regarding this decision and how it would impact professional development for teachers?

**MR. WARR:** No, there hasn't. Obviously, the district would have to deal with that, but there has been no consultations between the department and the district.

**MR. J. DINN:** My concern was in terms of morale and the ability then to carry out the leave for the Education Action Plan is how that might impact that, there would be a concern there.

With regard to CDLI; CDLI is now in the hands of the English School District. Where would that be? Would that be in the Operating Grant, that line now?

**MR. WARR:** Yes.

**MR. J. DINN:** Has there been any indication of the amount that goes towards – that is allocated, budgeted for that?

I know that would be in the district, but at one time it would have been with the department. I'm trying to ascertain if the budget has increased, decreased or stayed the same.

**MR. WARR:** It's at the district's discretion.

**MR. J. DINN:** So there's no indication whether they've limited, reduced it or increased it?

**MR. WARR:** No.

**MR. J. DINN:** And the department would have no say in that. Okay.

I don't know if this is quite the right place to deal with it, School Board Operations, but I'm looking at junior kindergarten. We were going to debate it at some point but it's been postponed; a private Member's resolution on junior kindergarten.

I'm just curious, with the introduction of junior kindergarten, has there been consideration given to space? Where that would be, where that budget would come from. Would it be out of works, services and transportation, the district, or would it come from the department?

**MR. WARR:** I'll defer to Bob.

**MR. GARDINER:** With respect to junior kindergarten, as you know, the task force recommended a phase-in approach recognizing that the infrastructure would not necessarily exist in all places, and then tasked the department with doing some consultants and

producing a report this year with a plan for a phased-in approach for junior kindergarten.

So we haven't had the infrastructure discussion, as we are waiting for the release of their report on a plan for a phase in of junior kindergarten, similar to – as you know, Nova Scotia, Ontario and Northwest Territories have moved forward with a junior kindergarten plan and they all have a varying – while similar, but varying implementation plans. So we would expect our plan for a phase in of junior kindergarten to be released shortly.

**MR. J. DINN:** If I may follow up on that, Chair.

With regard to the phase in and the consultation report, is there – a few questions. First of all, are we looking at the phase in then to go with the schools that have space available that may be small schools or rural schools where their population is such that there's more space than students? I'm trying to get an idea.

Also, will that infrastructure be in place before the children actually end up in the place? I ask that last question because the phasing in of kindergarten was less than ideal, and certainly from the schools I visited that the public perception of how kindergarten was phased in was vastly different from the reality in the school system where there was a significant overcrowding, and space issues were there.

I found it worked well in some of the smaller schools outside where the class size was smaller but in large, urban schools and larger centres that was a significant challenge where you actually had doubling up of classes in some cases, two teachers in a classroom, but it didn't make it any less stressful. I'm just curious as to what the plans are, or is there an attempt as we phase in to use the existing space and make it work?

**MR. GARDINER:** That's a good point, Jim. And the task force recognized that the implementation of full-day kindergarten wasn't a phase in and some of the challenges that – while a good thing, but still some of the challenges that it presented, hence, they recommend a phase in of junior kindergarten.

In terms of what that would look like, again, the analysis is being done and we would expect a report shortly. So, I wouldn't want to prejudge what the report will recommend but we will have that report very shortly.

**MR. J. DINN:** If I may follow up on that again, with regard to the staffing of junior kindergarten, teachers, early childhood educators, how will that be done?

**MR. GARDINER:** Again, Jim, that's to be determined based on the report that will be released. Nova Scotia, Ontario and Northwest Territories have varying models in terms of, is it a combination of early childhood educators with a certified teacher in the same classroom or is it just a certified teacher. Again, in terms of the model that we will be looking at, that's to be determined.

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you.

My concern with it, of course, is I would support junior kindergarten and the adequate resourcing of it. My concern and the concern of a lot of teachers is what happened with full-day kindergarten, it was implemented, 142 new teaching positions were created, but 204-some odd teachers were removed from the rest of the system to pay for it.

I guess my concern here is that if indeed the resourcing of the junior kindergarten is going to come at the expense of the rest of the system as it did in 2016, I would recommend, please, that if you're going to phase this in that it come at it quickly resourced and not be on the back of the rest of the system.

With regard to 3.1.03 – actually, I'm going to move on here. I don't see anything right there.

And 3.1.04, and I think here part of the service has to do with the school supplies, distribution of textbooks and instructional materials. Part of that, I would assume then, would be for supplies such as full-day kindergarten, correct?

**MR. WARR:** Yes.

**MR. J. DINN:** Okay.

I'd be curious as to – I'm assuming now, I would like to believe, I would hope that all full-day kindergarten classes are fully resourced. Again, I go from my experiences, NLTA experience, that when the minister was stating the schools were fully resourced that, in fact, was not the case.

What about replacement? What are we looking at in terms of – we had supplies of some \$6.5 million. I'm assuming that's where that's coming from. I'm just curious as to how much of that budget line is for replacement of full-day kindergarten, furniture, wear and tear and such like.

**MR. WARR:** We don't have that information available to us, Mr. Dinn, but we'll get that for you.

**MR. J. DINN:** How much of that would be – I don't know if it would fit in here – for curriculum materials? If you might remember at the time, too, when I was president the minister made the comment that part of the strategy of the Department of Education was to have teachers scrounge for supplies. I know that in some of the books themselves they relied heavily on getting some rather complicated materials from parents and so on and so forth.

I'm just curious, I would like a breakdown for the science programs and so on and so forth as to what's being provided. If there's a breakdown of that material, please.

I would assume also, for the junior kindergarten when it does come in, that it would come from this budget as well. If and when junior kindergarten does come in, the money for supplies will come from under 3.1.04?

**MR. WARR:** Yes.

**MR. J. DINN:** Perfect.

**CHAIR:** Okay. The Member's time has expired.

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Just a reminder, if we could go line by line within the subheads, in the interest of time. We're due to finish up at 12; however, obviously, the department will accommodate

questions as best as possible but staff have to clear the House. Just if we could please keep that in mind.

Okay. Mr. Pardy.

**MR. PARDY:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

The new special education policy, 3.3.01, I guess is the category. Can you update us as to where things are with that new policy?

**MR. WARR:** I'll defer that to Eldred.

**MR. BARNES:** The new policy is being phased in. This past year, 40 schools – 39 from the NLESD and one from the CSFP, the francophone school board – participated. The new policy is in draft form. We're learning from the feedback that has been provided, and quite positive to date. We'll be expanding into the next 40 schools in the upcoming school year and then for full implementation in year three.

Alongside the policy, of course, is the additional resources and the support so that we separate – which was one of the recommendations of the Premier's Task Force – reading issues from special education issues. So, the infusion of the reading specialist at the school level is poised to support the responsive teaching and learning, and so are the TLAs by providing supports to the classroom teachers so they can spend more time providing direct instruction; in addition, the support for student engagement and literacy development through the library learning commons and the infusion of extra teacher librarians.

So that's all part of that and it's moving forward, a phased-in approach, and we'll be entering phase two in September.

**MR. PARDY:** Eldred, can I ask who provides the feedback? Feedback has been generally positive, but would it be the special education teachers?

**MR. BARNES:** Feedback comes from – yeah – all levels, because there's opportunity for the classroom teacher, there's opportunity for the school administration, there's opportunity for other personnel within the school, guidance counsellors and so on to provide the feedback.

So we anticipate the policy will go through two more iterations before it is finalized in response to the feedback.

**MR. PARDY:** Yes. How extensive is the feedback? You got 40 schools.

**MR. BARNES:** Forty schools this year providing –

**MR. PARDY:** Every school would supply the feedback?

**MR. BARNES:** Yes. That's correct.

**MR. PARDY:** Fantastic.

Thank you.

I know there was reference in last year's Estimates to the Health-in-All Policies, and I think it referenced the secretariat. The comment may have been made: it's not going to happen tomorrow but it's well underway. One year later, I'm just wondering, has it evolved as we would like it to have? Then, would it be the data you would look at to see how many children in Newfoundland and Labrador would have had access to –

**MR. WARR:** I'll defer that to Bob – Eldred, sorry.

**MR. BARNES:** If you're referring to Recommendation 19 that calls for a secretariat within Executive Council –

**MR. PARDY:** Yeah.

**MR. BARNES:** – that has been established, and what that is composed of is the assistant deputy ministers from across the Departments of Health and Community Services, CSSD, Children, Seniors and Social Development, Justice and Public Safety, Advanced Education, Skills and Labour and, of course, Education. They are monitoring the progress in areas that A, B, C, D and E that's outlined in Recommendation 19, primarily looking at the implementation of comprehensive school health and the support for it in the years to come as outlined by the timelines of the Education Action Plan.

Also moving forward with a new model for child health services, looking at the resources of both the school districts and Health and Community Services. In addition to that, it's resurrecting, revitalizing and renewing the ISSP process which is an individual student support plan within the coordination of services to children and youth. That's well underway.

Then, of course, monitoring the implementation of those recommendations within the *Towards Recovery* report on mental health, particularly those that are applicable to school-aged children. Part of that initiative, of course, is building an additional pillar into primary, elementary and hopefully kindergarten through grade 12 for time of social and emotional learning.

**MR. PARDY:** Eldred, is it possible to respond in a short – when you say revitalizing the ISSP process what do you mean? Is it a different process than what I would have been used to?

**MR. BARNES:** It will be hopefully a simpler process where the time hopefully will be targeted to less completion of forms, more direct intervention. That's the goal, of course, and the goal to make sure that there is timely intervention by the most appropriate individuals. It's not people showing up for meetings for the sake of showing up for meetings and records, it is who is required at this point in time and let's get the service as quickly as possible, which is part of looking at early intervention and the transitions part of Recommendation 1 and the response of teaching and learning policy.

**MR. PARDY:** Good news and it's comforting to hear. That's good.

If I may ask about a program that I'm not really familiar, it's the PASS program, the Positive Actions for Student Success. If I'm not mistaken, we have 12 of these SS teachers now engaged in the province. I'm assuming they don't come under – would they be under the teacher allocation formula that we discussed earlier because they would, in fact, be in the schools or would they not?

**MR. WARR:** I'll defer that to Bob.

**MR. GARDINER:** The past teachers – and you're right, there are 12 of them currently in

the system – while they would not be part of the teacher allocation recommendations from Shortall in 2008 they are currently part of the teacher allocation model. Each year the district would be allocated, in this case, 12 of those teachers.

**MR. PARDY:** I'm assuming the allocation of these teachers is based on need.

**MR. GARDINER:** That would be correct, at the discretion of the district in terms of where they would be deployed.

**MR. PARDY:** Okay.

Is there a cap of what the department is going to provide the school districts? Just say Leo Burke in Bishop's Falls is in need and feels that they ought to have one of these SS teachers. If they did, then they have to demonstrate the need.

**MR. GARDINER:** The short answer to that is it would be the district that determines where the SS teachers are placed. The department allocates 12 units specifically for the past program. That said, as part of the teacher allocation model and the allocation of teachers to the district, while we do adhere to class caps and ratios for guidance counsellors and other teaching professionals, there is an allocation to the district that they will use at their discretion, what I refer to as a needs-based allocation.

So, once we get past the allocation formula per se, which is based on ratios and caps and so on, then the district also has an allocation that it can use at its discretion, again, needs based. For example, currently the allocation – this is a good example – of guidance counsellors is one to 500. We would have allocated to the district a number of guidance counsellors, about 130, based on 65,000 students. However, if you look at the deployment of guidance counsellors, it's probably closer to 180 guidance counsellors currently in our system because the district sees fit that the needs are greater than the one to 500 in some cases, so they actually allocate additional resources to the guidance. They would have the latitude to again do the same thing for the PASS program.

**MR. PARDY:** I think there are two of those SS teachers deployed in Central but, again, that rests solely with the district.

**MR. GARDINER:** Correct.

**MR. PARDY:** Good. Thank you.

If I may go on to 3.4.01 – and I'm going to have to come back to this one because I'm looking at my time – we've reduced our CRTs administration from my time to current? I would assume the administration of CRTs now is much less than what it was back six or seven years ago. Would I be correct in that?

**MR. WARR:** I defer to Bob.

**MR. GARDINER:** Basically, two of the recommendations from the task force report were for us to cancel the CRTs as we know them today and do a review such that we implement new provincial assessments more in line with the Pan-Canadian Assessment Program and the Programme for International Student Assessment, PCAP and PISA. That review has happened. There were no CRTs or provincial assessments this year or last year, but we will be looking at implementing a new provincial assessment model starting next school year.

**MR. PARDY:** At the end of each division, again, chances are.

**MR. GARDINER:** This would be three, six and nine.

**MR. PARDY:** Good.

Thank you.

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

This same question I had might focus on 3.1.04, but it might take in a few others. It's not a specific line but I'm interested with regard to the social and emotional learning and how that will be implemented. What does it consist of in terms of, I'm assuming, in Curriculum Development and Supplies? Any indication on that?

**MR. WARR:** I'll defer to Eldred.



**MR. BARNES:** Yes, social and emotional learning gets at looking at not just the behaviours, but the skill development in the early years in the various areas of respectful relationships and building relationships, self-regulation, self-management and that whole area. That is at the heart of the social and emotional learning and what has taken place over the last couple of years within the Department of Education is taking a look at curriculum.

Right now, we're focused on the early years of K to three, going on to four to six, but looking at opportunities within the health curriculum and then across the curriculum to support so that we're not adding more content to the K-to-six curriculum, but simply shifting the focus of the content to be actually social and emotional learning. And building that as one of the pillars alongside numeracy and literacy in the early years.

That look at curriculum has been completed. Resources are in place to support the teacher in the skill development piece of it at the primary grades and now we're ready to launch within the phase-one schools. They have taken on the responsive teaching and learning policy this year and some other aspects, and next year they will begin at kindergarten and grade one to infuse social and emotional learning within the curriculum and across the curriculum.

Of course, there will be professional learning that was actually launched this spring. That will be supported throughout the school year in the 40 phase-one schools and then learning from that to be able to move to the broader supports in the next 40 schools and on to full implementation.

**MR. J. DINN:** If I may, just with regard to that, so we're looking at, as I understand, using cross-curriculum; in other words, where it can be slotted in as such. It's not a matter of a specific course on social and emotional learning.

**MR. BARNES:** No, it is not a specific course. The first line is to look at it within the health curriculum, but then to expand beyond the curriculum. Primarily, of course, it's about behaviours and the opportunities that exist not

only within the classroom, but school wide throughout the day.

**MR. J. DINN:** Supports of our teachers, as you mentioned, would be in the form of professional development?

**MR. BARNES:** Correct.

**MR. J. DINN:** Okay.

I think you mentioned that in relation to responsive teaching and that would be part of the –

**MR. BARNES:** Yes.

**MR. J. DINN:** How would that take place?

**MR. BARNES:** That will be part of the focus and that's why we say we had professional learning in the fall because we're not going to just move beyond phase one into phase two with professional learning for those teachers who took on the responsive teaching and learning policy last year. We'll be circling back with the phase-one schools again in the fall to look at the lessons learned from year one and then, of course, infusing social and emotional learning through the professional learning with the teachers and the phase-one schools within the kindergarten-grade one area.

**MR. J. DINN:** Okay, thank you.

As one principal pointed out to me with regard to responsive teaching, it works as long as you can make it work; in other words, trying to find the time for teachers to sit down and meet and come together on this. It's either if it doesn't take place during the school day it takes place after school when teachers are also trying to get ready for the next day as well.

The other part I noticed, too, when it came to dealing with – I think you referred to it as students who don't know how to self-regulate, haven't learned how to self-regulate. What I found is that when we look at class size, we also have to keep in mind class composition. Invariably, the problem was that you had a large class size with many needs, one teacher, and you had a student that would assault the teacher.

I think in some ways, too, when we're looking at that I hope that the promised teacher allocation will actually look into that. It's great to have. I fully support anything that's going to develop fully social and emotional learning, but I think in some ways if that's it, then we're going to be sadly disappointed by the results. I think you're going to have to look at it in terms of the supports in the classroom as well, and that means lower class sizes.

I'm actually going to move on to 3.2.01, Grants and Subsidies. Would you please describe what was done in 2018 and what is planned for 2019 and the dollar amount allocated for each?

**MR. WARR:** Under the Grants and Subsidies there was \$45,000 for skilled trades and technology to support skilled trades initiatives through Skills Canada; there was \$20,600 for the Intra-Provincial Travel Program; \$34,000 for the provincial immigration strategy; \$150,400 for the Cultural Connections strategy; \$6,000 for Excellence in Mathematics strategy; and \$237,900 for the Education Action Plan youth apprenticeship co-operative education.

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you.

The increase in 2019 – that may have already been said but you could humour me. That was an increase of \$125,000. Is that for the Education Action Plan?

**MR. WARR:** That's an increase for the youth apprenticeship co-op.

**MR. J. DINN:** For Intra-Provincial Travel, what did you say that was? How much?

**MR. WARR:** \$20,600.

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you.

3.2.02, with regard to Professional Services, an increase of \$5,000. Would that be for translation services for curriculum guides?

**MR. WARR:** \$3,000 was the number of required translations. The number of required translations was higher than anticipated. There was an increase of \$5,300 and that was change resulting from a zero-based budgeting exercise.

**MR. J. DINN:** The translation activity in 2018 you said it was what? And the plans for 2019, you said there was an increase?

**MR. WARR:** There was an increase; the number of required translations was higher than anticipated.

**MR. J. DINN:** Okay.

Would you be able to give me – I guess I'm trying to get an idea of the progress on the translation of curriculum guides and so on and so forth and teacher resources. I know in the past there's been a real problem where French immersion teachers have basically resorted to either use the English text or translating themselves. Have these services been taken care so that French immersion teachers have the resources they need.

**MR. WARR:** Yes.

**MR. J. DINN:** Those guides and textbooks are up to date? Thank you very much.

Federal revenue; what's the extra money for? The extra funds there in federal revenue?

**MR. WARR:** I'll defer that to Bob.

**MR. GARDINER:** Basically, the difference between the budget for '18-'19 and the revised is \$500,000. There is available to the province \$3.9 million of federal revenue through the official languages agreement with the federal government. We are eligible for \$3.9 million. That's broken down: \$2.6 million for French second language and \$1.3 million for French first language.

Over the past couple of years we've only budgeted revenue of \$3.4 million. There's always been a question whether we can match the federal money. Again, we budgeted \$3.4 million; we did match \$3.9 million, so the total revenue coming to the province this fiscal year or last fiscal year was \$3.9 million which is the maximum we can get. We've decided to budget the \$3.9 million revenue, noting that we can match the \$3.9 million with provincial funds for the next fiscal year.

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you very much.

I'm on to 3.3.01. Education Action Plan task force there – actually, I'll leave it for the next round and turn it over to my colleague.

**CHAIR:** Okay.

Mr. Pardy.

**MR. PARDY:** Thank you.

3.4.01, in Salaries, \$10,500 less budgeted this year compared to last year. I wonder if you can clarify that.

**MR. WARR:** It was related to step funding for multiple positions. There was a \$3,100 reclassification of the clerk position.

**MR. PARDY:** Am I correct to assume that the assessment we're going to use in schools is going to be somewhat mirroring the, say, PISA instrument? Would it be correct to assume that other provinces are doing the same? Or do they already have the instrument design that would mirror the PISA assessment, or are we pioneers in relation to this?

**MR. WARR:** I'll defer that to Bob.

**MR. GARDINER:** Other provinces have different assessment programs depending on which province, territory you look at. I would suggest that Alberta is probably the ones that have to move closer to the PISA PCAP framework, but we probably are one of the leading provinces right now in terms of assessment and mirroring the PCAP PISA framework and philosophy.

**MR. PARDY:** Just to reference the Fraser Institute, back in 2016, a little dated, but when they stated the status of our province in relation to other provinces we were, I think, third probably in Canada, our placing. When I hear that, I know the first thing you do is you probably analyze the way we do things, and maybe the instrument is one thing that will assist us.

Are there any other initiatives the department has done when, in fact, we would be finishing third in the PISA results nationally?

**MR. WARR:** I'll defer that to Bob.

**MR. GARDINER:** Again, one of the recommendations from the task force is for us to move to a provincial assessment that more closely mirrors PISA and PCAP. Over the years, there have been significant initiatives with respect to the curriculum, you know, reference the Excellence in Math Strategy that's been ongoing for a number of years.

Certainly, any part of the Education Action Plan related to student achievement, which most are, whether it's the response of teaching a learning policy or the addition of reading specialists, reading and math program specialists at the district level, and teaching and learning assistants, additional teaching and learning, teacher librarians. Certainly, all of those, we would suggest, would have a positive impact on student achievement and be reflective in subsequent administrations of PISA and PCAP.

**MR. PARDY:** Thank you.

I would also say I think when we do the teacher allocation next year, then we'll find that is of significant importance, too, when we look at the results of our students – there's no doubt the class size that they find themselves in.

You mentioned the LRT. Can you explain what the duties of the LRT would be? It might seem like a trivial basic question, but I often wonder sometimes how the LRT affects the teaching and learning within the classroom. Would there be PD to make sure they're utilized as fully as what our expectations would be? Where were, I guess, the roles? And I know we've increased the ratio or the allocation of LRTs.

I'm just wondering what it would be based on. Because me coming out of the system, I probably would not have had that earmarked as one that I would think would be one of the premier steps that I would think to improve the system, but I've been off track many times.

**MR. GARDINER:** You're correct. The current allocation of learning resource teachers, based on the allocation model, is one per thousand. There was a recommendation from the task force report to increase the learning resource teaching allocation. It didn't give a number or a ratio.

Over the three years – again, heading into year two next year – there will be an additional 39 teacher librarians in the system. So I think at the end of three years then it would be incumbent on the department to do the further analysis to determine what does an allocation of teacher librarians look like for the school districts and come up with a new model, as opposed to one per thousand, plus an additional for Education Action Plan or task force report. I think we need to meld all that into what it looks like from a more holistic perspective in terms of the allocation for teacher librarians.

There is professional learning available and delivered for teacher librarians at the district level; the same as with any group of teachers. There was significant effort by the district over the past year, year and a half, in terms of delineating the duties of teacher librarians – particularly in the phase one schools – in light of the increased allocation.

**MR. PARDY:** Am I correct, you said the school district, there was work in delineating the roles of these teachers?

**MR. GARDINER:** Correct.

**MR. PARDY:** Okay. So they have the ability to do that, not the department, but it will be the school district?

**MR. GARDINER:** They will be the employer, yes. So they would have the roles and responsibilities of the teacher librarians outlined.

**MR. PARDY:** Okay. Interesting.

So if I were to ask a question, would technology be involved in their role, then that would be the school district's determination as to whether it is?

**MR. GARDINER:** Technically – the department would have fairly high level roles and responsibilities that would outline then what the district would further enhance in terms of on the ground deployment of these individuals. And I would suggest that, yes, technology certainly would be part of their duties.

**MR. PARDY:** Yes, good.

I know the Child and Youth Advocate had stated – I think may have stated that we have chronic absenteeism in our schools. I'm not sure what year they had cited. I think 10 per cent of the population was missing at a given year, which equated to 6,600 students. I'm not sure if I'm overly correct. I would say that is an alarming statistic.

I know we had talked about the SSTs, and I know that is a step even when I asked. I think I'm correct in assuming that they gave the department one year they want to see as to what the action would be. Is it possible that you can share that with us? I mentioned the SST, but what other initiatives that we look at to curb the chronic absenteeism in our schools that the department would be looking at?

**MR. WARR:** I'll defer that to Bob.

**MR. GARDINER:** The Child and Youth Advocate did put out a report with respect to absenteeism and she did indicate that approximately 10 per cent of the students are missing a minimum of 10 per cent of the days in a school year. She did have four recommendations there, recognizing that this is not just an education issue. It's one that crosses lines with Health and Community Services, Justice and Public Safety, as well as Children, Seniors and Social Development.

There is an active working group now looking at putting together a plan to address the four recommendations, and she suggested that we have a report back to her or a plan done by December – either December or January coming. That will be done.

One of the biggest things, of course, is accurate data. So we are moving towards a provincial system with respect to PowerSchool that will provide us better data and allow us to track attendance. There's a committee that put together a working group now, put together with representation from the departments that I just mentioned, as well as some community groups such as Strive and the Murphy Centre, having the discussion on absenteeism and what can be done to keep students in school, recognizing obviously the importance of that.

**MR. PARDY:** Good. Just one follow-up question. Thank you very much for that.

The active working group, I am assuming is cross agency?

**MR. GARDINER:** Yes.

**MR. PARDY:** Yes. Good.

Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Mr. Dinn.

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I don't know if I heard it correctly; with regard to – is it the intent then of the Education Action Plan, one of the intents is to improve our province's standing on PISA and, as such, as PISA. How much does PISA play into this Education Action Plan?

I know, in the Way Forward sessions I attended, that it was certainly brought up about Newfoundland's poor performance in relation to these national, international tests.

**MR. WARR:** I'll defer to Bob.

**MR. GARDINER:** I wouldn't even say that it's just the intent of the Education Action Plan but certainly the intent of any initiative – and, of course, the Education Action Plan being the primary initiative for the department over the next number of years. But any of these initiatives, the primary intent is to improve student achievement and, as such, we would expect to see that reflected in PISA and PCAP results but certainly everything we do needs to be around student achievement and improving student achievement.

**MR. J. DINN:** Okay.

Here's my question: In the beginning, when we look at achievement in relation to stats like this, would there be a concern then that as the measure of success is going to be the performance of our students on a PISA, on an international test that's designed primarily by an economic organization that has no connection with the cultural background of this province – there actually have been jurisdictions which

have opted out of these tests. They're actually more harmful than they are good.

But my fear is that as I saw in the initial stages when *The Way Forward* was put forward and the Education Action Plan was about our performance on tests, on these international tests that, to me, would be problematic. I'm just wondering if we are wasting valuable resources in chasing after a result, again on a test created by an economic organization which is not an educational organization, it's an economic organization.

I'm just looking at valuable and scarce resources.

**MR. GARDINER:** First of all, Jim, most of the funding for PISA is provided by the federal government through ESDC. I would suggest that we wouldn't be putting all our eggs in the PISA basket, so to speak. We would expect to see an increase in performance on PISA and PCAP as a result of investments in education, but again that wouldn't be our only measuring stick.

While we always talk about, and rightly so, the fact that when we look at PISA results where Newfoundland and Labrador stands, it's varied over the past number of administrations to middle of the pack, towards the bottom of the pack; but something that should not be lost on us all is the fact that when you rank Newfoundland and Labrador up against the other 50-plus participating countries, if we were a country unto our selves, in terms of ranking, we would be in the top 10 – all other provinces aside.

Internationally, as a province, we rank fairly high. In a Canadian context, again, depending on the administration, we're middle of the pack, or we could be below the Canadian average. But internationally, we rank fairly well. It's just that in the Canadian context we don't rank as favourable with other provinces and territories.

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you, Mr. Gardiner.

That's my point. I think the whole notion of ranking has actually probably done more to damage education than help it. And if that's what we're chasing after, we're not going to improve the educational outcomes for our students.

In 3.3.01, what's the progress on the development of a new special education policy, as per the task force recommendation? Now, you may have touched on some of this already.

**MR. WARR:** I'll defer that to Eldred.

**MR. BARNES:** The new policy that's being phased in is referred to now as responsive teaching and learning. And within that there's the range from step one, all students in a regular classroom, to various levels of targeted intervention at level two, and then, of course, substantial intervention at level three. Therefore, you catch the range of all students in the 85 per cent that usually are within the regular classroom, to the most complex needs that would require substantial interventions and, quite likely, ISSPs and that regard.

That policy has been drafted. That policy is working its way through the phase-in. And we hope to have all pieces of it – because we're already addressing, shall we say, this whole issue of all students in the classroom, versus pull out, versus targeted interventions inside and outside the classroom – that whole area. But there are still the pieces we are injecting now, in terms of a renewed ISSP process, and in addressing the partial days and so on. So it'll take us the next year to two years to finalize all aspects of that policy.

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you.

In relation to that, and going back to an earlier comment with the social and emotional learning, has there been any kind of consideration given to working with Dr. Dorothy Vaandering of the restorative justice in working that through the curriculum?

**MR. BARNES:** Absolutely. We've had multiple meetings with Dr. Vaandering and restorative justice. That is a significant feature of social and emotional learning. And much by way of social and emotional learning can be accomplished within that context.

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you very much.

Still with 3.3.01, what is the progress on implementing closer co-operation between Health and Education departments and maybe

I'd even extend that to other departments, even Justice? I'm looking at implementing the closer co-operation between certainly Health and Education.

**MR. WARR:** Thank you.

I'll defer that to Bob.

**MR. GARDINER:** Certainly, in my opinion, there has been significant progress made over the past couple of years with the interdepartmental co-operation between Health and Community Services, Children, Seniors and Social Development, JPS, Indigenous Affairs.

To that point, Dr. Alice Collins, the chair of the Premier's task force report, before she actually issued a report had two meetings with the deputy ministers from those departments. Some of her concerns were that many of these recommendations, particularly those in Chapter 1 and 2 cross over many departments. She wanted to have that discussion to get some ideas of how can we make sure that these recommendations that will be made will get implemented and they get the traction in all departments and are not simply seen as Education recommendations.

Hence, one of her recommendations was the hiring of an education expert; Eldred Barnes in this case. The recommendation was that person would report directly to the Clerk, not to the Deputy Minister of Education but to the Clerk. The rationale behind that was the fact that this is a multi-department initiative and we need the person that can actually reach out to all the departments. So while Eldred is housed in the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, he actually reports to the Clerk.

The other recommendation that was made was the establishment of a secretariat within Executive Council. On that secretariat are the ADMs from the departments I just referenced, again to give the recommendations the clout and the priority that they need throughout multiple department that I've referenced.

A good point – there was also the establishment of a steering committee that includes the deputy ministers of the Departments of CSSD, AESL, Health and Community Services, myself, the

two CEOs of the school districts as well as the executive director from the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association. Again, emphasizing the fact that this is cross-departmental and priority for more than just Education and Early Childhood Development.

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you very much.

That is encouraging, because I would suggest that was one of the most challenging and frustrating aspects of anyone working in the education field, was getting co-operation even just from the other departments, especially Health. You would consume enormous amounts of time on a number of school councillors just to set up an appointment.

With regard to Professional Services in 3.3.01, I notice that it declined significantly in the revised budget for 2018-2019. Apologies if you've already answered that but I'm just curious as to why?

**MR. WARR:** This budget was to support summer work for EAP. This work did not occur and savings were realized as a result.

**MR. J. DINN:** Okay, thank you.

**CHAIR:** The Member's time has expired.

Again, just a reminder that the staff will be preparing the House soon, so if we could move along.

Did you have any more questions for this section?

**MR. PARDY:** May I just a couple of more?

**CHAIR:** Okay.

**MR. PARDY:** With the Opposition's permission.

**CHAIR:** Oh yes.

**MR. PARDY:** Early Learning and Child Development, 3.5.01, a little over a half a million – \$600,000 – less spent, compared to what was budgeted last year. Then the budget for this year remains the same.

**MR. WARR:** You're in the Salaries?

**MR. PARDY:** Yes.

**MR. WARR:** Some regular positions have had vacancies but are expected to be filled. Some positions are funded through the federal allocation but not yet filled. Four of these positions are regional positions relating to the Quality Improvement Grant program. The policy related to this program is being developed. Once the policy is finalized, these positions will be filled. Two other positions are vacant, pending the position description, development and approval.

**MR. PARDY:** Thank you.

There is a policy now with those early childhood educators that are working in these daycare centres. I think they must have now Level 1, Level 2 training. We put in a grandfathering period where I think it might be okay without the Level 1, 2?

Can someone just give me an explanation in a nutshell on that? The genesis of my question is that my understanding would be there are some daycare centres, apparently, that would struggle with getting staff. Even though the process of getting Level 1, Level 2, having a higher quality of daycare attendant in there, is noble and is sound, if it's true in the two centres that I heard, they figure that they'll have difficulty with getting the staff.

Maybe I've already covered the initiative. As basic as the question would be, can someone just share in a nutshell what that program is all about, the Level 1, Level 2 concept, and whether we've had any indication that there would be issues with filling staff after the full implementation?

**MR. WARR:** I'll defer that to Mary.

**MR. PARDY:** Awfully long question, sorry.

**MS. GOSS-PROWSE:** This was a legislative change in July of 2017. In efforts similar to what happened with teachers a much longer time ago, we're trying to increase the qualifications across the board of people working in child care services.

There is a requirement that people maintain a trainee certification in which they have five years to complete a one-year post-secondary program in ECE to get their Level 1. That program is available completely online with the exception of one field placement that they may have to do at the college program. We provide bursaries for the course work as well bursaries for that placement.

The grandfathering you were speaking about actually applies to people who had been certified for at least 10 years prior to the implementation of the new act. Anyone who held entry-level certification without a post-secondary credential, who held that certification for 10 years prior to July of 2017, could in fact continue with their trainee certification as long as this act is in place. Basically, they'd do professional development instead of course work. Anyone who had less than the 10 years is now required to show course work every year in order to renew their certification.

We did understand that there would be a bit of a backlog at the college because of the numbers that would be coming forward to register, so we did also implement a period of an additional two years where the person only needed the PD and show us that they had registered at the college but were unable to start yet.

**MR. PARDY:** Mary, do we envision any problems with the transition to this because it's all good. I'm just wondering whether sometimes in the transition we might find some rough spots where they can't find the staff yet.

**MS. GOSS-PROWSE:** Potentially and there are abilities to have people waived as long as they've made an effort. In terms of the grandfathering piece, if they didn't make that 10-year cut-off, they do have to register at the college and continue that way.

**MR. PARDY:** Okay.

Good. Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Okay, thank you.

Do you have any further questions?

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you. Two.

Just to 3.3.01, Grants and Subsidies. Is this assistive technology related to ISSPs moved here from Professional Services?

**MR. WARR:** Are you talking about the \$20,000?

**MR. J. DINN:** Yes.

**MR. WARR:** That's an ISSP initiative.

**MR. J. DINN:** For assistive technology?

**MR. WARR:** That would be part of it, yes.

**MR. J. DINN:** Part of it. Okay.

Thank you very much.

3.3.02, Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority, or APSEA. I'm curious as to what activities did APSEA support for deaf, hard of hearing and visually impaired students in 2018?

**MR. WARR:** I'll defer that to Bob.

**MR. GARDINER:** Our contribution to APSEA is based on the programming that we get from APSEA, unlike other provinces. So our contribution is actually on a per-capita basis, less than Nova Scotia, PEI and New Brunswick, primarily because in this province the school district is the employer of the DHH, deaf and hard of hearing itinerants, as well as the blind and visually impaired itinerants.

Whereas in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick they're actually employees of APSEA, so obviously the contribution from New Brunswick and Nova Scotia is a higher per capita than ours. Many of the staff here, though, do avail of professional development through APSEA, particularly the blind and visually impaired.

I don't know if it answers your question, Mr. Dinn.

**MR. J. DINN:** I'm not sure because I had asked, more or less: What does APSEA support for the deaf? What activities do they support for the deaf, hard of hearing and visually impaired students?



**MR. GARDINER:** I can certainly get more information for you on that, not a problem.

**MR. J. DINN:** Perfect, I appreciate that.

Thank you so much.

3.4.01, federal revenue – was this revenue for the national autism prevalence surveillance project?

**MR. WARR:** Yes, it is.

**MR. J. DINN:** Is the project completed?

**MR. WARR:** It's a pilot project that ended, yes.

**MR. J. DINN:** It has ended?

**MR. WARR:** Yes.

**MR. J. DINN:** Are there any preliminary results? Is it possible to get them?

**MR. WARR:** We haven't seen anything as of yet.

**MR. J. DINN:** Okay.

Any expectation as to when?

**MR. WARR:** We'll hopefully get it shortly.

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you very much.

Subhead 3.5.01, is it possible to get a detailed breakdown of the components of the child care program including expenditures in 2018 and budgets for 2019?

**MR. WARR:** Yes, no problem.

**MR. J. DINN:** Okay.

With regard to the federal-provincial bilateral agreement on child care, how are the federal funds being spent?

**MR. WARR:** We will include it with the other information that we have to get for you, Jim.

**MR. J. DINN:** Okay.

I give you the same examples here. For example, details on the new money for ECE worker bursaries and professional learning grants and what proportion of ECE workers who do not have at least level one certification. So that's I guess part of how that money is being spent. With regard to Professional Services, please if you would, identify the professional services here and why there is a reduction of \$55,000 for 2019.

**MR. WARR:** The implementation of professional learning institute facilitating emergent early literacy skills, birth to age six will not be held going forward. These savings are reflected in the 2019-2020 budget.

**MR. J. DINN:** Okay.

**MR. WARR:** And there's a decrease of \$25,000 which is funding for the upgrade of a mobile app. The app was not developed and therefore the budget for upgrading the app will not be needed in 2019-2020.

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you very much.

Allowances and Assistance, is it possible to have a breakdown of funding here, how much for the parent subsidy, the ECE workers' supplement, bursaries and so on and so forth?

**MR. WARR:** Yes.

**MR. J. DINN:** Excellent.

What was the overrun in 2018 and the overrun this year? That may have been already answered and apologies if it has.

**MR. WARR:** Under the Allowances –?

**MR. J. DINN:** Yes. What was the overrun and the additional funds for 2019?

**MR. WARR:** The overrun was predominantly application-based programs under the child care subsidy – early learning and child care supplement bursaries. They are somewhat unpredictable in nature, and less applications than anticipated.

**MR. J. DINN:** And that's the same for this year as well – the same rationale or reason?

**MR. WARR:** Yes. It would be an increase in funding related to ELCC supplement, which was an incremental dollar per hour for qualified ECEs, slightly offset by a reduction in funding for CCS subsidy program of \$61,000.

**MR. J. DINN:** Makes sense.

So how many families receive a full parent subsidy and a partial subsidy? Is it possible to get that information, or do you have that there?

**MR. WARR:** We'll get that information for you.

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you very much.

How many families were added when the income ceiling increased last year? Is it possible to have that?

**MR. WARR:** We'll do the same, yes.

**MR. J. DINN:** Perfect.

We'd also like a copy of the new subsidy calculation guide. Do you have that available or handy?

**MR. WARR:** Defer to Mary.

**MS. GOSS-PROWSE:** The new calculation guide? I'm not sure what you're referring to.

**MR. J. DINN:** How do you determine the subsidy?

**MS. GOSS-PROWSE:** Oh. Yes, absolutely, we can get that for you.

**MR. J. DINN:** Perfect.

And is it possible to find out how many ECE workers are receiving this supplement?

**MS. GOSS-PROWSE:** It's usually between 700 and 750 per quarter. It's a quarterly application process. And it does range, because people do work differently during the summer, et cetera, et cetera.

**MR. J. DINN:** Excellent.

With regard to Grants and Subsidies, could we have a detailed breakdown of these grants and programs and expenditures on each for 2019, such as operating grants, quality improvement and inclusion grants, Daybreak, Association of Early Childhood Educators and Family Resource Centres?

**MR. WARR:** Yes.

**MR. J. DINN:** And I realize you may not have that with you right at this point in time.

**MR. WARR:** I have it here if you ...?

**MR. J. DINN:** Oh, go right ahead, please.

**MR. WARR:** Under Grants and Subsidies there are early learning grants; grants to support the early literacy and numeracy projects, birth to three initiatives; grants to community organizations for professional learning partnership to implement early childhood learning framework for early childhood educators, early childhood development initiatives; grants to schools, districts, to implement the KinderStart; provision for teacher leave for professional learning; KinderStart and early evaluation; birth to three initiatives: Power of Play, Play and Learn Week; provides funding for a number of grants related to equipment, capacity, inclusion and offering grants for licensed approved child care services: Daybreak child care centre; provide funding for the operation and development of family resources centres, family resource centres provide a Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Early Learning and Child Care Agreement.

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you.

I assume then the reductions in those years has to do with it's application based.

Okay, thank you.

Is it possible to have the most recent statistics on the number of private centres, community-based, not-for-profit centres, family daycare homes and child care spaces, and would they break down by region, if possible?

**MR. WARR:** Yes

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you.

Finally, 3.6.01, Grants and Subsidies. The extra funds in 2018, is that because it was application based and there was an increase in the applications?

**OFFICIAL:** Different altogether.

**MR. WARR:** Yes, that's the library. Severance payout for management and non-bargaining, non-management staff was \$50,000 approved to fund repairs on the Placentia Library building, partially offset by \$230,000 in savings associated with lease of new CBS library which was not completed in '18-'19.

**MR. J. DINN:** Thank you.

Finally, is the department working with the board to address the resource needs of libraries in the future – that's my last question – for example, the need for more librarians, equipment and technicians?

**MR. WARR:** Yes.

**MR. J. DINN:** That's it for me, Madam Chair.

**CHAIR:** Okay.

Well, thank you so much. It's been a productive morning to say the least.

I think now we will call for the vote if there are no further questions.

**MR. J. DINN:** Madam Chair, before I go, I would like to say thank you very much to the staff, and to the minister and his staff for taking the time to answer the questions. It's a long morning, I realize, but certainly I appreciate that he is new to the position, so he did well.

Thank you very much.

**MR. WARR:** Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Okay, all right.

Clerk.

**CLERK:** Subheads 3.1.01 to 3.6.01.

**CHAIR:** Shall 3.1.01 to 3.6.01 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, subheads 3.1.01 through 3.6.01 carried.

**CLERK:** Subhead 1.1.01 to 3.6.01 inclusive.

**CHAIR:** Shall 1.1.01 to 3.6.01 inclusive.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, subheads 1.1.01 through 3.6.01 carried.

**CLERK:** The total.

**CHAIR:** Shall the totals carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, total heads, carried.

**CHAIR:** Shall I report the Estimates of Education and Early Childhood Development carried?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, Estimates of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development carried.

**CHAIR:** Also, I'll need a mover to carry the minutes from the Department of Health and Community Services from the last Estimates.

Mover, MHA Bennett.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, minutes adopted as circulated.

**CHAIR:** The next Estimates will be scheduled tonight in the Chamber for 6 p.m.

Thank you.

On motion, the Committee adjourned.