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

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Department of Education

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Honourable Ross Wiseman, MHA

## **SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Department of Education

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Chair: Glenn Littlejohn, MHA

Vice-Chair: Eddie Joyce, MHA

Members:

Tony Cornect, MHA  
Dan Crummell, MHA  
Glen Little, MHA  
Andrew Parsons, MHA  
Gerry Rogers, MHA

Clerk of the Committee: Kimberley Hammond

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Appearing:

### **Department of Education**

Hon. Clyde Jackman, MHA, Minister  
Sheldon Antle, Executive Assistant to Minister  
Brad Clarke, Director of Program Development  
Ingrid Clarke, Assistant Deputy Minister, Infrastructure  
Brian Evans, Director of Information Management & Special Projects  
Heather May, Director of Communications  
Tracy Stamp, Manager, Compliance & Financial Reporting  
Don Stapleton, Departmental Comptroller  
Janet Vivian-Walsh, Deputy Minister  
Renee Williams, Director, Policy, Planning and Accountability

### **Also Present**

Jim Bennett, MHA  
Dale Kirby, MHA  
Kevin Pollard, MHA  
Kim Ploughman, Researcher, Official Opposition Office  
Susan Williams, Researcher, NDP Office

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Jim Bennett, MHA for St. Barbe, substitutes for Andrew Parsons, MHA for Burgeo – La Poile.

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Dale Kirby, MHA for St. John’s North, substitutes for Gerry Rogers, MHA for St. John’s Centre.

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Kevin Pollard, MHA for Baie Verte – Springdale, substitutes for Dan Crummell, MHA for St. John’s West.

The Committee met at 9:00 a.m. in the Assembly Chamber.

**CHAIR (Littlejohn):** Good morning, everyone.

First of all, I would like to welcome you, Minister, and your staff to the Estimates for Education this morning. Without any further ado, I am going to ask members representing our Committee this morning to introduce themselves. We do have some substitutions, but those substitutions have been duly noted at the Table

I am going to ask, if you would, Jim, to introduce yourself, please.

**MR. BENNETT:** Jim Bennett, MHA for St. Barbe, and I am the Education critic.

**MS PLOUGHMAN:** Kim Ploughman, Researcher, Liberal Opposition Office.

**MR. KIRBY:** Dale Kirby, MHA for the District of St. John’s North, Advocate for Special Education.

**MS WILLIAMS:** Susan Williams, Researcher, NDP Opposition Office.

**MR. CORNECT:** Tony Cornect, from the great cultural District of Port au Port.

**MR. POLLARD:** Kevin Pollard, MHA, Baie Verte – Springdale district.

**MR. LITTLE:** Glen Little, MHA for the beautiful District of Bonavista South.

**CHAIR:** Glenn Littlejohn, MHA for Port de Grave, and Chair of the Estimates Committee for Social Services.

Minister, if you would like to take the time to introduce yourself and your staff, that would be appreciated.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes, I will introduce my staff.

Right to my left here is Janet Vivian-Walsh, she is the Deputy Minister. Janet has only been in the job for a few months. Next is Don Stapleton, Departmental Comptroller. Ingrid Clarke, the Assistant Deputy Minister for Infrastructure. She is the one who is in charge of all new schools construction and the work that goes on with repair and maintenance.

Behind me right here is Heather May. She is the Director of Communications. Next to Heather is Sheldon Antle. Sheldon is my Executive Assistant. Next to Sheldon is Brad Clarke, Director of Program Development. Next to Brad is Brian Evans, he is the Director of Information Management and Special Projects.

In the back row we have Tracy Stamp. She is the Manager of Compliance and Financial Reporting, and Renee Williams, Director of Policy, Planning and Accountability.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Minister.

As the morning goes along, Minister, you have fifteen minutes for opening remarks. Then we will pass it to Mr. Bennett. Mr. Bennett will have fifteen minutes for questions or comments. Then we will go to Mr. Kirby and then we will rotate on a ten-minute basis between anyone who wishes to speak on behalf of the Committee. If that is okay with everybody, we will get ready to get started.

Minister, your opening remarks please.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Thank you.

I think –

**CHAIR:** Oh, I am sorry, Minister, just one formality.

I ask the Clerk to call the first subhead, please.

**CLERK:** 1.1.01.

**CHAIR:** Subhead 1.1.01.

The minister, please.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Okay.

I think you know that this government has made unprecedented investments in education, with the overall budget increasing by 42 per cent since 2003. This increased investment has occurred despite the fact that student enrolment has decreased by almost 14,000 students, or 17 per cent over that same period.

As you may also know, all departments, school boards, and agencies were asked to find efficiencies and cost-cutting measures to help address a projected provincial Budget deficit this year. As a department, we entered into this exercise on the premise that front line delivery of services to students and classrooms would not be negatively impacted. The fact that we have seen just a 3 per cent decrease in the overall budget from last year will tell you that this government took this challenge very seriously. We have taken measures to reduce costs.

For example, the provincial government is combining the four existing English school boards into one provincial board, with one CEO and senior executive responsible for corporate and operational services located at headquarters in St. John's. Regional offices will remain in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Corner Brook, and Gander. I have said on several occasions, a strong educational component is the critical piece to these offices. The difference is that these regional offices will be staffed primarily with executive and management who will be the day-to-day decision makers on issues related to educational programming.

Again, it is the corporate administration and the executive structures which are being realigned.

I cannot stress enough that educational programming services provided to students and their families, and to the staff, will continue to be offered in the regional areas, as they have been in the past.

I must also say this, even if there had been no fiscal challenge this year, it would have made sense to examine the school board structures we have in place to serve the much smaller student population. I have said it, 14,000 less students, and a 17 per cent reduction since the last reorganization.

Meanwhile, the budget also provides \$537 million. Almost 64 per cent of the entire Department of Education budget is for teacher salaries, substitute teachers, student assistants, professional development, and various services for teachers.

Our commitment this year was to ensure there would be no change in the allocation of regular classroom teachers who deliver the required curriculum. There would be no change to allocations to special education. No changes to direct supports for students with special needs, despite what we have heard, and that Newfoundland and Labrador would continue to have the best pupil-teacher ratio of any province in Canada. I repeat, the best, and we have done that.

We have retained many teachers in the system over the years, which the allocation formula would have removed. We have even added teachers to the system in some years, despite enrolment decline. In fact, in September of 2013, there will still be about 265 more teachers out there relative to student enrolment than there were five years ago. I think that speaks to our commitment to teachers and to teaching services.

Meanwhile, over the course of the last ten budgets this government has taken an aggressive approach to addressing school infrastructure throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. That commitment continues, with almost \$102 million provided in Budget 2013 for new and ongoing school infrastructure projects to meet

the immediate and the long-term demands throughout the Province.

Again, there have been some reductions in this budget, but we are justifiably proud of the investments we have made over the years, and continue to make to improve opportunities for our students. For example, we have eliminated standard school fees. That is at a cost of \$50 million since 2006. We have extended the provision of free textbooks to all K-12 public school students, with an investment of over \$20 million since 2007. We have kept class sizes at K-9, Kindergarten to Grade 9, reducing the average class size at this level from 20.7 in 2004 to eighteen. This initiative alone puts an additional 180 teachers into the system each year.

We have invested in new curriculum, new technology, and skilled trades programming designed to meet the needs of our students in the twenty-first century. We continue to invest in music, theatre, and visual arts. We are also entering into the third year of implementation of the Province's Early Childhood Learning Strategy, Learning from the Start, which is designed to enhance early learning opportunities for young children and their families so that by the time they get to school they will be ready and eager to learn.

Our overall efforts are paying off. In the mid-1990s, Newfoundland and Labrador had the highest dropout rate in Canada at 16.7 per cent. Today we have the second lowest: 7.4 per cent. We must be doing something right. Even as we head into a period of some restraint, we will continue to direct the maximum funding available into supports for our children and into our schools for the benefit of our students and their families.

Thank you, Sir.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Minister.

Jim.

**MR. BENNETT:** Yes, Minister, shortly after this government took office, it reduced the number of school boards to five boards.

Can you tell me, what was the objective? What was government trying to do by reducing it to that number of boards?

**MR. JACKMAN:** I do not know if I can speak to what they were doing at that particular time, but at this particular time we have, as I have said, 14,000 less students. We have seen a 17 per cent reduction. So when we look at restructuring, the question comes down to: Do we invest in the students or do we invest in an administrative structure that we think can be revamped and still deliver the quality services?

If I just use the example of payroll, surely from a financial perspective and the finances of these individual boards that are in place right now, we can do that from one particular spot. That is what it comes down to, whether we invest in management or we invest in students. We decided to invest in students.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, are you saying you do not know why we went down to five boards, or nobody in the department knows why, or you do not want to say – because you did not answer the question.

**MR. JACKMAN:** I do not know if anybody in the department knows. If not, I can just –

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** I think it is exactly as the minister said; it is to look at how much of an administrative structure is needed to support the number of students. At the time we were down, as the minister said, we are down 14,000 more from that time in 2004. It is very much a matter of management versus the supports for students, would be the reason.

**MR. BENNETT:** I am asking about the original downsizing, not the current downsizing. What was the rationale for that downsizing eight or nine years ago? Is there a written objective? Did anybody know what they were doing?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Does anyone know what they are doing?

**MR. BENNETT:** Did anybody know what they were doing and did they write it down?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Jim, I would assume that they would have known what they were doing and, as some of the stats that I have read out to you, I would say they were successful in what they did. We have reduced our dropout rate. We see our students who are performing better than ever before. We have implemented criterion reference testing and such to inform and instruct as to how we deliver programs in the school. I would think whoever they were at the time, they made good decisions.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, do I understand from your answer that nobody wrote down why there were doing so nobody can remember why they did it, or is it just off the cuff? I mean, are we flying by the seat of our pants here or do we actually have a written strategy that we pursue in this department?

**MR. JACKMAN:** There is one strategy that I pursue entirely when it comes to education. That is improved student achievement. The number one aim of our department and any board should be the improvement of student achievement. Our investments in this going forward is to ensure that the cap sizes stay in place, that we provide the services that we are presently providing for special needs students, and we will continue down that road.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, what I am still going back to: Was there a written plan when the school boards were reduced down to four English and one French? Is there any way that we can compare what was the plan and what was the result?

**MR. JACKMAN:** We have been into discussions with people who were involved in the previous restructuring. We are looking right now at putting a transition team in place, records are still on file from the last reorganization, and those will all be considered as we move through this process. All the details around this are still

being worked out, as we will put in place a transition team. Government will not be accused of controlling the agenda; there is a transition team that we will put in place to carry this out.

**MR. BENNETT:** So do I understand that nobody came with you today who has any knowledge of the plan that was put in place when we reduced the boards the last time?

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** We have a plan for September 2013 and we are moving along that plan, Mr. Bennett. The one from 2004 was very similar in its purpose – I am trying to answer your question as to what was the reason why it went and it was reduced. It was very much as to look at where were the efficiencies to be had, what were redundant services, and to try to concentrate specifically on the school-based and student-based services, and that would be the philosophy of our plan for September 2013.

It would still be that plan and we have different pieces of that plan, so I am not sure if I am missing your point, but it would very much be of taking the previous broads which went from eleven down to five and now we are going from four English to one, so we will have one English and one French. It would be very much to take what is a redundant service, what is needed in every single one of those locations, and what is needed in perhaps one location and handle for the whole Province, and that is from a management point of view.

Then when we come to school-based services and direct student services, that is the piece we wanted to retain and keep. That would be the philosophy of the plan. We do have different pieces of the plan, as the minister has said, which would be the transition committee. We have organizational charts and things like that which are very much based on what the services would be. So unless I am missing something, you can ask specifically.

**MR. BENNETT:** I do not know if you are missing or refusing to answer the question, because the question is –

**MR. JACKMAN:** We are not refusing. If you can get me the question and I can clearly understand what you are asking, I will provide you with an answer.

**MR. BENNETT:** Was there a written plan prepared when the school boards were reduced the last time around with four English and one French? Was there actually a written plan?

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** There was not something called this is the plan or this is what we are going to try to do, but there are very specific direction, time lines, and the reason was to take as much as we could from the management and put the monies and resources towards a consistent approach and combine where we could.

**MR. JACKMAN:** So, from that perspective, there was a plan.

**CHAIR:** Just for clarification, before you speak can you make sure that you announce yourself so Hansard picks up the conversation. I thank you very much.

Minister, sorry to cut you off.

**MR. JACKMAN:** No, as the deputy has pointed out, the records that we have on file clearly indicate time frames and the implementation. I go back to my previous statement; the things that we are going to do in education are for the betterment of the student population. That front line service is what is of most critical importance.

**MR. BENNETT:** Nobody drafted a written plan when the school boards were reduced last time, is that correct?

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** I think there was a plan. It is a matter of whether you call it – this is a documented plan. There is certainly evidence of all the things that were done and a very detailed plan was there, a very detailed plan.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, are you able to produce that to the Estimates Committee?

**MR. JACKMAN:** We will go through the records and put something together, yes.

**MR. BENNETT:** If we know what was the plan – and only by knowing that can we measure what was the outcome to determine if it was successful or not. How else would we know? If we do not know where we started from and where we intended to go, how do we know what we have?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Tell me what you would define as how would you determine the success?

**MR. BENNETT:** You would need to know where you started. If you do not know where you started from you cannot calculate if you are successful or not.

**MR. JACKMAN:** What would you use as a criteria to determine success?

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, I am simply asking for the plan and you cannot produce it. You have not produced it.

**MR. JACKMAN:** You –

**MR. BENNETT:** You have not produced it, Minister.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Answer for me though, what would be the one determinant that you would use as success of the reorganization of a school board.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, what I meant the Education Minister –

**MR. JACKMAN:** My determinant is going to be student achievement. If I see that student achievement has improved, that our dropout rate has gone from the worst in Canada to the second best, we are having success and our investments are in the right place.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, when I am Minister of Education and you are the critic, you can ask me the questions. Right now, you are the Minister of Education and I would like the

opportunity to ask the questions. They are your Estimates, not my Estimates.

**MR. JACKMAN:** I am only asking you for clarification.

**MR. BENNETT:** It is an interesting tactic to get here and debate and provide no information. We are simply trying to get information, which either you do not have or you are refusing to produce. It is that simple.

**CHAIR:** Mr. Bennett, the minister has already said and indicated to you that he would produce the documents that he did have for the last – Ms Janet Vivian-Walsh did say that. They said they would provide that information.

Are we going to continue on that path? They did say they were going to provide the information that they did have.

**MR. BENNETT:** Okay.

Minister, the next question is: Does the Department of Education interact with other government departments when it formulates its planning for schools?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Planning for schools? Yes.

**MR. BENNETT:** Which departments?

**MR. JACKMAN:** We interact with Child, Youth and Family Services, we interact with the Department of Health, and we interact with what would be now the Advanced Education and Skills.

**MR. BENNETT:** What is the nature of that interaction?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Well, we set out a common goal. The goal for the Department of Education, and Child, Youth and Family Services are the same. It is the improvement and the betterment, and the education of our youth.

We interact with the Department of Health through having assessments completed; we co-ordinate with the Janeway. Through Advanced

Education and Skills we recognize that the earlier we engage students in the type of activities that we see the market is requiring, then that is where we develop our planning.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, do you interact on a local basis with schools to determine if there can be efficiencies achieved by having other government departments utilize school buildings, like schools?

**MR. JACKMAN:** We are speaking with Child, Youth and Family Services around if there is availability for daycare spaces in many of our buildings. As a matter of fact, it is part of our planning and consideration now in new school construction.

**MR. BENNETT:** What schools have you done that with?

**MR. JACKMAN:** The most recent one that we worked with Child, Youth and Family Services, I believe it was on the Bonavista Peninsula.

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** We have worked with the Labrador School Board in a daycare in a school in Labrador as well.

**MR. BENNETT:** Do you interact on the basis of community schools and maybe even post offices or police detachments or any government service that could share space? Have you done that in your department?

**MR. JACKMAN:** I do not think – we have not gone to a post office yet.

**MR. BENNETT:** You have not gone to a community school model?

**MR. JACKMAN:** We have not gone to having a post office in our schools yet.

**MR. BENNETT:** You have not gone to a community school model?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Well then I will – I am assuming you have some information. I would be more than willing to accept what you have. I would be more than willing to take a look at it.



**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, has your department looked at a community school model for this Province for small schools?

**MR. JACKMAN:** We have been looking at it for a number of years. I can even go back to my days as a principal when we were looking at more utilization of the schools. I think maybe ten or fifteen years ago it was primarily around the use of the school for additional recreation and meetings, but I think even today there are more activities taking place.

**MR. BENNETT:** Has your department included medical clinics in schools?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. BENNETT:** Where is that?

**MR. JACKMAN:** I know we have one right in my own district in South East Bight.

**MR. BENNETT:** Are there any others?

**MR. JACKMAN:** I cannot say off the top of my head, but I can certainly check into it and see.

**MR. BENNETT:** Would you agree that if the Department of Education is already paying for infrastructure, such as schools, that there would be certain synergies to be obtained by having other government services provided in those buildings?

**MR. JACKMAN:** If there is opportunity for those types of activities, we would be more than open to it.

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** I could also add here, Mr. Bennett, that in several of our schools we have family resource centres that are very much a part of the community model. That exists in schools here in St. John's as well as outside. That is very much a part of the integrated early learning model.

We have also partnered with the Jimmy Pratt Foundation and McCain Foundation for some research regarding the integrated learning

between the daycare centres, the family resource centres, and the school system as well.

**MS CLARKE:** (Inaudible) add that there is a school currently under construction in St. Anthony where we have partnered with the town. There is an arena being constructed adjacent to that school and we are sharing parking lots. We recently had a meeting with Municipal Affairs and the Department of Transportation and Works to pursue opportunities where we could collaborate on projects.

Like our Deputy Minister just indicated, where there is a family resource centre currently in a community where we are building a school and is housed in a school, when we do new construction we always provide funding to ensure that the family resource centre is included in the school. We have been looking for those opportunities for many, many years.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

Dale.

**MR. KIRBY:** Thank you. Dale Kirby, Member of the House of Assembly for the great and historic district of St. John's North.

I have some very specific questions about the lines in the Budget, but I was intrigued by some of the questions that my colleague, the Member for the District of St. Barbe, had asked. I just want to follow up on some of the minister's responses to that.

With respect to the new super-sized English school district that we are now going to have in September 2013, did personnel in the department or the minister, yourself, did you consult any of the literature on public school board governance in the North American or Canadian context prior to moving to this? My understanding of the research literature in this area is that when there are fewer boards, and now we will have only one, there is far less autonomy for trustees and local governance. Did anyone consult that literature and is anyone

aware that is more or less the accepted fact in this area of research?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Well, I guess you could dispute what accepted fact means. First off, if I look at some other districts across the country, some of them would have numbers that would be comparable to what we would have, the 67,000, in this Province.

We recognize the challenge of the geography in this Province. There is no doubt about that, but to think that an area is not going to receive representation because we have gone to a larger board, I do not believe that. I do not believe it. I am looking at, and I have said this on several occasions, the presence we are going to have on the West Coast, in Central, and in Labrador, the strong presence that we will have there, and in particular, I would say, a very much more focused attention on student achievement and student learning.

Now, I cannot give to you the specifics of how the staff will be deployed at this particular point. We have an idea and now what will happen is a transition team will be put in place. Then the people who make up that transition team will now take a look at developing that and then see how we move forward with it.

**MR. KIRBY:** So in the absence of a specific answer to that question, I will ask the question in a different way. There are a number of individuals down at the Faculty of Education just down the road: Dr. Bruce Sheppard who used to be head of one the precursor Avalon boards, the Eastern School District; Dr. Jean Brown; Dr. Ken Stevens has experience from Australia and New Zealand as a prominent sociologist and somebody who is quite knowledgeable in this area; Dr. Noel Hurly, who used to be head of one of the larger school boards in New Brunswick, I believe, or Nova Scotia, whichever – but all of these individuals have significant writing in this area. Did anybody consult with any of those individuals?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Their report is available; I have read the report. I still believe that one English board – and I cannot give you the

details, the finer points, at this particular point, but I still think the delivery of education in this system will not be compromised by moving to one English and one French board. The piece that we are – if I could – downsizing, is the administrative piece of it. The educational piece of it and the educational leadership of that, when this unfolds, is going to be strong and I will contend that it is going to be stronger than it is now.

**MR. KIRBY:** So, some of the folks in Newfoundland and Labrador are most well acquainted with democratic decision making within the school system, our trustees, and there are a good number of them across the boards that we have already. To what extent were those trustees consulted on the plan for the consolidation?

**MR. JACKMAN:** We went to our school boards, just as we did across government with other entities, and asked them to see where they could find efficiencies. They came back and the trustees were informed – I believe they were informed in February, if I am not mistaken; I do not know the exact date. They came back with some recommendations.

After we reviewed these recommendations, some of them were accepted and some of them were not. I will tell you one, as an example. Anybody who has been in the education system will tell you there is one person next to the principal in the school who is of critical importance, and that is the secretary. That was a recommendation that we reduce some of the secretarial time. We did not go there, knowing the importance of that individual and the challenges that come with just delivering medication, which the secretaries often enter into.

So, again, throughout that entire process – and I will go back to a point that I made here – if you look at other departments and some of the amounts that they have cut, Education when down by 3 per cent. I will contend it and I will stand up anywhere and defend what we have invested in education through this budget.

**MR. KIRBY:** One of the concerns that I have, you are changing the teacher allocation formula to devote fewer resources to administration at the school level. As I have learned from principals and assistant principals, over the course of time – and not just since 2003 either, really since that landmark study in 1968 on the state of the school system. Over time, increasingly there has been more and more and more administrative responsibilities allocated to schools, and a great expectation put on administrators to do a vast number of things.

I would waste a whole lot of time here this morning recounting what they are but certainly the people who do that work day in and day out know what it is that they are expected to do, and what the department is expecting of them, and what parents expect and so on.

One of the things that we have had a lot of conversation about in the last twelve months or so in the House of Assembly – and there has been a lot of discussion about it in recent years more and more – that we accept the fact that bullying is not just some sort of rite of passage.

There is great expectation on principals and administrators to intervene and ensure that our children are not bullied in schools, are not tortured in schools, that people are not ostracized for their socioeconomic status, whether they have the right lunch or the right sneakers, the right jeans, or if they are the proper gender or sexual orientation.

Are you confident, Minister Jackman, that with fewer administrative resources in schools that our kids are going to be protected to the same extent that they are today?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes. You are looking at two former administrators: myself and my deputy. I walked in those shoes for many, many years.

I will say for many of the points that you have mentioned and many of the challenges that confront our children, I would say there have been services provided beyond. Fifteen or twenty years ago you would have had seven, eight or ten children who we would consider, I

would think, behavioural problems and these types of things who would have been segregated; people with special needs who would have been segregated. We have put supports in place to ensure that these children take part in the mainstream. I would hope that you would agree that the advances we have made to counter bullying have been tremendous and have been far-reaching.

In the number of occasions that I have been into the schools, I see it time and time again. The introduction of MyGSA around sexual orientation and that acceptance, think where we have taken that, to make sure that these children and students are not marginalized. We have made major advances. We have the admin allocation I do feel still adequately meets the needs of the school.

**CHAIR:** Jim.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, has your department determined with any degree of precision how much money will be saved by getting rid of three boards?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. BENNETT:** How much is that?

**MR. JACKMAN:** It is around \$12.8 million. Now, it may sway \$100,000 or \$200,000 one way or the other, but it is around \$13 million.

**MR. BENNETT:** Are you able to provide a spreadsheet that shows where that saving is realized?

**MR. JACKMAN:** We can provide you with some, but at this particular point I cannot provide you with the full details. I expect that we probably could within short order.

**MR. BENNETT:** Will you do so?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes. There is nothing to hide. I have nothing to hide here.

**MR. BENNETT:** Do you have an idea of how much of it is going to be saved through

personnel and how much is saved in other savings?

**MR. JACKMAN:** We can break that pretty well down for you, but as I have said, we have an interim board or transition team that is going to be put in place and they will be working through some of those details. Like I said, I cannot provide you with it all right now. We will provide with what information I can provide you with at this particular point. If you want to stay in touch with my office as things unfold, I will keep you updated on that.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, have you identified the members of the transition team yet?

**MR. JACKMAN:** We are pretty close on doing that.

**MR. BENNETT:** Do you know any of them?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. BENNETT:** Are you able to disclose who they are?

**MR. JACKMAN:** No.

**MR. BENNETT:** When will you be able to say who they are?

**MR. JACKMAN:** As a politician, I have learned to say very soon.

**MR. BENNETT:** Thank you.

Minister, one of the complaints with the Eastern School District previously was, there was what I would call a democratic deficit. It seemed that the boards were reconfigured before trustees were determined based on geography. Whether it is accurate or not, I cannot say that.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes, I think you are right.

**MR. BENNETT:** So that meant for a smaller geographic area, such as the greater St. John's area, the Northeast Avalon, you would have a large population and not many trustees. For the other parts of the Eastern School District, you

would have lots of geography and not so many people. Consequently, people in St. John's that I have spoken to, felt that it really was not fair. Is that an accurate assessment?

**MR. JACKMAN:** I think it probably would be. What we are looking at to address at this particular point is that we would have equal representation from each district now, and then have the room to increase should the transition team feel that it is needed.

**MR. BENNETT:** Do I understand, then, that representation will be more about population with the new board rather than by geography?

**MR. JACKMAN:** No, at this particular point, the initial set up would be equal representation from each one of the present boards. Now, if the transition team feels that more would be needed to reflect population, or more would be needed to reflect geography, then let them come together and they decide.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, one of the issues with some of the board members that I spoke with from previous boards – I guess they are still existing boards, not the previous, but the current boards – is that due to geography, travel, and time and so on, it was difficult for some board trustees to attend regular meetings. It came at a considerable personal cost for them.

For example, it is five hours in good driving to drive from St. Anthony to Corner Brook, and considerable expense. Will the new board or new boards consider what would be a fair way to compensate far-flung trustees so there can be equal participation, both in overhead and travel?

**MR. JACKMAN:** I have said myself, personally, I do not think that any trustee should have to pay out-of-pocket expenses to be a trustee and represent now. I do not know what will come in terms of reimbursing individuals. We will let the transition team do their piece and then we will decide that further down the road.

I will tell you one thing that is happening is that our investment in CDLI has been – I believe it is \$60 million over the last eight or ten years. As a

matter of fact, it is recognized as one of the best across the country. School districts are using more technology now to have that, those types of meetings, so that somebody from St. Anthony could very well go on-line.

As opposed to travelling to Corner Brook five times a year, they may travel to Corner Brook twice a year and then have the technology to deliver the other three meetings. So, those types of things are being explored to cut down on cost.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, I think most of us agree that school board trustees have a relatively onerous job, and it is voluntary. Is there consideration that they would be compensated in the form of some sort of per diem or replace their income?

If a person is called for jury duty, for example, to sit in the courts for however long, they get at least some sort of compensation for it. Is there any consideration that – and I know this is an area of cutbacks, but if we do not compensate people then it makes it more difficult to get better people to serve as trustees, does it not?

**MR. JACKMAN:** I do not think we can get any better people to serve as trustees than the people that we presently have. These people are doing it. I believe the true majority of them are doing it because they believe in the young people of the Province and they believe in education.

From my time in meeting with trustees, I have found them to be dedicated individuals. You are quite right; all you have to do is look at some of the school closures that were proposed this year to see what trustees are subjected to. I think they are world-class, but in terms of are we going to reimburse them? I am not able to say at this particular point.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, I do not dispute the intent or the calibre of the individuals who are the current trustees; however, on reviewing the annual reports of all of the school boards, I noted that there was a fairly significant age and gender imbalance. Would there be some consideration by the department so that the people who are school board trustees are not the

age of you and me or older, and more of them are women and more of them are people who have packed lunches for children some time in the last twenty years?

**MR. JACKMAN:** I do totally agree with you. The gender balance is one that is very, very obvious. The representation of the age appropriate, I agree with you. It is something that we will take a look at.

**MR. BENNETT:** I think six of the ten French trustees are women and four are men.

**MR. JACKMAN:** I was looking at the imbalance the other way, with the English board.

**MR. BENNETT:** I was thinking if they could do it with the French board, and Labrador is nine and six, or it was when I last looked, and I think it was like eleven and three in Western, with one vacancy, and at one point it was fourteen and one here in the East, I would think that if there was some mechanism maybe in the bylaws whereby a certain number had to be women, a certain number had to be a certain ages, almost like political parties do - political parties want to cater to the youth and they want to cater to the older people and they want to cater to whatever.

**MR. JACKMAN:** We do not have to be a certain age before we can get into a political party, though.

**MR. BENNETT:** Well, school boards are very political, whether they should be or they should not be.

**MR. JACKMAN:** I am not making light of your point. I truly do hear what you are saying and it is one that we have talked about.

**MR. BENNETT:** I will pass to Mr. Kirby before I start something else.

**CHAIR:** Dale.

**MR. KIRBY:** Thank you – Dale Kirby, Member of the House of Assembly for the great and historic District of St. John's North.

I have some more specific questions, but I just wanted to pick up on something that the minister had said in a response to questions from our colleague for the District of St. Barbe. You talked about, and I have heard you talk about quite a bit in the past, the success that we have had in terms of reducing the dropout rate.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** Certainly, a contrarian could say that the curriculum is significantly shifted over the same period of time that the dropout rate has been changing. As you are aware, there are a variety of different ways that we can judge outcomes and success of the school system. One could make an argument that we would do that quite differently today and we have done it quite differently since 2003 than we did prior to then.

Does the department monitor or accumulate any statistics on outcomes when it comes to senior high school graduates who complete courses that enable them to access post-secondary education programs, trades, college, and university versus those who do not, rather than looking at the dropout rate? If I get to the end of the line and what I have is a credential that does not enable me to access post-secondary education and potentially transcend the socio-economic position of my parents, then I really do not have a whole lot at all.

Does the department collect or collate statistics that would show this?

**MR. JACKMAN:** You do not remember my answer in the House of Assembly here one day when you asked me a question. I will get you the stat now.

**MR. KIRBY:** Is this for the past program again?

**MR. JACKMAN:** No, I am going to correct you on that later. What I am telling you is I provided an answer that showed that the number of students who are graduating with the honours program has gone up.

The three-streamed program is meeting the needs. I will use this example; any of us who have been in education will know that we came across a student who in Grade 6 was having the most difficulty reading, but that individual could pick apart a motor, put it together, and go into a garage when they were in Grade 10 and disassemble and assemble an engine.

Previously, these students would have dropped out as soon as they were able to. Our system now allows these students to stay in and now they are geared very much towards accomplishing a program in that. The academic side of it, they would still face the challenges, but if I use the mechanical side, these students will do quite well.

Now that we have the number of students who are moving up in the honours category, sure, it gives them more choice. I will provide you with those numbers.

**MR. KIRBY:** Yes, it would be interesting to see about the movement at the other end of the spectrum, away from academics to – it would be interesting to see. The other point would be in terms of actual transition. I have not seen a lot of research coming from this government on transitions. In fact, I have not really seen much since the White Paper on Public Post-Secondary Education.

**MR. JACKMAN:** What do you mean by transitions?

**MR. KIRBY:** From high school to trades programs, to college programs. Again, we can look at the number of students who are dropping out or not, but it would be more useful to look at outcomes in terms of where they are ending up after they leave that third or fourth year of high school.

**MR. JACKMAN:** I am willing to bet you that there are more students going on to a post-secondary education now than there ever was before. The mindset around post-secondary education has changed.

At one time if we spoke about post-secondary education, it talked about your learning institution: Memorial. Now when we talk about post-secondary, it talks about the skilled trades because I do believe that at one point a Memorial education was here and a skilled trades program was here.

I will tell you this story. I have five children – I have told people this before. Two of them are teachers, one is a social worker, and one is a chef. Their pictures were on the wall. My other son is a welder. I said: Come with me. I want to take a picture of you with a gown on, so when someone comes into my house and asks, ok your son is a chef, teacher and a social worker; what does this fellow do? He is welder. He is a welder? They did not look at the welding trade as being the up here type of course. Go and speak to some of those folks now and see where they are.

**MR. KIRBY:** There is no doubt we have done a lot over the past fifteen years or so to diminish the perception that trades are somewhat less than other destinations.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Definitely.

**MR. KIRBY:** Does the department have those statistics then on what those transitions are; what the outcomes are for our high school graduates; how many go to trades; how many go to college; how many goes to university here in the Province; how many go outside of the Province?

**MR. JACKMAN:** I do not think we would have them as a department. Maybe Janet you can speak to that if you want to.

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** I would think we would be able to get some of the through AES as well, Mr. Kirby, but I will say to you that from a K-12 perspective there is great interest in the Atlantic Provinces and through my colleagues at the CMEC level when we meet.

One of the main priorities right now is transition to post-secondary, trying to reach the more vulnerable groups, the groups that are not choosing post-secondary. Whether that being a

socio-economic factor; sometimes it is actually achievement of boys; there is concern regarding boy achievement and where that would be; and some other vulnerable groups that do not have the role models to allow them to pursue post-secondary and to be encouraged to post-secondary.

There is a big piece of work being done through CMEC now and trying to fit that transition to post-secondary to the labour market, as well, because there is a bit of a misfit there as well. How do we, from the Atlantic Provinces point of view, satisfy the labour market through what we are doing with career counselling, career guidance, and through handling the vulnerable groups to better fit our own labour market?

So, that is a piece of work being done now, but I would say that we could get you some statistics. I certainly am aware of – I have conversations with Memorial University regarding the numbers that are going in from our system so I have that, but in terms of the college pieces, I am sure I could probably get that for you, Mr. Kirby.

**MR. KIRBY:** It would be useful to have, because it is difficult for people external to government to access that data these days. One, government is not providing it and publishing it the way that it used to; and, second of all, because of concerns around protection of privacy issues because of getting all of these personal identifiers. Some institutions follow based on an MCP number and then they have their own internal numbers, et cetera. Government is really in a position to provide the data rather than anyone else.

The last question I have with respect to this is around the transitions to employment. The best way as to really judge the success of the system is to look at attachment to the labour market. The best measures of that, as far as I am concerned and as far as a lot of researchers are concerned, is to look at the number of individuals who are reliant on employment insurance and the number of individuals who are reliant on Income Support, proportioned by the level of educational attainment.

Again, I have not seen anything published from government on this since the White Paper on Public Post-Secondary Education was produced. Does the department have any up-to-date statistics when it comes to those particular labour market attachment statistics? Is there something that can be provided?

I will go back to what I said earlier. You can talk about dropout rates all you like, but it is really not a good indicator of how successful the school system is in preparing people to do what we want them to do, which is to get a decent job and stay in a decent job.

**MR. JACKMAN:** I think, as the deputy said, we can gather up some of that information and certainly we would have to consult with Advanced Education and Skills as well.

**MR. KIRBY:** Is this something that I can write to you in six months and ask you if you have it available?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes, you can. Indeed you can.

**MR. KIRBY:** Okay. Good, thank you.

**MR. JACKMAN:** You are welcome.

**MR. KIRBY:** I will hand the conch back over to my colleague.

**CHAIR:** Jim.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, the Schools Act permits you to extend the term of the school board for whatever reasons you see fit, and the term comes up in the fall.

Have you considered extending the term of the current board by, say, another year rather than have new school board elections to allow more time for this configuration?

**MR. JACKMAN:** We have discussed it, but at this particular point that is the limit to where we have gone with it. We are saying that this transition team will have things done and in

place by September. If not, then shortly before that we will see where we go.

**MR. BENNETT:** Would you not agree, though, Minister, that what you are proposing is a very substantial piece of work for people to do in a short time?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Definitely, and we have said from the outset, we are not going to compromise on ensuring there is good work done. We will assess that as we go through.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, a handful of schools currently offer full-day kindergarten in the Province. You are probably aware of that. I understand it is not government's policy right now to go to full-day kindergarten, but why not?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Well, for one thing we have a number of our facilities that would not be able to handle it. So, we have made a decision that while we are taking a look at it, we are not going there at this particular point.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, why not phase in full-day kindergarten over time with wherever the facilities or the teachers are available and the demand was, ultimately over a period of three or four or five years maybe, and have full-day kindergarten?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Well, all I can say to you is that based on the research in learning, we decided where investments were going to be made, and right now, it is our Early Childhood Learning Strategy that we are focusing on. As I said, we are still reviewing, looking at full-day kindergarten, implementation costs and so on and so forth, but we are not there now.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, has your department determined how much it would cost to phase in full-day kindergarten?

**MR. JACKMAN:** We have looked at both phase in and full, but we have not identified a finalized number, no.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, earlier you said the current budget is going to be some small amount



– I think 3 per cent or so – less than last year’s budget.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. BENNETT:** However, last year’s budget was underspent by \$50 million, correct?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes. Do you have a line you want me to –

**MR. BENNETT:** Last year’s budget was \$866 million, and what was actually spent was \$815 million, and this year’s budget is \$840 million.

**CHAIR:** Mr. Bennett, Jim, can I ask you to – so we are all on the same page here.

**MR. BENNETT:** Page 15.3.

**CHAIR:** Page 15.3.

**MR. BENNETT:** It is the very last line.

**CHAIR:** The last line in Administrative Support, 2.1.01, is that where we are looking?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Is it 4.2?

**MR. BENNETT:** I am looking in Estimates 2013, total department costs.

**MR. JACKMAN:** You are looking at the first page there.

**MR. BENNETT:** No, the very last page, the total, the bottom line.

**MR. JACKMAN:** The last page.

**MR. BENNETT:** Page 15.3, and it is line, I suppose, 3.5.01.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Page 15.13.

**MR. BENNETT:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** I am still not following you, Jim, so –

**MR. JACKMAN:** No, it is page 15.13.

**CHAIR:** Page 15.13. Okay, thank you.

**MR. BENNETT:** Last year \$866 million was budgeted and \$815 million was actually spent. So, in fact, the department underspent its budget by \$51 million.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. BENNETT:** That means this year’s budget is \$25 million more than was last year’s actual.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. BENNETT:** Why is it, if it is \$25 million more, necessary to collapse these school boards?

**MR. JACKMAN:** What you are looking at is the finalized number now across the entire department. I can tell you that a percentage of that, going from \$866 million to \$815 million, would have to do with Ingrid’s shop. That we budgeted, I do not now, \$28 million let’s say for school construction. Some of them did not get through this year, money is carried forward. That would be –

**MR. BENNETT:** Capital works –

**MR. JACKMAN:** It would be capital. As well, the reduction from \$866 million to \$840 million is because of some of our 3 per cent exercise that I have identified, but a majority of that difference between \$866 million to \$815 million would be through capital construction.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, I understood you to say a few moments ago that instead of full-day kindergarten the department is focusing on Early Childhood Learning. Is that correct?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. BENNETT:** On line 3.4.04 –

**MR. JACKMAN:** What line is it?

**MR. BENNETT:** The page before.

**CHAIR:** Subhead 3.4.04?

**MR. BENNETT:** That is correct.

**CHAIR:** Page 15.12, Minster.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. BENNETT:** Under item 10, Grants and Subsidies, last year the department budgeted \$1.174 million and used \$1.124 million. This year the budget is \$524,000, which is \$600,000 less, but you say that you are focusing on Early Childhood Learning.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. BENNETT:** How are you able to save \$600,000?

**MR. JACKMAN:** One of the programs we were going to implement this year was to work through our provincial libraries to offer some activities in the libraries, and that would have amounted to \$500,000 or so. What we have decided to do now is to hold off on that.

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** Just adding to that, it is early literacy programming, and we are still piloting. We are reducing the number of sites. That will still go ahead, that early literacy. It is a pilot, and thus we will assess it and determine then moving forward, but it still will be an initiative done this year.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, on page 15.9, under category Student Support Services, 3.3.01, line 05, Professional Services. This is appropriations to provide for the development, implementation and evaluation of programs for children with special needs.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. BENNETT:** This amount is being slashed by \$500,000?

**MR. JACKMAN:** This is the one I hoped that the NDP was going to ask. Thank you for asking it.

This is a program that we have called a past program. It was piloted in eight schools. It was to identify students at risk.

To bring this program in, it had to be the development of curriculum, the other associated costs that come with it. This project now, the pilot has been completed. Contrary to someone saying that I do not believe in pilots or whatnot, now comes the decision. Based on what has come out of this, our new board will determine, do we want to proceed with it or not?

**MR. BENNETT:** Does that mean that the \$572,200 which was spent to the penny, which is a good thing –

**MR. JACKMAN:** What line are you on?

**MR. BENNETT:** Does that mean it is up and running and the \$70,000 is operational? Or does that mean that it is abandoned?

**MR. JACKMAN:** No, it is certainly not abandoned. What we have done through a pilot is we have gathered information. Now a decision will be made whether we will continue with it or not.

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** That pilot that has existed, as the minister said, and actually it existed in – we have eight teachers there, but there is one school that has two schools attached to the one teacher. We have built the capacity, as the minister said, through the initiative. The schools have the skill set now to continue that initiative.

The districts right now, they are able to decide if they are going to continue that, if the success has been in that particular school. I can say that districts are working through that now. I already am aware that four of them are already going to be in the schools next year and continued. The others are just working through their numbers now.

It is a program, though it is under Student Support Services and it is for at risk, it was never meant for students who had special needs or exceptionalities. It was for students who had

significant issues of achievement who were not special services or had issues, major concerns, with attendance or some issues regarding disciplinary issues in the school. The idea was to get these students back; some of them were not actually in the school.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Some of them were not even in the school.

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** To try to get them back and increase their numbers. It has been very successful. The most important piece is building that capacity within the school and the district because it was a very different approach. It would involve what we called credit recovery and credit rescue which would allow students to do things at different paces.

Credit recovery would be to determine how the student had done and take them from where they were and try to get that credit, a little bit of a different approach in the structure. A lot of it was capacity building. As a pilot, the monies came through poverty reduction. We do consider it a very successful pilot, though, I have to say.

Some of the districts actually, one in Western and one in the Eastern board, without being part of the pilot, took units from their own to put towards this as well.

**CHAIR:** Jim, hold your thought.

Dale, please.

**MR. KIRBY:** Thank you.

Dale Kirby, the great and historic district of St. John's North.

Line 1.1.01, page 15.3, the budget for the Minister's Office.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** There was a \$22,000 increase in 01, Salaries, there.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes. I am going to let my deputy explain this one.

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** Mr. Kirby, that particular one there used to be a parliamentary secretary position attached to the Department of Education. What you see there, if you went back to the Estimates of 2011 you would actually see that, that there was that attached. It was not attached and put in the budget for 2012-2013. Actually, it was taken out again. So, it was taken out twice, and it was \$27,000.

That particular amount is attached to a position that no longer exists in the Department of Education, but the budget was started with, was not put there, but then it got taken out, so in other words it got taken out twice.

The most important thing for you to know is that \$240,600 is the salaries for four people and that would be the equivalent amount that would have existed if we did not talk about the parliamentary secretary piece.

Though it looks like an increase, it is not, Mr. Kirby.

**MR. JACKMAN:** I am not getting paid any more.

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** It is confusing, however.

**MR. KIRBY:** Okay. Yes, it is.

Then, under Transportation and Communications, there was \$21,000 unspent in the previous year, 2012, and this was subsequently reduced in 2013. Maybe walk me through the changes there.

**MR. JACKMAN:** We decided to lower our transportation.

**MR. KIRBY:** Why would we have budgeted an additional \$21,000? How were the savings realized?

**MR. JACKMAN:** You are looking at the \$54,300 gone to \$33,000.

**MR. KIRBY:** Yes.

**MR. JACKMAN:** That was simply what we budgeted. As a result of some cost-saving measures, we decided in our office, myself, my executive assistant, that we would do less travelling.

**MR. KIRBY:** You are putting less money on the gas card; is that what you are saying?

**MR. JACKMAN:** We do not have a gas card. Are you proposing that as a party?

**MR. KIRBY:** You are travelling less, yourself and your political staff?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes. We started in our office if we are going to have cost-saving measures. We start just as everyone else.

**MR. KIRBY:** Okay.

Then under 1.2.01, Executive Support, Salaries, 01, you went over budget in 2012-2013.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes. Those were severance and leave for two people.

**MR. KIRBY:** Okay, severance and leave for two people.

Then under Transportation and Communications you had another \$15,000 or thereabouts unspent.

**MR. JACKMAN:** My deputy and her staff are not travelling as much.

**MR. KIRBY:** We are budgeting the same amount there?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes. While we budgeted the same amount, based on just being safe in case we need it as a department, we still look at whether we travel as much or not.

**MR. KIRBY:** It seems like a relatively small amount of money, but for interest groups and –

**MR. JACKMAN:** We want to make sure that there are sufficient funds there to get there. As

you see from last year \$40,100 to \$25,000, one of them might have been that our new deputy has been in for the last three months, she has not had a chance to leave the office to go home let alone travel across the Province.

**MR. KIRBY:** Sure. I see what you are saying, but that \$15,000 represents about three times the amount of money that was cut from the Federation of School Councils. We will talk about that a little bit later. While it seems like a relatively small amount of money, to groups that rely on the Department of Education for their existence to some extent, it is actually quite a substantial sum of money.

To go next in my notes here, Corporate Services, 2.1.01, just let me locate it here –

**MR. JACKMAN:** What line are you on? Oh, yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** Line 01, Salaries. It is 2.1.01.01, Salaries.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** We have \$204,000 less planned to be spent in this year than the previous year. I note that last year the budget for this line actually exceeded over what was budgeted.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes. Exceeding was, again, due to severance leave. The reduction this year is because we have taken some positions out of this division.

**MR. KIRBY:** So you have taken some positions out. What sort of positions would they be?

**MR. JACKMAN:** We have taken two financial officers and a Clerk III and a payroll clerk.

**MR. KIRBY:** What would those financial officers have been doing, what sort of work?

**MR. STAPLETON:** One of those was a financial officer who supported student transportation. We had a retirement coming up, so a number of years ago we put another position in place to kind of job shadow and

learn. That person has since retired and the person moved over to that position.

The second financial officer was really internal controls, something that has been added recently with the reorganization of government where the accounts payable went over to Corporate Services. That was a position that was added and has not really gotten fully functional. So when the restraints came we cut back in that particular area.

**MR. KIRBY:** Okay. So one was student transportation, the other one was internal controls.

**MR. STAPLETON:** Yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** What sort of work would the Clerk III have been doing then? What sort of files are we talking about?

**MR. STAPLETON:** The Clerk III would have been a secretary. I am the Director of Financial Services, so it would have been my secretary for my division.

**MR. KIRBY:** This is basically someone's administrative assistant.

**MR. STAPLETON:** Exactly.

**MR. KIRBY:** Okay.

Then we go down to 06, under the same line 2.1.01.06, Purchased Services. We can see that \$50,000 went unspent in 2012, and now we are talking about spending a little over \$75,000 less on Purchased Services. What did we purchase less of in 2012, and what are we purchasing even less of in the coming year?

**MR. JACKMAN:** This is primarily around production of printed material. So what we have decided is that we are going to take more responsibility internally to deliver that.

**MR. KIRBY:** Well, that makes an awful lot of sense to me.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Thank you.

**MR. KIRBY:** Moving on to the next one. Sorry, I guess I have one more and then I will run out of time.

Under Property, Furnishings and Equipment, there was \$4,400 more last year. Did somebody buy an armoire?

**MR. JACKMAN:** It was not in my office.

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** That is the Department of Education's share towards the equipment in the fitness room here.

**MR. KIRBY:** Okay. That is pretty close, so we are almost holding the line, but even less so in the coming year.

Maybe if I just ask my last question under this one. Under 10, Grants and Subsidies, there is a \$10,000 reduction. Is there one or more loss of grants here?

**MR. JACKMAN:** No. We often receive letters from schools just looking for some funds to help out with particular areas. It might be to develop a reading program or something in a particular school. That has been traditionally \$55,000, so we decided to take \$10,000 off that.

**MR. KIRBY:** These are grants that you have ministerial discretion over, is that correct?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** Okay.

You can go to Mr. Bennett.

**CHAIR:** Jim.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, on page 15.6, under Financial Assistance, 3.1.01.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Subhead 3.1.01? Yes.

**MR. BENNETT:** Right near the top, under "Appropriations provide for the cost of teachers' salaries and associated employee benefits, exclusive of teachers' pensions."

Can you tell me how teachers' pensions are dealt with? Are they dealt with by the Department of Education or the government generally?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Who wants to speak to that?

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** Can you ask the question again, Mr. Bennett?

**MR. BENNETT:** Yes, this is exclusive of teachers' pensions. So, I am asking: Does the Department of Education fund the pensions and do that work, or is it done by some other department of government?

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** That is handled through the Department of Finance.

**MR. BENNETT:** Does that mean the Department of Education budget really should have the cost of pensions added to show a true cost of education?

**MR. JACKMAN:** I am assuming so. I cannot be 100 per cent certain on that. I do not know if either one of the staff – but I can certainly find out for you.

**MR. BENNETT:** Many people are concerned about the pension deficit that we have in the Province, including myself, and I think we are well advised to be concerned.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. BENNETT:** Has there been any consideration to having discussions with the NLTA about having them administer their own pension and, ultimately, have some sort of solvency in our pensions with respect to education?

**MR. JACKMAN:** I think right now that discussion, through the Department of Finance, is being held – and I will put it this way. I think unions, as well as government, are very much aware of the issues that face pension. I cannot speak to the discussions that Finance have had with NLTA but I think everybody is aware of the concern that it has to be dealt with.

**MR. BENNETT:** Yes, because in some provinces the teachers' unions manage their own pensions. They get, whatever it is, their payment and deposit it every year. Clearly, at least I believe that our Province has to get our pension liability under control.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Definitely.

**MR. BENNETT:** It is an iceberg we are going to hit.

**MR. JACKMAN:** As Finance Minister, just like you just said, I am concerned about it just as you would be, and I think most people generally are.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, a little further down in the same category, it says Supports to Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. BENNETT:** There is nothing there at all. Supports to Deaf and Hard of Hearing –

**MR. JACKMAN:** No, no, you are looking at the heading there, Supports to Deaf and Hard of Hearing, then you have students, institutional schools, and so on.

**MR. BENNETT:** Oh, I see. I understand.

Thank you.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Okay.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, on page 15.9, it deals with Language Programs.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. BENNETT:** This is, "Appropriations provide for development and management of the implementation of the French curriculum including French First Language and French Second Language Programs and for special projects. Expenditures are cost shared with the Federal Government."

We have a cut in Language Programs from \$2.229 million to \$1.343 million.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Which line are you at?

**MR. BENNETT:** Near the middle. It says Language Programs, the second last line in that category.

**MR. JACKMAN:** It has gone from \$2.2 million, you mean, down to \$1.3 million.

**MR. BENNETT:** Yes.

**MR. JACKMAN:** We have to go through the line items up above because what we are looking at here is the total. For example, line 01 has gone from \$696,000 down to \$611,000. We have taken a position out of the department for that one.

For Transportation, we had an increase in that particular line because there was an assessment, a French test that was administered – a proficiency test that was administered to 120 students, so some additional transportation costs were incurred there.

The big one is line 10, Grants and Subsidies. We have fewer start-ups of Intensive Core French and there was a reduction in funding for the recruitment and retention of teachers at the Francophone school.

**MR. BENNETT:** Does that mean that there is less demand, or is it the same demand and less money?

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** I think what we have there, Mr. Bennett, is sufficient to cover the needs.

**MR. BENNETT:** Okay, but we have dropped by about \$1.2 million, which is more than a quarter of last year's allocation. A 25 per cent drop seems to be a lot, unless there is some change in demand.

**MR. JACKMAN:** There has been a reduction in length of some of the French summer school programs. If you look at that we have taken out

two positions here, fewer start-ups of Intensive Core French – I do not think there is less of a demand – and the length of summer programs, there is where we have a reduction.

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** I should add that the line here under federal revenue, we are actually negotiating the agreement now with the official languages and that is an estimate there, even though it is a reduction of \$500,000,000 there, that is an estimate and it is a 50-50 agreement. That is an estimate, but now we had to make sure that we can match what we receive there. That is the OLE funding.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, with respect to school busing – school busing likely will always be contentious. There is a complaint among school bus operators, private operators, they receive less funding per unit or per bus than boards are able to spend. Do you have any thoughts on how that could be equalized? Can one be improved or can all go private or all go public? What are your thoughts on that?

**MR. JACKMAN:** We do not have a finalized position on it yet. It is a tender process when we go through private contractors, but we do have a report that Deloitte is completing. We do not have the finalized report yet, and then once that comes in, that will inform us.

The private operators have made representation to that group. Then from that we will extract the information to see how we need to go forward.

**MR. BENNETT:** One of the concerns that I have heard from student groups, teachers, and parents is that if the school board provides the bus then for extra-curricular activities the cost is automatically covered. It is included and the child does not have to pay anything; whereas if it is a contractor, then the child has to come up with money to pay for bus transportation. I do not know if you are aware of that. It seems to be factual, and if that is a concern.

**MR. JACKMAN:** It would be a concern. I am expecting that out of this report will come a number of issues, possibly that being one of them. Representation has been sought from an

array of people who have an interest in this. I cannot speak to pre-judge what will come out of that report. I am looking forward to this thing being finalized, and then we look at where we go for the coming year.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, do you have a deadline in mind or an expected time when we might receive that? Not very soon.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Soon, very soon – no, I cannot give you an exact date. The thing that I can say to you is that this is something that I am certainly not looking to extend it and string it out into another year. Like you said, there have been concerns that have been raised by the private operators. We have some questions of our own. We know that every September there are issues that arise around busing; therefore, the sooner we can get the report and address the points then we will.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, one of the concerns was the school closure in St. Lunaire-Griquet, which I am sure you are familiar with –

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. BENNETT:** – is the travel for the children to St. Anthony and not having cellphone service. Is there any consideration to maybe providing satellite phones for buses that may be in areas where there is no cellphone service?

**MR. JACKMAN:** I certainly would give it consideration.

**CHAIR:** Thanks, Jim.

Dale.

**MR. KIRBY:** Thanks.

I will move down to 2.1.02 –

**CHAIR:** 2.1.01?

**MR. KIRBY:** Yes, Assistance to Educational Agencies and Advisory Committees. Now, Grants and Subsidies here have been reduced by almost \$465,000. I guess the first question I

would have is who is being cut in 2013 and by how much?

**MR. JACKMAN:** One group, for example, is the Council of Ministers of Education for Canada, CMEC, and then another one is the Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training, the Federation of School Councils, as you mentioned, and there is a cultural connections program that we have reduced the budget to, but we still feel that there are adequate funds to meet the needs of the other group. For example, the Council of Ministers of Education, we will still be committing \$100,000 to them. CAMET is still \$119,000; the Federation of School Councils, \$25,000.

T.I. Murphy, we are still committing \$691,000 to them; Encounters with Canada, still \$21,000 going to them. Even though there have been cuts to some groups, as I outlined earlier we still feel there is adequate funds to meet the needs of those groups.

**MR. KIRBY:** The Council of Ministers of Education for Canada, was the grant to CMEC \$100,000 – was it \$100,000 in 2012?

**MR. JACKMAN:** It would have been \$103,600; we cut them by \$3,600.

**MR. KIRBY:** Thirty-six hundred.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes, \$3,600.

**MR. KIRBY:** Three thousand six hundred dollars.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** The Canadian Educational Association, how much did they have their grant reduced by?

**MR. JACKMAN:** The Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training, that is the CAMET group; I am missing – what is the group that you –?

**MR. KIRBY:** The Canadian Education Association.



**MR. JACKMAN:** Is that CAMET?

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** No.

**MR. KIRBY:** That was in the list of –

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** That was last year, Mr. Kirby.

**MR. KIRBY:** So they received no funding on that?

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** That is correct.

**MR. KIRBY:** They had their funding reduced by how much then, to zero from how much?

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** I do not have that right in front of me but I can get it for you. I am thinking that might be close to about \$30,000, but I will check on that for you.

**MR. KIRBY:** What sort of service or support was provided to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador for \$30,000-odd or so by the Canadian Education Association? What is their mandate and so on?

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** Their mandate is to – it is an educational group of professional colleagues who would provide – they do some research on things, student attendance being one, engagement is another. So, a lot of it is providing professional development for educators and some research.

**MR. KIRBY:** The Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation, are they no longer receiving funding?

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** Yes, the Atlantic Provinces is APSEA. They would be found on a different budget line there. I am just going to find it under the Student Support Services. That is the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority on –

**MR. KIRBY:** No, the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation, they would have received funding in 2012.

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** That would be CAMET. It is now CAMET.

**MR. KIRBY:** It is now CAMET.

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** Yes, and they would have continued to receive funding. There is a reduction there of \$1,200, I believe.

**MR. KIRBY:** A reduction of \$1,200, okay.

Then in 2012 there were grants provided to women's institutes under this line.

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** My understanding is I think that has been changed to AES. I do not think that is under us at this time.

**MR. KIRBY:** They are receiving their funding from AES now.

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** I would not be able to speak to it, but it is not with us at this time in Education.

**MR. KIRBY:** Okay. Do you know how much they received in the prior year, 2012, from the Department of Education?

**MR. JACKMAN:** We do not have that here now.

**MR. KIRBY:** You do not have that.

**MR. JACKMAN:** No.

**MR. KIRBY:** Would you be able to provide that to me?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes, we could.

**MR. KIRBY:** The Federation of School Councils had a 17 per cent reduction in their grant from the department. What was the rationale behind that? Because I understand they had actually been looking for additional funding.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Well, I have had a couple of meetings now with the Federation of School Councils. I wanted to take a look at what their

membership is and see how they are functioning because I think the role of school councils is going to become even more important. I think if you have a good parent body, then – you talk about local representation, that is where you get local representation.

I am looking at further meetings with them to see how they are going to proceed. I am certainly willing to provide them with more supports, but I wanted to just be more comfortable around their organization, their makeup, their membership, and the quality of representation. So I am looking at follow-up and discussions with them.

**MR. KIRBY:** Maybe it is just me, but it appears to me it would be problematic for them to do more with less, especially in light of what the concerns have been relayed to me in the past. As you are aware, they do have a statutory responsibility. It is in legislation.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Well, what I want to do is I want to work with them to ensure the effectiveness of the group as a statutory body and to ensure there is representation across the Province. Like I said, if you are talking about having local input, then this is the group we need to look at.

**MR. KIRBY:** I will be going out to their meeting, and I understand Mr. Bennett is as well.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Well, that is good. You will be there to listen to my speech. Make sure you are there.

**MR. KIRBY:** This will be one of the highlights, of course, of the meeting.

**MR. JACKMAN:** It definitely will be. I would not expect anything less.

**MR. KIRBY:** My experience, and it has been very limited, is that one of the difficulties, because the Province's population is geographically dispersed as it is, school councils have an inability to get their people out to some extent. You think about travel, kilometres –

**MR. JACKMAN:** Sure it is.

**MR. KIRBY:** - gas and accommodations and so on. They already have a limited ability is really my point, but I will not belabour that.

Then there is the Canadian Education Network. They receive –

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** That is another one from last year, Mr. Kirby. I do have my list here now. That was not received funding this year, as well.

Just to correct something I said earlier, the two of them have similar names. The Canadian Education Association was receiving \$17,000, which did not receive that this year, and the Community of Education Network was receiving \$60,000, and is not receiving that this year.

**MR. KIRBY:** What were they doing, the Community Education Network?

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** My understanding is that was a group that was based out of the Western School District, out on the West Coast. They were doing some projects with the school district but not all of their projects were related that way.

They had other funding groups as well, Mr. Kirby, and we had to look at what was directly impacting our students; thus, when we were looking at which grants to continue, that was one that we felt was not directly related to what we were doing at the school there.

**MR. JACKMAN:** No. They were receiving funding from different departments. They were not in the school per se; therefore, we decided that the \$60,000 they were receiving from ours, we did not renew it.

**MR. KIRBY:** Are they going to be defunct now? Is that starting in September?

**MR. JACKMAN:** No, no, they are still operating.

**MR. KIRBY:** Are they getting any funding from government at all now?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** That is from which department?

**MR. JACKMAN:** I am not certain which department, I cannot recall. I can certainly get that for you. They operate out of Stephenville.

**MR. KIRBY:** Okay. I think I have run out of time.

**CHAIR:** Yes.

Jim.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, one of the questions that have been posed to me by people who are teachers, actually, is with the five board configuration. If you were within a board, you were hired within a board, and you transferred within the board. Will that change with the districts now? Will it be seen as just one?

**MR. JACKMAN:** It is a discussion we will be having with the NLTA, but I expect it will.

**MR. BENNETT:** Because a concern, I suppose a two-way concern, one is job mobility for people; however, within regions, particularly where it may be remote, it can be very difficult to hire teachers.

**MR. JACKMAN:** This should enhance that.

**MR. BENNETT:** Maybe. However, if those teachers become more experienced and then they move to the larger centres, then what happens is that the smaller schools will always be a training ground for teachers. They will always have the least experienced teachers. The most experienced teachers will go to the bigger centres that, it could be argued, already have more advantages than the smaller centres.

**MR. JACKMAN:** I consider myself a half decent teacher. I moved to one of the rural spots and I stayed there.

**MR. BENNETT:** That may well be the case –

**MR. JACKMAN:** We have often found that many people who have moved to Labrador have stayed there.

**MR. BENNETT:** On an individual basis – so you do not see any problem at all with just having one hiring policy across the board instead of having the districts?

**MR. JACKMAN:** I understand the fear. If you look at the model that we moved with when we went to the present structure, we had a Burin Peninsula board, we had a Bonavista Peninsula board, a Vista board, and then we had a St. John's board. Then we went to one larger Eastern board and those issues were worked out.

I would expect the same thing would happen here. I do think that it will provide the remote areas of the Province to get teachers.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, the opposite of people going to a remote area and staying is also true. My family moved in 1966 because the school principal was transferred. The family moved from Daniel's Harbour to Corner Brook, the whole family lock, stock and barrel. It was either that or we go to boarding school, which simply was not an option in my family.

Generally, the students with more experienced teachers will get better outcomes. Do you not agree?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Do you want to determine for me what a better teacher is?

**MR. BENNETT:** No, I said more experience and better outcomes. I did not say better teacher.

**MR. JACKMAN:** I would think that right now in this Province our teachers are all qualified; they are all given professional development in outcome-oriented instruction. I am sure that we will always find, for a variety of reasons, that there will be areas that will have better scores than others. That is the reason for our

assessments that we have happening in the Province.

I would hope that as a Department of Education and as a group of teachers and educators generally, we strive for the best. I do not know, I am missing the point maybe.

**MR. BENNETT:** Do I understand you to say that cohorts of teachers in a one-year experience are just as good as the ten years experience?

**MR. JACKMAN:** I would encourage maybe that you should visit some of the schools. In some of our remote areas we have teachers who have been there for ten, twelve years, very experienced teachers. You may have some transient, and once people become established in schools in our larger centres, but with retirements, come opportunities.

**MR. BENNETT:** Are you then saying that there is no benefit to having a teacher with experience over one with no experience?

**MR. JACKMAN:** I am certainly not saying that. I am saying that I believe that across this Province we have an equal representation of experienced and inexperienced teachers.

**MR. BENNETT:** Will it not be true that teachers will go to areas that are less attractive – as they define it – to live and get experience, and move to areas that are more attractive, being bigger and more urban.

**MR. JACKMAN:** You and I are having more of a philosophical disagreement now, because I have been in a situation where I have had first-year teachers who have come out, who are eager and determined and would be certainly on par with teachers who have been there for a number of years. So, I cannot go down that road. I just cannot go down that road.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, it is not a philosophical argument. What I am asking is by having four boards, that means it is four pools, versus one, with the increased mobility, that these smaller communities will suffer.

**MR. JACKMAN:** So then with the move from a Burin Peninsula board and a Bonavista Peninsula board to combine with a St. John's board, you think that the people on the Burin Peninsula and the Bonavista Peninsula have been disadvantaged? I do not see it that way.

**MR. BENNETT:** Well, only the outcomes will determine – and the Burin Peninsula is more urbanized than a lot of the parts of the Province.

**MR. JACKMAN:** You move outside of Marystown and you will see. I have schools in my district that have nine students – I have one school. I have other schools that would have fifty-seven to eighty-five and this kind of stuff. The Burin Peninsula is no different than would be the other areas, and I would invite you to go to St. Lawrence and go to Lawn and just see how many teachers there are experienced teachers.

**MR. BENNETT:** So you think that isolation plays no role in where someone chooses to live – like Fogo Island or Little Bay Islands?

**MR. JACKMAN:** I think if you look at the global situation, we know that things are moving towards a more urbanized society, but I can assure you that – I went to a drama festival this weekend in Lawn – I would put the students on that stage on a stage with any students in this Province.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, was the Poverty Reduction a strategy of the Province considered in the decision to reduce the number of English boards to one?

**MR. JACKMAN:** No.

**MR. BENNETT:** Do you think it should be?

**MR. JACKMAN:** In what light?

**MR. BENNETT:** I understand this Province has a Poverty Reduction Strategy – I do not know where the results are, but poverty is linked to losing schools, rural schools. It has been linked in professional studies. I am simply asking: Would you consider it worthwhile to look at the

Poverty Reduction Strategy and engage that part of government?

**MR. JACKMAN:** So you are saying that poverty is linked to losing schools?

**MR. BENNETT:** Absolutely, it is well documented.

The 2008 Canadian Senate Agriculture and Forestry committee report, called Beyond Freefall, identifies school abandonment as the major contributor to the cycle of rural poverty. So I am asking – and you said no, the Poverty Reduction Strategy has not been considered with this move.

**MR. JACKMAN:** I am missing your point somewhere. I am just missing the point. If you can further explain the point to me, I might be able to debate it with you, but I am just –

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, I am referring to a report by the Canadian Senate that says school abandonment is a major contributor to the cycle of poverty. We have a Poverty Reduction Strategy and I have asked if you have considered it and you said no. The answer really is complete.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Fine.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, do you propose anything special to deal with Labrador's special challenges in education?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes, we recognize in the movement to the new board structure that Labrador, especially the remoter areas of Labrador, needs to be taken into consideration. Again, I will go back to the point that the strong presence that we will have in Happy Valley-Goose Bay will be equal to as what we offer in Corner Brook, as what we will offer in Gander, and as what we will offer on the Avalon Peninsula.

Education in Labrador is not going to be diminished.

**MR. BENNETT:** Okay, I can pause.

**CHAIR:** Okay.

Dale, please.

**MR. KIRBY:** Thank you.

I just want to go back to where we were before Mr. Bennett began again. The cultural connections, we are talking about, under those grants –

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** You know where we are, right? Assistance to Educational Agencies and Advisory – how much is that in total, Cultural Connections?

**MR. JACKMAN:** The Cultural Connections, we still have \$874,000 that will be in there. That was around a million. So we are taking some \$230,000, \$240,000 out of it.

**MR. KIRBY:** Does Encounters with Canada fall under that?

**MR. JACKMAN:** No.

**MR. KIRBY:** It does not?

**MR. JACKMAN:** No.

**MR. KIRBY:** What did they get that is separate, Encounters?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Well, those would be the ArtsSmarts program, the Visiting Artist Program.

**MR. KIRBY:** Okay. So ArtsSmarts does fall under this?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Under Cultural Connections.

**MR. KIRBY:** So that has been cut, and then there were – this is what I just sort of heard anecdotally, touring school arts programs, three programs cut.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** Is that what it is? Is it programs or positions or –?

**MR. JACKMAN:** No, it is programs.

**MR. KIRBY:** What else falls under Cultural Connections? ArtsSmarts and this touring school arts program –

**MR. JACKMAN:** And we have a Visiting Artist Program.

**MR. KIRBY:** Visiting artist. Now, that is a visiting artist, where?

**MR. JACKMAN:** That is various artists who would make application, and then once selected they would travel to some schools.

**MR. KIRBY:** Has that been cut as well?

**MR. JACKMAN:** It has been cut, yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** Entirely, is it?

**MR. JACKMAN:** No, no.

**MR. KIRBY:** No?

**MR. JACKMAN:** No.

**MR. KIRBY:** So you have reduced the amount of funding?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** Okay.

Maybe this year – I know last year I asked for a breakdown of all this and I did not really get it. Maybe I asked and I was not as detailed as I would have liked to be in my question, though. Is it possible for me this year, then, to get a list – well, basically get the list that you are reading from over there.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** I would like a list of the grants –

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** – of the organizations, but I would like to be able to compare 2012 to 2013, because the list that I got last year did not really reflect –

**MR. JACKMAN:** We will give it to you, yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** Because I will get the list, I will not really belabour this too much.

The T.I. Murphy Centre is funded under this. What was the change in funding for the T.I. Murphy Centre?

**MR. JACKMAN:** None.

**MR. KIRBY:** There was not any change. So any reduction they have experienced is from Advanced Education and Skills?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Another department, yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** Somewhere else.

What about the Learning Disabilities Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, was there any change to their funding?

**MR. JACKMAN:** No.

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

I will move then to 2.1.03, Policy and Planning, and 01 Salaries. There is a just over a \$32,000 reduction in that line in 2013. What is happening here?

**MR. JACKMAN:** That is a maternity leave.

**MR. KIRBY:** Somebody is on maternity leave?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** Under 2.1.03.03, Transportation and Communications, there was a significant under spending of funds there and now it has been cut substantially over the previous year.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes, it is across the department. We are looking at less travel and less communications.

**MR. KIRBY:** Less communication in what respect? Do you mean less mail?

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** The changes in the travel piece there under Policy and Planning, there is a cycle for strategic planning for the school districts. We are not at that critical point where we would need that extensive travel for our people. That would be the drastic cut there. It would be tying into the off years of the strategic planning cycle.

**MR. KIRBY:** For school districts?

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** Yes, sorry, for school districts.

**MR. KIRBY:** It would seem to me there would be a need for an awful lot more planning now that we are going to have just the one English language district rather than four. That would seem to knock all that out of sorts now.

**CHAIR:** Minister.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Right now, like the deputy said, there is the strategic planning of individual boards. As this new one comes on stream in the coming year, not this calendar year, but as that new board gets in place, I expect to see that back in the Budget next year.

**MR. KIRBY:** Okay.

Then under 05, the same line, 2.1.03.05, Professional Services. There was \$22,500 under spent in the last year. What professional services did we not avail of in 2012 that we had thought?

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** There were a couple of areas there where we were planning an evaluation and still deliberating that piece. So we are not ready for that piece, an evaluation.

**MR. JACKMAN:** The line as well, part of this is going to be the review of the transportation, the busing, the review that we are going to be paying for, for this coming year.

**MR. KIRBY:** Is in that?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes, it is in the \$104,000 budgeted this year, \$104,900.

**MR. KIRBY:** Who is the consultant who is doing the work?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Deloitte.

**MR. KIRBY:** Are you at liberty to disclose what it is they are being paid for? What is Deloitte being paid?

**MR. JACKMAN:** It is \$75,000.

**MR. KIRBY:** It is \$75,000 for the busing review.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** Last year, under the next line, 2.1.03.06, Purchased Services, under Policy and Planning. There was \$8,500 that went unspent. We are not talking office supplies here, are we?

**MR. STAPLETON:** That is for printing of accountability documents and there was just less need, and some restraint, where we did not need to we did not.

**MR. KIRBY:** So, fewer printed documents?

**MR. STAPLETON:** Yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** Is this because we are moving more towards electronic communication?

**MR. STAPLETON:** Not in this particular case. There was just less need in this particular year. It was lower.

**MR. KIRBY:** Okay.

The next one is 2.2.01, Information Management and Special Projects. It used to be Information Management and the CAP program.

Under 2.2.01.01, Salaries, here it is \$124,200 less in 2013.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes. That is, again, two positions that are being taken out. Two Industrial Officers, two positions, and a Technician III.

**MR. KIRBY:** That technician, is that an IT person?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Don.

**MR. STAPLETON:** That was a person who was in our registry. It would have been an Information Management Technician, kind of like a librarian, for the library services.

**MR. KIRBY:** The two other positions were Industrial Development Officers. What sort of work would they have been engaged in?

**MR. JACKMAN:** (Inaudible) there was mistake there. It should have been one, not two.

**MR. STAPLETON:** It was one Industrial Development Officer that was reduced, not two.

**MR. KIRBY:** What sort of work were they doing?

**MR. STAPLETON:** That had to do with the federal CAP program and the federal government cut back funding in that particular area. Then the Province had to reduce the expenditures.

**MR. KIRBY:** Those two individuals – were they laid off or did they retire?

**MR. STAPLETON:** One person actually found a job before this cut happened, that was the Industrial Development Officer. The other person, they are of age to retire. Yes, they were made redundant and have now gone in retirement. They would receive their pension.

**MR. KIRBY:** Did this person take the package –

**CHAIR:** Dale, excuse me, your time has expired. Can you hold that question?

**MR. KIRBY:** Sorry, I will go back to this later.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

Jim.

**OFFICIAL:** (Inaudible) answer that question.

**MR. BENNETT:** Sure.

**CHAIR:** Dale.

**MR. KIRBY:** Did this person take the package that the Minister of Finance was shopping about?

**MR. STAPLETON:** They got a redundancy so they would have gotten more than the package because they were laid off. That is the IM Technician.

**MR. KIRBY:** Oh.

**MR. STAPLETON:** They were given a redundancy because they were non-union, non-management so they could not bump. They were given more than the package because they got a redundancy.

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

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Dale.

Jim.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, the decisions to go down to one English board, was this vetted through the Province's rural lens? Government claims to apply a rural lens to all decisions that affect rural parts of the Province. Was the decision to reduce the English boards down to one board put through the rural lens?

**MR. JACKMAN:** We have boards that are elected and that have trustees who represent their constituents. These are the people who make decisions in terms of our boards. They are the ones we consulted with.

**MR. BENNETT:** Did the boards make the decision to shut themselves down?



**MR. JACKMAN:** The board made some decisions around some of the things that they felt could be implemented from their perspective, and then we as a government, based on the information we have, decided to collapse the boards, the executive component of it, into one board.

**MR. BENNETT:** There was no rural lens analysis done, as the government says it does with rural decisions.

**MR. JACKMAN:** The rural lens in this case is applied to our working with the board Chairs and the trustees.

**MR. BENNETT:** So is that written down anywhere?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Well, we have their submissions.

**MR. BENNETT:** Okay, and their submissions with respect to closing and what the outcome would be?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Well, they looked at the satellite offices and where spaces could be provided in schools. They brought forward a list of recommendations from individual boards.

**MR. BENNETT:** Is a copy of that available?

**MR. JACKMAN:** We have the information over at the department. We are still working through some of those proposals. At this particular point, I will not release them.

**MR. BENNETT:** When do you expect they would be able to be released?

**MR. JACKMAN:** I think once we get our final decisions in place and we have the opportunity to meet with the transition team. Then they work their way through the piece. We will see then when we can release it.

**MR. BENNETT:** What reason do you have for refusing to release this information?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Because we are looking at putting in place a transition team who will have to work through details. I, right now, do not want to put documents out there that will create more confusion. I would not accuse people of political opportunities to put information out there. I do not want to at this particular point until we have the transition teams taking a look at it.

I will go back to one of my statements I said previously. We will have this transition team in who will make decisions in the best interests of students and quality education. Therefore, we will let them deal with the information. Then as we get further into it, if I feel the time is right, then we will release it.

**MR. BENNETT:** Was there a written submission from each board?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. BENNETT:** Who sent the written submission? Was it the Director of Education or somebody else?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Well, you had the Chairs who discussed with their trustees, and then it was sent from the Chairs.

**MR. BENNETT:** So there is a written submission from the Chair of Eastern, Nova Central, Western, and Labrador?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. BENNETT:** That may or may not show up at some point?

**MR. JACKMAN:** That is right.

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** I would just like to add that there was a Cabinet paper that would have been prepared regarding the decision of the consolidation of the school districts, which would have had a rural lens applied to it.

**MR. BENNETT:** When did these submissions come?

**MR. JACKMAN:** We got them around – I cannot give you the exact date, it is probably around the last week in February, somewhere around there.

**MR. BENNETT:** When were they requested?

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** I can get the exact dates for you, Mr. Bennett, that they were asked to do the similar exercise as other entities, and to submit – but I can get you that date. To be honest, I think it would have been early February, maybe, when they submitted.

**MR. BENNETT:** So they were requested, obviously, before that.

**MR. JACKMAN:** As we said, we can give you the exact date.

**MR. BENNETT:** Were the requests done in writing?

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** I met with the school districts and we also had discussions with the Chairs.

**MR. JACKMAN:** We had several discussions with the Chairs – a couple of face-to-face meetings, and then some online conference calls with them.

**MR. BENNETT:** Not a written request.

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** This was done through meetings with the districts.

**MR. JACKMAN:** I committed to the Chairs that I would engage them throughout the process, which we did. No, there was not a written –

**MR. BENNETT:** These meetings, where did the meetings take place?

**MR. JACKMAN:** A couple of them took place here in town, and the other ones were through teleconference.

**MR. BENNETT:** Were there minutes of the meetings?

**MR. JACKMAN:** No.

**MR. BENNETT:** Was the Minister of Rural Development consulted regarding the effect on rural parts of the Province by this change?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Well, as the deputy minister said, in the development of the Cabinet paper, all departments were asked for input.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, I understand that this is the only Province in Canada that does not have an Aboriginal curriculum program. Is that correct?

**MR. JACKMAN:** I will ask –

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** We have a person in the Department of Education who works with the Aboriginal groups. As you would know, the Inuit are actually in our schools. The Innu, we work with them and we are working with them regarding a memorandum for curriculum work with them, similarly with the Mi'kmaq; but we do have a person who is dedicated, at the Department of Education, to work with the groups.

**MR. BENNETT:** Is there written curriculum set forth for Aboriginal children?

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** I know that we have worked on some curriculum projects with the Inuit and I can say that in our early learning initiatives we have certainly worked with the groups to provide appropriate language-based posters and things for them.

Regarding other initiatives in the department, we are looking at – and I think I will ask Brad Clarke, Director of Program Development, to speak further on some of the initiatives we are planning regarding Aboriginal.

**MR. CLARKE:** There are several in the higher grades, and I am thinking from seven to twelve. The curriculum is actually flexible enough to incorporate Aboriginal culture, language, things like that of interest to each individual group.

Down in the lower grades, again, the curriculum guide itself is flexible enough to incorporate, but at those grades we have also been working with groups to produce resources in Inuktitut, in their own language, very culturally sensitive and relevant to the outcomes of that particular grade.

As well, there is another avenue that some groups have chosen to do what we call local courses, design their own curriculum. I am thinking as an example the Inuktitut language that is going on in Coastal Labrador for the Inuit, where it would be designed, we would certainly review and make sure it is at a standard and is sensitive to the students' needs at their age. That is part of their efforts to resurrect their spoken language.

**MR. BENNETT:** When you say their efforts, does that mean you do not see it as a departmental responsibility?

**MR. CLARKE:** No, quite the opposite.

Our Aboriginal consultant would be very involved in that process right from the very beginning to implementing and evaluating, but it has been our experience that the Aboriginal groups really want to be the leadership on this. They bring us in and incorporate us. We want to meet their needs, their desires, rather than sort of impose what we believe should be there. So that is my phraseology about their wants.

**MR. BENNETT:** Has a course been developed and is there a textbook?

**MR. CLARKE:** I missed that second part of the question?

**MR. BENNETT:** Has a course been developed and is there a textbook?

**MR. CLARKE:** Yes. I am thinking of particular examples. The courses on Inuktitut, yes.

**CHAIR:** Okay, Mr. Bennett.

Dale.

**MR. KIRBY:** I just wanted to go back to something earlier around the Arts Smarts and these touring artists program. Do we have a sense of how many schools are affected by cutting that program, or reducing funding, or cutting those programs, I guess (inaudible)?

**MR. JACKMAN:** I do not, but I am certain we can find out how many that would have been visited.

**MR. KIRBY:** Yes, last year.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** Do we know how many schools were visited last year?

**MR. JACKMAN:** I cannot tell you that offhand, but we can get it for you.

**MR. KIRBY:** So, I can follow up with you in writing and you can provide that information.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes, sure.

**MR. KIRBY:** Then, I guess the other thing I would be interested to know is how many artists were engaged in providing services to that?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes, you put that in your letter.

**MR. KIRBY:** Can we remember that, please? I am just talking to myself.

I want to go back to then where we were: 2.2.01, Information Management and Special Projects. In fact, before I do that, Mr. Bennett, was asking questions there and he was talking about transitional administration at the new supersized district there. Is there a plan for a transitional group of trustees?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** Are they in place?

**MR. JACKMAN:** No. We are hoping to have them out rather quickly.

**MR. KIRBY:** Rather quickly, so there is no deadline yet?

**MR. JACKMAN:** No. We are looking at a Chair and then representation from existing boards. That is what we are going now is finalizing those numbers, and we will be contacting these individuals very shortly.

**MR. KIRBY:** Are you, as minister, or is the Department of Education selecting a group of transitional trustees and the Chairs? Is that what you are saying?

**MR. JACKMAN:** What we are going to do is ensure that there is representation from the existing boards. We have not finalized yet how we will do the selection at this particular point.

**MR. KIRBY:** Has any thought been given to having those trustees select amongst themselves? It would seem if they were elected themselves rather than someone else externally doing the selecting, wouldn't it be most democratic to allow them to decide who – I am not suggesting they play a game of survivor or anything like that, that they just have sort of a simple secret ballot perhaps or that they just come up with whatever.

**MR. JACKMAN:** We are looking at that. We are looking at whether we have somebody independent, but that has not been finalized yet.

**MR. KIRBY:** We reap what we sow, that is all I will say.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** So, 2.2.01, Information Management and Special Projects, 04, Supplies, it was under spent last year and cut in half this year.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes, somebody will answer that for you.

**MR. EVANS:** That is simply just an adjustment. It was part of an expenditure management exercise we undertook this year. As result of federal funding cuts to the

Community Access Program, we were forced to look at similar restraints on the provincial side, so it is more rightsizing of the budget.

**MR. KIRBY:** So, you have fewer people and less activity so you have less need for supplies? Is that what it is?

**MR. EVANS:** That would be correct, yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** Then, under Property, Furnishings and Equipment, 2.2.01.07, there is no budget for that this year. This is along the lines of the same rationale then of the previous question.

**MR. EVANS:** Yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** You have enough. Well, that is good.

The Grants have been eliminated entirely. Was that \$725,000 provided entirely by the federal government? The budgeted amount last year was \$725,000 and that was –

**MR. JACKMAN:** There has been a \$550,000 cut through the federal program, the CAP program. The \$275,000 that you see there was the amount that was provided by government to maintain the connectivity. Connectivity exists in – this was provided to library and non-library sites. What we are expecting is that fund will not be continued but connectivity exists in these sites, so we expect that connectivity will be maintained.

**MR. KIRBY:** The Province has eliminated its share of the funding as well.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** I guess there was some question around the time whether the Province would kick in the federal share to maintain the programs so this did not happen.

**MR. JACKMAN:** What we did – it costs \$1,500 per site for connectivity and that is what that \$275,000 is for.

We provide funds to our provincial library board and they have connectivity; therefore, we anticipate that that connectivity will remain there.

**MR. KIRBY:** You are hoping that public libraries will maintain the connectivity.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** They have less money and you are hoping they are going to be able to do more with less.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Well, I think if you look at where public libraries are moving, technology is becoming more and more a part of public libraries; therefore, we do expect that connectivity will be there.

**MR. KIRBY:** Okay.

I am going to go to 3.1.01, Teaching Services. Of course, this is really a substantial portion of the department's budget.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** How many teachers is going to be lost through retirements or how many are going to retire and not be replaced?

**MR. JACKMAN:** How many are going to be retired? We are expecting just about 550, if they are going to retire –

**MR. KIRBY:** Five hundred and fifty.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** They are not going to be replaced.

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** No, they are eligible to retire, but the number of units out of the system would be the 142 plus the eighteen from decline, so 160 units is what is taken out.

The idea of the retirements is that there are that many eligible, thus we are not expecting teacher layoff.

**MR. KIRBY:** Okay.

Under Grants and Subsidies, School Boards, we have \$4.2 million less in 2013.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** Are you able to itemize then –

**MR. JACKMAN:** One of the things is there is going to be increased costs as teachers move up in the pay scale; that will be a portion of it. Then the moves that we have made in the administration piece and the learning resource, the equivalent to 142 units less.

**MR. KIRBY:** This reflects the reduction in the ratio – I guess it is really an increase in the number and the ratio for learning resources and for administrative support for the principals and vice-principals.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes. Again, we are not expecting that there will be teacher layoffs.

**MR. KIRBY:** You are not expecting that? So, it is not going to happen or you are not expecting it to happen?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Well, we can never guarantee anything with 100 per cent certainty, but we are not expecting it. You will hear some teachers who will be displaced for a period of time because you will see a natural progression of bumping rights and whatnot, but we are not expecting any teachers to be laid off.

**MR. KIRBY:** Just out of curiosity, because I did this sort of work in a previous life when I worked with the Government of Ontario in a similar department, when you are doing that modeling when it comes to seniority levels and step levels and cost per person, are you modeling it or do you have the exact numbers? Do you know –

**MR. JACKMAN:** How many teachers are at what pay scale?

**MR. KIRBY:** You have all data and you work with more or less the exact –

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes. Pay is determined by qualifications.

**MR. KIRBY:** Because all of those payrolls are being processed by your department, you are able to monitor it closely then.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** Good.

Am I out of time, or would you like to continue for another ten minutes?

**CHAIR:** You are out of time, Dale. Sorry.

**MR. JACKMAN:** I have to take a five minute.

**CHAIR:** The minister needs a three-minute break, so we will go three minutes and we will try to get back –

**MR. JACKMAN:** It is okay for you fellows; you can step out.

**CHAIR:** We are working away until noon, so can we just be quick?

Three minutes, Minister.

### Recess

**CHAIR:** Jim, I think you are up. You are on the clock.

**MR. BENNETT:** One strong critic of the math system in the Province is Dr. Sherry Mantyka and she says the department has been resistant to listening to the deep problems that the university has been experiencing with graduates from the education system in mathematics. Do you agree with that criticism?

**MR. JACKMAN:** No.

**MR. BENNETT:** Why not?

**MR. JACKMAN:** I think we made major advances in mathematics, we have streamlined our curriculum, and there is ongoing work as it relates to mathematics.

**MR. BENNETT:** Isn't it true that our mathematics scores have been declining for the last half a dozen years under this government?

**MR. JACKMAN:** I have to dig up all of the stats now, but I think our students are doing better now than they have done before.

**MR. BENNETT:** So you dispute the numbers put out by the Programme for International Student Assessment?

**MR. JACKMAN:** No.

**MR. BENNETT:** So those numbers are lower, so how can you say our students are doing better?

**MR. JACKMAN:** How do you use assessments? That is the thing about it. Any assessment that we do, whether provincial, national or international, is to inform instruction. If we look at the overall statistics over the last number of years, if you are looking at one statistic, then that is not where I am. I would look at a number of statistics, that being provincial plus international, and our students are doing better.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, the PISA scores in math increased from 2000 to 2003 and declined in 2006 to 2009, straight line down. The report which is essentially validated by Statistics Canada says that this is a statistically significant decline. Do you disagree with that?

**MR. JACKMAN:** I have heard you say that before.

**MR. BENNETT:** Have you seen the report?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes, I have.

**MR. BENNETT:** You do not agree that the numbers have gone down.

**MR. JACKMAN:** I can agree on these particular numbers. Would you agree that they have gone up in some other areas?

**MR. BENNETT:** No, they have not gone up; however, they have declined.

**MR. JACKMAN:** No, you have dug into one particular area and certainly, yes, you have found an area where our students have done not as well in this particular area. What should that do? That is the purpose of assessment and evaluation, that we identify an area where we need to address. Therefore, as a result of that assessment, that is exactly what we do.

**MR. BENNETT:** What have you done to address that decline in math scores?

**MR. JACKMAN:** I have just outlined that to you. First off, the assessment identifies an area that we need to work on. That is exactly, as I have already said, the purpose for evaluation measures: you identify an area and now you start to work to address the area of concern.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, you say you do not agree with Dr. Mantyka?

**MR. JACKMAN:** What?

**MR. BENNETT:** You do not agree with Dr. Mantyka's finding?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Look, if we have an area of concern, if it is identified by the university as a concern, we are more than willing to work with that particular individual. Would I dispute that she is having some students who are having difficulty with mathematics? No, I would not dispute that. All of that plus the assessments are what inform our PD and then inform instruction as we move forward.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, some years ago this government committed \$11.3 million to a new Excellence in Math Strategy.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. BENNETT:** Can you produce a copy of the strategy?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes, we can.

**MR. BENNETT:** Can you produce the results at the beginning and the results at the end?

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** The Excellence in Math Strategy was to take us from the curriculum when we started to implement the WNCPC, the Western and Northern Canadian Protocol, into the system. Actually, this coming year will be the last year that we will be implementing the Grade 12 courses into this particular curriculum. The Excellence in Math Strategy had many components to it over the years, and there was a lot of money pumped into that to assist with that implementation.

One of them would have been with the numeracy support teachers who were put in place to assist teachers with their mathematics knowledge, especially in the K-6 grades as that was implemented through. We have some in the higher grades as well. That was an intensity at that time to provide as the curriculum was being implemented. They have done great work with teachers. There has been a lot of work done in that model to show that teachers feel that there has been a great impact on their knowledge.

We have changed some of those units to literacy numeracy as well, in a very structured model that has been evaluated and with very, very good results. That is one of the pieces of the Excellence in Math Strategy that we would be able to comment on. As I said, this is the final year we are coming into now, which is the Grade 12.

There are many different components. There were math promotions that we went through during that time, as well, to get students talking about math, playing games, math literature, involving math in everyday life, and having parents involved in those activities. There were some parent brochures done as well of how to help their child in their numeracy literacy. There were some pamphlets done.

**MR. JACKMAN:** As the math curriculum was developed, we recognized there was an outcry from the public, parents and teachers, that we had gone too far. So a new curriculum was

developed to find a balance. An important component of that was the parent component.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, for how many years has this program now run?

**MR. JACKMAN:** How many years has it run?

**MR. BENNETT:** Yes, since it started.

**MR. JACKMAN:** It was started in 2008.

**MR. BENNETT:** Do you have the math scores at the beginning and the math scores today?

**MR. JACKMAN:** We have math scores that we would have gotten from the type of assessments that you have mentioned.

**MR. BENNETT:** So are you able to provide the math scores at the beginning and the math scores today?

**MR. JACKMAN:** We will provide you with the reports we have available to us.

**MR. BENNETT:** Thank you.

Minister, there was a commitment made by your government a number of years ago to reduce the age of school buses. Quite a number of them are still more than ten years old. The commitment was to move toward having them less than ten years old.

Can you tell us how that is done?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Before I go on to something specific, it was not ten years. I believe it was twelve, wasn't it?

**OFFICIAL:** Twelve.

**MR. JACKMAN:** It was twelve years, not ten years.

We have been working with, in particular, the private operators to ensure that. We have met them, myself and Minister Davis when he was in Service Newfoundland and Labrador. Now Minister McGrath has met with them as well. I

will get Don to speak a little bit further to that, but we are working with the association to have those things in place.

**MR. BENNETT:** How many school buses now are in operation in this Province that are more than twelve years old?

**MR. STAPLETON:** How many are more than twelve years old, did you say?

**MR. BENNETT:** Yes.

**MR. STAPLETON:** There are none that are allowed to transport children that are older than twelve years.

**MR. BENNETT:** You said none that are allowed, but are there any that are more than twelve years old?

**MR. STAPLETON:** No, there are not any.

**MR. BENNETT:** Does the Department of Education have any view on whether school buses should be equipped with seatbelts?

**MR. JACKMAN:** We have not gone there. I suppose you can look at the research either way, but we have not decided to move there.

**MR. BENNETT:** I understand from some school bus operators that some operators do not bother with buses they just use minivans in order to satisfy the contract. Do you have any information in that respect?

**MR. JACKMAN:** All I can say to you is there are contacts that are set out and agreed upon and I would expect that the contractors are meeting what is set out in their agreement. If you have individual cases where that is so, I would appreciate having them.

**CHAIR:** Dale.

**MR. KIRBY:** Thank you.

I was forgetting to point out that I am from the great historic district of St. John's North. I think everybody is getting the point now: Thimble



Cottage, O'Brien's Farm, Freshwater Valley, et cetera. That is for another time. Another committee, I think tourism and culture.

I wanted to ask – I skipped over it because I wanted to confer with our staff person – about this item under Information Management and Special Projects. This relates to the Community Access Program on 15.5.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** It says here, "Appropriations under Special Projects provide youth internship grants to public internet access sites formally funded under the Community Access Program."

What is happening with these –

**MR. JACKMAN:** That is still there. You see that in line 01 Revenue – Federal, that is the \$425,300. What that does is it allows the libraries to hire summer students to work there. The federal government has kept that in place.

**MR. KIRBY:** We still have the youth internship grants?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** Nothing has changed?

**MR. JACKMAN:** No.

**MR. KIRBY:** They are still hired as they were previously?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** Okay. Where I left off before that then, so we stopped on page 15.6 –

**MR. JACKMAN:** I thought you were at section 3.4.03.

**MR. KIRBY:** No, no, 3.1.01 Teaching Services.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** It is 10, Grants and Subsidies, Supports to Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** We have \$168,100 less in 2013.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes. That is a reduction in teaching units from six to four. There is less need for service.

**MR. KIRBY:** Gone from six down to four teaching units.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes. It is specific too. This was not part of the expenditure plan. This was just the natural evolution of students who do not require the service any more.

**MR. KIRBY:** You attribute this to cochlear implants or something?

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** This is in particular from a Cabinet Paper at the closure of the Newfoundland School for the Deaf. These are specific children who went to the School for the Deaf. They used supports put in place for them when they left, and they are working their way through. The supports for students now with cochlear implants are from a completely different teaching allocation. This is specific to the closure of the School for the Deaf.

**MR. KIRBY:** Okay.

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** We have several who have graduated now and the services are less.

**MR. KIRBY:** I see. Okay. In the same area here, Institutional has gone down by \$145,500.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes. We have reduced two teaching positions at Whitbourne.

**MR. KIRBY:** This is the two in Whitbourne?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** Then Substitute Teachers has gone up by \$2.89 million.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes. We are anticipating an increase in the substitute budget, and that is it.

**MR. KIRBY:** In the previous year's budget you spent what you had budgeted exactly. What is the reason why we would have a need for that much new funding for substitute teachers? Why would you think there is going to be a change in the teaching environment to that extent?

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** There is an increase in the sick leave in the trends, actually, but then of course you would have different steps on the scale for teachers as well that you are balancing off in that particular amount. There is an increase in recent years in terms of the numbers. It depends then on which teachers are sick, those who replace them, and where they are on the scale.

**MR. KIRBY:** That sounds reasonable.

Subhead 3.1.02, School Board Operations, under 09, Allowances and Assistance to school board operations.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Somebody mentioned earlier that when they could not stay in the community the family moved. This is bursaries. We have less students taking bursaries now.

**MR. KIRBY:** Under which line here?

**MR. JACKMAN:** You are under 3.1.02.09, Allowances and Assistance?

**MR. KIRBY:** Yes, there was \$12,000 under spent but it is budgeted to be the same amount.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes, because people may still avail of it. What we have found this year is that is not the case. I can speak to an example in my own district where normally kids would leave in Grade 9 and Grade 10, but it is not happening now.

**MR. KIRBY:** Is that because of CDLI?

**MR. JACKMAN:** No, I think that some people are just opting to move with their children. Rather than send them off to a school on a bursary, they have decided to go with them.

**MR. KIRBY:** Okay.

Then under the next line 10, Grants and Subsidies, the Regular Operating Grant has been cut by almost \$2.4 million. Can you itemize that in terms of staffing or whatever it is we are losing in terms of services?

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** Well, between the Regular Operating Grants and the administrative grants, this is where you would see the large majority of the savings from the expenditures from the board that they put forward as well as those involved in consolidation.

**MR. KIRBY:** This is a savings as a result of the consolidation of the four English boards?

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** Some of it; and in terms of the regional offices as well, the closure of the regional offices would be part of this.

**CHAIR:** Minister.

**MR. JACKMAN:** In addition to what Janet said, there is an organization, the Newfoundland and Labrador School Boards Association; there was a position that would have been related to that. We have eliminated that as well.

**MR. KIRBY:** They will be a non-entity now in the future, right, the Newfoundland and Labrador School Boards Association?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. KIRBY:** Then the Administration Grant right underneath there has been reduced by almost \$3.6 million.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes. There are savings that have been identified by individual boards. It is also related to the reduction in school board operations. The consolidation of the regional offices, we decided that those regional offices now, the staff that are there will be placed in the schools. So, there will be some redundancies and some relocation savings.

**MR. KIRBY:** Do you have a number of positions we are talking about under there?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes, but we are still working through that with the boards and the transition teams. At this particular time, until we get this information and form the transition team and get this information to them, I will be releasing it after that. You can come over and see me at any time.

**MR. KIRBY:** All of the positions are currently listed on the public Web sites of all of those boards. That is really only publicly accessible information when it comes to the positions that we have now. I am just wondering how it is we are going to know how many fewer positions are –

**MR. JACKMAN:** Well, as we work through this process that will become known.

**MR. KIRBY:** I guess it will become obvious to individuals. How do I find out about it as a legislator?

**MR. JACKMAN:** You can keep checking with me. I have invited you over.

**CHAIR:** Okay. Thank you, Dale.

Jim.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, I would like to ask you about Distance Learning.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. BENNETT:** Can you tell me how many students currently take part in Distance Learning?

**MR. JACKMAN:** I cannot tell you right off the top of my head but we can certainly get it for you.

**MR. BENNETT:** How many teachers are involved?

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** We have thirty-eight courses in 103 schools. I can tell you that, Mr. Bennett. I can say to you that coming up in September we will have twenty-nine CDLI teachers, plus a principal.

**MR. BENNETT:** Is the number growing, or shrinking, or staying even?

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** I can get the exact numbers, but I think they are pretty stable. We are always bringing on new courses and new students. As you said, it has been very, very successful.

**CHAIR:** Minister.

**MR. JACKMAN:** I think the demand is going to increase.

**MR. BENNETT:** Is it more for smaller, rural schools or for specialty urban courses? How does it work?

**MR. JACKMAN:** I think right now it is becoming more of a – it started out as something that you were going to provide to the more rural areas, and I think that would still be the bulk of it. As it progresses you are going to have more and more people availing of it, and so they should have the opportunity.

**MR. BENNETT:** Are there any hiring vacancies right now?

**MR. JACKMAN:** No, there is not. Let me just see, what section are we on here now? Are you at the section there now?

**MR. BENNETT:** No, I am just going from my notes.

**MR. JACKMAN:** What section is CDLI?

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** That is right at the back.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes, 15.12. You are asking, are there any vacancies?

**MR. BENNETT:** Yes, teaching vacancies.

**MR. JACKMAN:** No.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, last year's budget was \$6,442,600 and it was fully subscribed, which would be perfect budgeting I would think.

This year it has been cut by \$800,000. What are we losing this year that we had last year?

**MR. JACKMAN:** We are taking some positions out of it. We have one position that is retiring, and we are paying until the end of August. So we will not have to pay from September onward. We are taking some positions out of it, and these courses are still offered.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, this is an \$800,000 drop. This is as much as 15 per cent of the overall budget.

**MR. JACKMAN:** If we go down through all of it, we can take a look at a number of areas, because you are looking at the bottom line. For example, as I have outlined, one of the reasons is the position I talked about that we will not be funding for six months.

If I look to Transportation, what we are saying is for CDLI now, because we are offering it through that medium the division is looking at decreasing their travel. If I look at Professional Services, this budget reduced. What they are going to be doing is completing some of the professional service work within the department.

If I look at another item on property and furnishings, CDLI will look at reducing the number of purchases they are making and extending the refresh cycle. There is a whole gamut as to why the reduction overall.

**MR. BENNETT:** If you go to the next line, and I noticed you stopped at that one. If you go on to Grants and Subsidies, last year it was \$3.727 million and this year it is being dropped by \$300,000. For the 10 per cent, what are we losing?

**MR. JACKMAN:** You are losing some positions.

**MR. BENNETT:** Some teaching positions?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. BENNETT:** I thought earlier it was important that it was not shrinking?

**MR. JACKMAN:** We are still maintaining the courses and the programs are still intact.

**CHAIR:** Janet.

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** For an example, Mr. Bennett, there is an art teacher retiring. We have another art teacher who is able to deliver the CDLI art curriculum. That would be one example. Similarly, there is a chemistry teacher retiring, and we have other chemistry teachers. Another is in French and we have several French teachers.

In terms of covering the curriculum pieces, we are confident we can do that with the teachers we have. In terms of the other position, one of the other positions was a lab assistant that we have. We are cutting one of those positions, so we still have one. The other one was a French first language, where we have very small subscription we are able to handle that through a rotational basis with the schools, in consultation with the school.

**MR. BENNETT:** Are there any courses that could be offered if you had funds to do so?

**MR. JACKMAN:** As an example, I suppose, there was a point when I was at the school and the primary courses that were offered would have been advanced math, advanced physics, science, and these types of things. Now we offer courses in music, art, and even skilled trades.

So, on a request basis, we will make those determinations. If we have an increased demand for it, then we will make application and we would put it in the budget cycle.

**MR. BENNETT:** Who makes such a demand? Is it teachers or students, or parents?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Well, individual schools will determine that. If there is a course that an administration, in consultation with boards, thinks that can be offered through CDLI, then they will make application.

**MR. BENNETT:** So all of this will be done by one board now?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes.

**MR. BENNETT:** Instead of –

**MR. JACKMAN:** We have one overseeing board that will be involved in that. As I said before, that strong educational presence within these regional offices are going to determine that. I can assure you on the Burin Peninsula where we have an SEO that is still in place who works with these ten or twelve schools, if they identify a need, it is going to work its way through the system. Then we put in place what needs to be put in place.

**MR. BENNETT:** Minister, are you saying every school course that people want is being offered through CDLI?

**MR. JACKMAN:** You make application, and you make a case for it.

Like Janet mentioned earlier with the French one, the uptake on the French is not such that we can offer it every year. So we offer it on a rotational basis. Schools make determination as to what course offerings are needed and then through allocations it is determined through the boards if it gets offered.

**MR. BENNETT:** Does that mean you get French one year and not the next year?

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** Just a couple of points there. No, core French is offered every year, and French first language courses are offered every year.

**MR. BENNETT:** What was the minister saying?

**MR. JACKMAN:** It depends. When I was in a particular school, it may not have. Because of course selections, I could offer Distance Learning as French this year but not next year. You could have a student – you may not be familiar with the school system as much, but I may have a Grade 11 student who could be

doing French 3200. They may not get it in Grade 11 but they get it the following year because courses in high school – there is a course selection method. I can sit down some time and explain that to you if you want.

**MR. BENNETT:** Is there a catalogue of available courses that you have –

**MR. JACKMAN:** Sure there is. There are course selection sheets.

**MR. BENNETT:** Everybody knows what all of them are?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Sure they do.

**MR. BENNETT:** They know if they are available through CDLI?

**MR. JACKMAN:** If you are familiar with Grade 9 students, you will hear – if you have not already heard – sessions being held by schools where parents and students will come in and start to select courses they will do through their high school. Every year course selection sheets go out and students select.

**MR. BENNETT:** Do I understand you to say that there is no more that you can do with CDLI?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Who said that?

**MR. BENNETT:** Well, you are cutting back the funding by \$300,000.

**MR. JACKMAN:** We explained to you that the courses are still available. We have a demand in a particular area that would be less than it would. I hope you would not suggest that despite not having demand there that we put a course on anyway.

**MR. BENNETT:** What I am suggesting, Minister, is –

**MR. JACKMAN:** What we are looking at is that we do it, if there is demand for the courses then we work our way through an allocation process.

**MR. BENNETT:** What I am suggesting is if you save money due to retirement, why would you not replace the person who is doing the job instead of overloading other people?

**CHAIR:** Janet.

**MS VIVIAN-WALSH:** No, we feel we can handle the demands there.

To get back to your point on the courses, CDLI is actually part of the Department of Education. We have a director, Jim Tuff, who is the Director of Centre for Distance Learning. We meet regularly with the school districts and the assistant directors of programs. The decisions around the programming are decided through the needs of the district. We feel very confident that the districts feel well serviced.

Now, in some of the courses, what you are going to have here is just like any high school principal is trying to decide their schedule, we will be able to offer in all cases the same courses. The only exception may be – and we will have to wait and see if it is a maybe – would be depending on what the French first language students would choose this particular year or another year as to how we will offer that. The programs that we talked about with the retired teachers and all that, the programming will still be offered and we feel we can handle the numbers that are in those courses.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Individual schools work with school board officials and work with the people at the Centre for Distance Learning, and then we determine the schedule.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

We are approaching noon, and noon is our traditional break. Obviously there is some more work to be done. I am not sure, Jim or Dale: Do you have additional questions that are going to take some time?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes, you are not going to get it done now.

**CHAIR:** I would suggest that we break. We have a little bit of formality, Minister.

Just before we do the formality, I want to thank you and your staff this morning for taking the time to come before the Committee and answer all the questions that have been posed to you this morning.

We will discuss, Minister, an appropriate time if it will meet your schedule. I will work with the members and let the members know when that would be, if that is okay with you.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Okay.

**CHAIR:** Good.

I want to again thank your staff and thank you, Minister.

We have one piece of business. I need a motion to approve the minutes of the Estimates Committee for April 15, 2013 for the Department of Municipal Affairs.

**MR. LITTLE:** So moved.

**CHAIR:** Moved by Mr. Little.

Can I have a seconder?

Seconded by Mr. Cornect.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

On motion, minutes adopted as circulated.

**CHAIR:** Can I have a motion to adjourn?

**MR. POLLARD:** So moved.

**CHAIR:** Moved by Mr. Pollard.

Seconded by Mr. Little.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

Thank you. We are adjourned at 11:57 a.m.

On motion, the Committee adjourned.