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Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

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Honourable Wade Verge, MHA

SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Chair: Glenn Littlejohn, MHA

Vice-Chair: Stelman Flynn, MHA

Members:

Tony Cornect, MHA

Lisa Dempster, MHA

Glen Little, MHA

Kevin Pollard, MHA

Gerry Rogers, MHA

Clerk of the Committee: Sandra Barnes

Appearing:

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Hon. Sandy Collins, MHA, Minister Responsible for Early Childhood Development (Acting)

Hon. Derrick Dalley, MHA, Minister of Education (Acting)

Ingrid Clarke, Assistant Deputy Minister, Infrastructure

Mary Goss-Prowse, Director, Child Development

Blair Medd, Director, Communications

Joan Morris, Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services

Lori O'Keefe, Executive Assistant

Tracy Stamp, Financial Manager

Don Stapleton, Departmental Controller

Janet Vivian-Walsh, Deputy Minister

Ed Walsh, Assistant Deputy Minister, K-12 Education and Early Childhood Development

Also Present

Dale Kirby, MHA

Lorraine Michael, MHA

Kim Ploughman, Researcher, Official Opposition Office.

Susan Williams, Researcher, NDP Office

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Dale Kirby, MHA for St. John's North, substitutes for Lisa Dempster, MHA for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair.

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Lorraine Michael, MHA for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi, substitutes for Gerry Rogers, MHA for St. John's Centre.

The Committee met at 6:00 p.m. in the Assembly Chamber.

CHAIR (Littlejohn): Good evening everyone.

Welcome to the Social Services Committee. Welcome, Minister, and your team for this evening.

This evening we have Education and Early Childhood Development. Minister, we are going to do Early Childhood Development First, I understand. For Committee members, that would be beginning on page 16.13 and 16.14, section 3.5.01 to section 3.5.04.

Minister, I am going to just ask you to introduce yourself and your team and then I will ask us to introduce ourselves. We will get started, if that is okay with you.

MR. S. COLLINS: Great, sounds good.

My name is Sandy Collins. I am the Acting Minister for Early Childhood Development and also the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services. I am joined here by a number of individuals. I will pass it over to the DM, Janet, if she wants to begin.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Okay. Janet Vivian-Walsh, Deputy Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

MS MORRIS: Joan Morris, Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services, Education and Early Childhood Development.

CHAIR: On that far end.

MR. STAPLETON: Don Stapleton, Departmental Controller, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

MS CLARKE: Ingrid Clarke, ADM, Infrastructure, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

MR. WALSH: Ed Walsh, Assistant Deputy Minister, K-12 Education and Early Childhood Development.

MR. MEDD: Blair Medd, Director of Communications, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

CHAIR: The red light, Lori, I think.

OFFICIAL: No.

CHAIR: Okay.

MS GOSS-PROWSE: Mary Goss-Prowse, I am Acting Director of Family and Child Development at the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

MS STAMP: Tracy Stamp, Manager of Budgeting, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

MS O'KEEFE: Lori O'Keefe, Executive Assistant, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

CHAIR: Dale, if we could start with you. We will go across the front row and then the back row, please.

MR. KIRBY: Dale Kirby, MHA, St. John's North.

MS PLOUGHMAN: Hi. Kim Ploughman, Opposition Researcher.

MS MICHAEL: Lorraine Michael, MHA, Signal Hill- Quidi Vidi.

MS WILLIAMS: Susan Williams, Researcher.

MR. CORNECT: Tony Cornect, MHA, Port au Port.

MR. LITTLE: Glen Little, MHA, Bonavista South.

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

CHAIR: Thank you and welcome all.

Minister, you do get fifteen minutes, if you wish, to have opening remarks, or we can go right into it. It is up to you.

MR. S. COLLINS: I will take it that you are suggesting we go right into it. I will forgo the formalities. I cannot speak for Minister Dalley; he may want to have some opening remarks. I think we can get right into it, if it is fine with everyone else.

CHAIR: Okay, I am going to ask the Clerk to call the first subhead please.

CLERK (Ms Barnes): Subhead 3.5.01.

CHAIR: Dale, it is all yours.

MR. KIRBY: Okay. Can I just ask a question from the start? Boy that is awfully loud. In terms of programmatic questions that –

CHAIR: That will be at the choice of the minister whether the minister answers programmatic questions or not.

MR. KIRBY: Are you suggesting that I should try to keep them under –

CHAIR: Keep them under the line items and I think we should be fine.

MR. KIRBY: I do not want to go past anything and not be able to get there.

CHAIR: I just want to remind members that we will direct questions to the minister and the minister can defer to the appropriate staff individual, if he so chooses. I ask that you wait for your red light to come on before you speak and identify yourselves please.

Thank you.

Dale.

MR. KIRBY: With that clarification though, from time to time I might ask does such and such fall under this heading just so we do not move ahead.

The first one we are at here, 3.5.01, this is Early Childhood Learning. Those Salaries here; there are two permanent people within that. Is that correct? That appropriation for \$344,700, how many staff people does that represent Salaries wise?

CHAIR: Janet, are you taking that one, or, Minister, are you?

MR. S. COLLINS: Just one moment there now. Bear with us please.

CHAIR: Okay.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Two permanent and three temporary for a total of five.

MR. KIRBY: Three temporary. So we have the two permanent Program Development Specialists in the administrative office. What are the staff roles for the three temporary?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Currently the director is also temporary, which is a process ongoing at this time. Rather than speak specifically to that I will pass that over to Mr. Walsh to see if he has further information on the two other temporary.

MR. WALSH: As was noted, two of the individuals are permanent and one of them would be temporary; the director's position. I am going to guess that the other two positions – no, I am going to mix those up now with child care.

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: We will have to get some clarification for Mr. Kirby on that.

MR. KIRBY: Okay. Why would the director be temporary or classified as temporary?

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: That particular position, when it was first put in as a director and hired, it was in temporary, but the actual salary was in base. So we have moved to make that permanent, but the salary dollars are in base.

MR. KIRBY: The position is going to be made permanent?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: That is the intent, yes.

MR. KIRBY: Okay.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: I should add there were two positions, as well, in full-day kindergarten in last Budget 2014; one was an Administrative Assistant and the other was a consultant, but those were to be permanent. Thus, I need to check on the category that is here in my notes.

MR. KIRBY: Okay. Thanks.

Under Professional Services, there seems to be an increase – there is an increase in current Estimates. There was budgeted \$195,000, then there was an over-expenditure there of \$20,000, and now it has gone up fairly significantly.

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. S. COLLINS: Yes. With regard to the \$215,000 and the \$20,000 you just referred to, costs of some contract work was higher than anticipated. The need to have custom-designed puffin artwork for Kinderstart nesting dolls and creative design work for Learning from the Start Strategy; that would be the \$20,000.

MR. KIRBY: So \$20,000 for customized art?

MR. S. COLLINS: I think that is just a part of it.

Can we speak in a little bit more detail to that, what else was contained?

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: There is also some customized artwork for the strategy, Learning from the Start, included in that.

MR. KIRBY: Then basically the jump from what was budgeted last year to what we are budgeting this year.

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. S. COLLINS: That was the ‘annualization’ of full-day kindergarten funding that was added in 2014-2015. You are talking about the \$185,000?

CHAIR: The \$380,000.

MR. KIRBY: That is the increase, yes.

MR. S. COLLINS: Yes.

MR. KIRBY: Sorry, it is what?

MR. S. COLLINS: The ‘annualization’ of full-day kindergarten funding that was added in 2014-2015.

MR. KIRBY: Can you elaborate on that at all? The ‘annualization’ of full-day kindergarten was one hundred and –

MR. S. COLLINS: Eighty-five thousand.

MR. KIRBY: That seems like a rather low –

MR. S. COLLINS: Again, this was for professional services, not so much the program itself.

MR. KIRBY: Professional services for what, curriculum development or something like that? Is this the engineers who are –?

MR. S. COLLINS: No.

Do you have any details on that, Janet?

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: The additional monies there for 2015-2016, which gives the increase of \$185,000, is involved in a video series that we are doing, a legacy series for the summer institutes. That would be on the play-based learning that we could use for the professional learning that is associated with full-day kindergarten. So there would be a professional development piece of that legacy piece. As well as there is \$35,000 involved in the screening and assessment in the early years evaluation tools.

MR. KIRBY: Then that summer institute that the minister announced in August of last year, that is for professional development. So that is going ahead this summer, is it?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: There will be plans for another summer institute. I could ask Ed for information on that, if he has anything further,

but, yes, it would be used for professional learning associated with full-day kindergarten.

MR. KIRBY: Okay.

I do not know if it is appropriate to ask this question here or not. Is that professional development that the minister announced in August of last year, the summer institute for 2015?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: That would have been one institute; that is correct. That was for both educators and early childhood educators as well. Both teachers and early childhood educators.

Similarly, we will be planning another one like that but we would be using this series for all of the professional development for full-day kindergarten.

MR. KIRBY: Where is the professional development institute taking place this summer?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: I would have to say here. I will just defer to Mr. Walsh to see if he has any further details, but the plans were to have another summer institute.

Mr. Walsh.

MR. WALSH: The planning for the summer institute is underway. I do not believe at this stage that the location has actually been finalized. Last year that session took place at the district school on Strawberry Marsh Road. As I said, there are no firm details on the actual location but the planning for it is underway.

MR. KIRBY: Okay. I was just wondering if it will be hosted by the Faculty of Education or involve the College of the North Atlantic or –?

MR. WALSH: I do not have those details at this stage.

MR. KIRBY: But you are planning to have a summer institute for PD this summer?

MR. WALSH: Yes, that is correct.

MR. KIRBY: There was a large, in Dale Kirby terms, reduction in expenditure. Initially, we budgeted \$944,100 in the budget last year for

Purchased Services and did not spend all of that, so there were savings there. I would be interested to hear what that is all about. Then we are purchasing a whole lot less of something this year than we did last.

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. S. COLLINS: With regard to the first revised number there of \$324,100, some zero three resources purchased for approximately \$250,000 should have been out of Supplies and not out of Purchased Services. Things such as board books should have been considered textbooks under Supplies. I think that is where the error was made. The error has been corrected for 2015-2016 Budget.

Also, there is a cost savings of approximately \$75,000 due to late start-up of twenty-four and thirty-six month parent resource kit pilot, and reduced need to purchase additional twenty-four and thirty-six month parent resource kit items.

MR. KIRBY: Okay, a couple of things. Those parent resource kits, does that fall under any particular strategy or is that part of the 10-year child care strategy?

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: This whole section, Mr. Kirby, was in the Department of Education prior to the combining of the departments. So this particular one would have been part of Learning from the Start for the zero to three initiatives. We started off with the six-month kit, then the twelve month, the eighteen month. The twenty-four and the thirty-six is what we are working on there now. These were kits that we started off in education prior to and were distributed through with the help of the Department of Health and the public health nurses.

MR. KIRBY: Okay.

What is the status of the thirty-six month kit?

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: I believe the thirty-six is in pilot stage at this time.

Mr. Walsh, could you confirm that? I know that the six, twelve and eighteen, and I think maybe the twenty-four are now provincial, but I will defer to Mr. Walsh.

CHAIR: Mr. Walsh.

MR. WALSH: The thirty-six month kit is in pilot at this stage, moving to full implementation in September.

MR. KIRBY: Has that been the process with all of these kits, the pilot, the six, the twelve, and the eighteen and so on?

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: They are in provincial.

MR. KIRBY: They have all been piloted have they?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Yes.

MR. KIRBY: The other question, you said there was an error and there were supplies and it was moved somewhere else. What line in the budget was that amount of funds moved to, do you know?

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. S. COLLINS: It should have been out of Supplies, correct?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Correct.

MR. S. COLLINS: It was moved to Supplies.

MR. KIRBY: Just above Supplies you mean. So that is why there is such a big bump there.

MR. S. COLLINS: Yes.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: That is right. You will notice the flipping of the two there. If you will notice that the large amount in 2015-2016 is in Supplies versus Purchased Services, whereas the reverse is true in the revised. The larger amount now would be in Supplies where the board books will come out of. The board books were considered textbooks and should be under Supplies.

MR. KIRBY: Okay.

There was a lot less, I guess, provided for Grants and Subsidies last year than was initially budgeted for. What would have been the reason for such a large decrease in that actual expenditure?

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. S. COLLINS: The revised is just over \$430,000. The cost savings are due to a difficulty in recruiting qualified facilitators for the early literacy partnership with the public libraries. Three separate competitions were held with no successful applicants. The most recent competition was held in January 2015 and resulted in some potential applicants.

MR. KIRBY: How many people was that supposed to employ? How many contracts?

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: First, there are two programs that we are referring to here. The Every Child Ready to Read is the one that the people in the libraries are actually doing. The one we are having difficulty with is the Early Literacy Foundations. Actually, that particular program – as Minister Collins has said, we have put in the ads for that.

We started off with a pilot in that from January to April in twelve communities. That was in April of 2014. That was the Early Literacy Foundations program which was good. Phase 2 from April to July was in eleven and Phase 3 occurred from September to December. We had some success in the pilot piece, Mr. Kirby.

There were thirty-two programs offered throughout the three phases. However, due to the difficulty that is mentioned here – and I will see if Ed knows the exact number. We are trying to retain early literacy facilitators and there were multiple numbers that we were trying to hire. My understanding is that even through the three competitions we have not been successful in finding the skill set that is needed for this particular program.

We are looking at some options. This has happened last year as well. I do not know if you

recall that. We had this difficulty with the number of facilitators for this particular program. Though the other one is working well in the library, this particular one requires more space. It is younger children and perhaps some more space for change tables and things to make it more comfortable for parents, and shelving and things for the kinds of materials that you would use. The actual skill set has been a difficulty.

We are looking at some options of how we can do this. We do not want to go down this path again where we are not able to offer this program. We are looking at if there are any other ways of offering this program to get the skill set that we need.

The actual number of positions, I will see if Ed can answer that for you, Mr. Kirby.

CHAIR: Ed.

MR. WALSH: The number of positions that we had attempted to fill was as Janet noted. We started out with fourteen, then eleven, and then four.

Before we got to the point where the program could be fully implemented – well not to the point where it was fully implemented – we continued to have recruitment issues with the facilitators we were looking to run the program with the families. As was noted, we had three separate competitions. We actually entered eighteen individuals. None of the eighteen individuals met the minimum requirements, which is an ECE Level II. That is the minimum requirement that we were looking for.

As was noted, we are exploring some other options to ensure that type of programming is available for families, children, and parents throughout the Province. That is something we are currently working on.

MR. KIRBY: Is that part-time work or full-time work?

MR. WALSH: The intention would be for it to be full-time work split between working with families and then working with families and children, but also working on the administrative side as well.

CHAIR: Okay, Dale, can I hold you there and come back? Lorraine, please.

MS MICHAEL: Okay. Thank you.

Let's go down to 3.5.02, Child Care Services – Policy and Programs. There is not a lot to ask about here in terms of the line items. Under Salaries last year it was \$566,500 and both the budget and revised were the same. This year, it is going up by \$159,000. Could we have an explanation of that please, Minister?

CHAIR: Sandy.

MR. S. COLLINS: That was funding for two temporary positions relating to full-day Kindergarten.

MS MICHAEL: Could you repeat that again.

MR. S. COLLINS: Yes, two temporary positions relating to full-day Kindergarten. Plus you had your 3 per cent salary increases involved in that as well.

MS MICHAEL: Okay.

I notice that in terms of the permanent positions, there are four under the permanent positions, right? Oh no, seven. I am sorry. There are categories; the program and policy development specialist.

The expenses with regard to the running of this division are static, there is absolutely no change. Could we have a description? I know we have what the appropriations provide for, but could we have a better idea of the actual work that these seven are doing, especially the program and policy development specialists?

Are they just working in their offices? It does not look like they do much travel outside. Is there consultation going on, just to get an idea of what it is that they do for people in that position.

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: In this particular division here, this is the part of the division that came with us, Ms Michael, from Child, Youth and Family Services.

MS MICHAEL: Okay.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: There were two pieces that came with us. It was the group that came, in terms of policy, that are here located in the St. John's office and then we have the regional staff. There was a large number in the regional staff that came with us.

In these two areas we would have nine people in this particular Division of Family and Child Development policy. We would have a total of fifty-six people in the regions dealing with everything from child care, licences, inspections and those kinds of things in the regions, and dealing with subsidies and all of those kinds of things.

To get back to your point in terms of policy, the people in this division would be doing everything from handling subsidy supplements; they would be looking at the operating grant. You would be looking at all aspects of the 10-Year Child Care Strategy. There is a significant amount of work, as you know, in that area. There are family resource centres and on it goes. I could go down through the whole listing there.

There are two completely different groups; we have the regional staff which is being supported by the group in here. This particular year, as you can see here, the monies from when we came together in October, the end of September, October 1, 2014, all of the monies – though the functions happened in our new department, the actual money stayed within Child, Youth and Family Services until the changeover for this fiscal.

MS MICHAEL: Right.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Thus, it is a significant amount of people involved in that section.

I will pass it over to Ed, or to Mary Goss-Prowse who is Acting Director here now, for any particular pieces if you would like to ask anything in terms of other policy pieces.

MS MICHAEL: No, I think you have given me an idea there. I would like to know – it looks like over \$200,000 is there for the temporary workers. What would the temporary workers be doing?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: That is part of the full-day kindergarten program. We are transitioning – as you know in the child care centres, there would be students there half time taking up a full space. Financially, for child care centres that becomes a challenge.

This was discussed in part of the whole plan of full-day Kindergarten. The paper on full-day Kindergarten was put together by both departments, by Child, Youth and Family Services at the time and ourselves, to look at a transition for child care centres and what that means. These two workers will be involved in – these are transition positions. One would be a financial position, one would be more involved in a consultant policy piece that would be looking at this transition; thus, they are temporary positions.

MS MICHAEL: Okay.

They would be involved then, especially the program policy development specialist, in having things ready for the start of the all-day kindergarten, when it is starting in September 2016?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Yes, that is the plan. Right now we would be recruiting these two right away as full-day kindergarten is scheduled for September of 2016.

I will just pass it over to Ed or to Mary, if they would like to add to that, but these two positions you are referring to would be transition positions.

CHAIR: Ed or Mary, which?

MR. WALSH: Ed Walsh.

CHAIR: Ed.

MR. WALSH: Yes, the recruitment process for those positions is underway. They will be working with other branches or other divisions within the branch that have responsibility for the implementation of full-day kindergarten, including Early Childhood Development and the Programs Division. So it will be working hand in hand.

MS MICHAEL: Okay.

Could you remind me, I probably have heard this but I cannot remember, how many schools will have the all-day kindergarten in September, this coming September – or 2016, rather?

MR. WALSH: In 2016, the plan is for all schools to have full-day kindergarten.

MS MICHAEL: Okay. Then this September coming, are there any who are going to have it in September 2015?

No, everybody will start at 2016.

MR. WALSH: The only schools that have full-day kindergarten in the public system are the French School District.

MS MICHAEL: Okay, thank you very much.

I have so many papers here I want to make sure I have the right page that I am looking at.

Okay, if we could then look at 3.5.03.

CHAIR: Subhead 3.5.03 on page 16.14, Ms Michael?

MS MICHAEL: Yes.

CHAIR: Okay.

MS MICHAEL: Child Care Services – Regional Operations. Looking at the Salaries, we have a slight increase in the Salaries here, \$115,200. Is there a new position involved in that?

MR. S. COLLINS: That would just be, simply, the 3 per cent salary increases that would account for the \$115,000.

MS MICHAEL: Okay, good enough.

Coming down to 09, Allowances and Assistance. Under Allowances and Assistance, in 2014-2015 there was \$1.5 million approximately not spent over the budgeted amount, but in 2015-2016 we are going to have a \$2.6 million increase over last year's budget. Could we have an explanation of that, please?

MR. S. COLLINS: Yes. With regard to the revised \$1.5 million, that was due to the uptake

of the Child Care Subsidy and Early Learning and Child Care Supplement. It was lower than budgeted.

MS MICHAEL: Okay.

MR. S. COLLINS: Then further to the other, with regard to 2015-2016, the \$2.6 million that you referred to is an increase in funding for the 10-Year Child Care Strategy.

MS MICHAEL: Can we have an idea, so \$2.6 million – repeat again how you said that, Minister.

MR. S. COLLINS: Yes. For the 2015-2016, there was an increase of \$2.649 million.

MS MICHAEL: Yes.

MR. S. COLLINS: It was an increase of funding for the 10-Year Child Care Strategy.

MS MICHAEL: Right.

MR. S. COLLINS: We have seen year over year increases in funding to implement that strategy, and that is representative of that.

MS MICHAEL: What would the implementation of the strategy involve?

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: You are referring to the subsidy there, Ms Michael?

MS MICHAEL: Yes.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: There is a subsidy review underway. That review has been complete. The first draft of the subsidy program and what we would be looking at has been submitted at the ADM level. We are working on that piece. So there is a piece of work there that – well, changes are definitely forthcoming for the subsidy program and the increase there would certainly be involved with that, the review of that and the changes to that.

Mary, would you like to add to that?

CHAIR: Mary.

MS GOSS-PROWSE: We anticipate that with the reviews there will be a higher than there has been in the past for the subsidy program. In addition, it is one that is dependent on people who apply. So, hopefully we will see with the revisions to the program that there will be more people able to avail of it. There is also a small increase there for the ELCC Supplement.

MS MICHAEL: Okay.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Just a follow-up, Lorraine.

MS MICHAEL: Yes. Could I just – yes.

CHAIR: Yes.

MS MICHAEL: Just to ask, could we have a breakdown of the amounts for the different groups that get subsidies? If you do not, you do not have to give it to us now or give it to us in writing. If you have it, it would be great to hear it, and also receive it in writing.

CHAIR: Minister, if you have the Grants and Subsidies list –

MR. S. COLLINS: I can certainly endeavour to try to get that.

CHAIR: I guess if you have the Grants and Subsidies list, if you could provide it to Ms Michael, and to Mr. Kirby, because I am sure he would want a copy as well. So what you provide to one you would provide to the other, and that is kind of a given.

MR. S. COLLINS: Okay.

CHAIR: Okay, thank you.

MS MICHAEL: Okay, thank you.

CHAIR: Okay.

Dale.

MR. KIRBY: Does the funding under this area cover –

CHAIR: Okay. Where are we exactly, Dale, just to make sure –

MR. KIRBY: Where you left off there.

CHAIR: Where you left off?

MR. KIRBY: It is 3.5.03.10.

CHAIR: Okay, 3.5.03.10, good.

MR. KIRBY: The 3.5.03, does that cover, we will call it the majority of the funding for the 10-Year Child Care Strategy? Is it correct to assume that? That is where it is, right?

I just wanted to ask a couple of questions about the program. I have been asking in the House of Assembly and talking about the inclusion supports review that was supposed to be completed at the end of 2014, I believe. Is that something that is going on?

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: The inclusion review is complete as well, and that particular one is under review by executive.

Ed, would you like to add to that, in terms of timing?

CHAIR: Ed.

MR. WALSH: As Janet noted, the review of the Inclusion Supports Program has been completed, and there is a draft policy with executive for review. We would expect within the coming months that that policy will be fully completed and released to stakeholders.

MR. KIRBY: Okay, thanks.

What about the centralized child care registry? That is also something I was asking Minister Sullivan about in December.

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Minister Sullivan had asked for some changes to the registry, and we are tweaking that right now. That is in its final stages there now, but there were some additional pieces that we added to it.

MR. KIRBY: Yes. One of the big problems, I find, is we really need a registry for day homes.

I know that a family resource centre has some data – I do not know how complete it is – the CUPW Family Resource Centre. Just recently, there was a raft of people asking me if I knew of any day home spaces that were available.

It is really something that – if that is a change that she suggested, you are on the right path. It is a real problem for people to locate it because you are looking at Kijiji, Facebook, and all the sort of desperate – if there was a way to connect all of those better, that would be helpful. It is just a suggestion.

Another thing that we have been asking questions about is the voluntary Operating Grant Program. I had a letter from – I am not sure which minister now, it might be Minister Collins. Yes, it was Minister Collins. I do not have it before me, but it was about the number of applicants. I believe there was a Ministerial Statement subsequent to that about the number of applicants.

We are wondering if it was possible to give us a breakdown of how many of those are applicants to that program. I believe it was thirty-six you said, or thirty-four.

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. S. COLLINS: Forty-five applications, thirty-eight of which are approved.

MR. KIRBY: Okay, so there are thirty-eight approved. This letter is a bit outdated then. How many of the thirty-eight – how many did you say? Forty –

MR. S. COLLINS: Forty-five in total.

MR. KIRBY: Forty-five and thirty-eight.

MR. S. COLLINS: Yes. Seven are in the review process.

MR. KIRBY: Do you have a breakdown on how many are private operators versus not for profit?

MR. S. COLLINS: We have a regional breakdown, Dale, but not with regard to private.

MR. KIRBY: It would be good to know that.

MR. S. COLLINS: Okay.

MR. KIRBY: Is it possible to break that out that way, somehow, for the forty-five and the thirty-eight? I think that is sort of a key question. Then if you break that out further by region it might give us a good sense of where it is all flowing. Those are questions that have been asked to me by stakeholders.

MR. S. COLLINS: Dale, as I said, the regional breakdown, I have that available now. Did you want to get those numbers?

MR. KIRBY: That is Metro, Western, Central East, and Labrador, right?

MR. S. COLLINS: Correct. Yes.

Metro is thirteen, Western is eight, Central is fifteen, and Labrador is nine.

MR. KIRBY: Okay.

If you could look at breaking it out in terms of private or not for profit, or whatever, we will follow up with you looking for that. We want to know the status of that.

MR. S. COLLINS: Sure.

MR. KIRBY: Those first two that I mentioned, the inclusion supports and the centralized child care registry, are things that we had anticipated seeing earlier than now. Do you anticipate any other delays? Are there any items that are listed in the 10-Year Child Care Strategy for 2015 that may not materialize in 2015, do you anticipate, or any hiccups?

MR. S. COLLINS: Well again with the other two you had mentioned I do not think we had foreseen they would be delayed, but we wanted to make sure that what we created was the best possible that it could be.

With regard to the registry, I know it has been on the go for some time now. I think that when it is released it will be an improvement on what was going to be released previous. I think that was the intention Minister Sullivan had. I had conversations with her and wanted to make sure it broadened the scope and be the best piece of work that we could possibly have. So with

regard to upcoming delays, I do not think we foresee any, but it is hard to say at this point, hopefully not.

MR. KIRBY: There was some suggestion that the requirements for the Operating Grant Program might be changed somehow to accommodate additional applicants. Is there any discussion going on of changing what has been announced, reviewing the rates that are included in the schedule for that?

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Minister Sullivan committed to reviewing it each fiscal to know what – to look at it. We have put out a survey to all operators to try to get some information, particularly on the metro area, to try to see if there were particular areas which were struggling with the particular grant.

We did not have a great return on that, Mr. Kirby. What we have found is that – we had an information session out in the Spaniard's Bay, Bay Roberts area. Going out there and explaining it – it is one of the kinds of things where you have to have a conversation with someone. It is very private information going through their business transactions. We have found that is where we have built the program so far.

Again, as you know, it was only December when that was rolled out. So having the forty-five applications, it is coming along, which we are very encouraged by, but we are certainly very informed, or I should say we would like to be informed by the operators of their particular challenges. That is what we have been asking for, to look at our decisions to see if there is any particular reason from a differential point of view, and asking them to show their statements to show where their concerns are.

Right now we have planned another session for the Gander area. That one got changed because of the ECE conference that did not go ahead. We are going to continue on with those kinds of sessions as well because we find that sitting down and trying to explain the math piece of it – to make sure and note that the money is upfront as well, that is one thing that is not well understood.

The communication side of it; we have found the more that we are getting out there and explaining it and having the one-on-one conversations is where it is growing right now. We do not dismiss the fact that we might tweak it based on factors that might come forward that are consistent with other operators within a particular area.

MR. KIRBY: Can you elaborate on your comment about the money being upfront?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: A lot of times in these programs it is a matter of you having to wait for your payment, but once approved, the money is upfront. I can get Mary or Ed to explain that to you, but it is not well known and the operators find that quite helpful –

MR. KIRBY: They were suggesting –

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: – and they can plan.

MR. KIRBY: They would have to wait three months, some of them were thinking.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Right. That is not the way that this one works. That is another piece that was perhaps not well understood. The uptake was not as good at the beginning, but it has been very encouraging. Mary, would you like to speak to that further regarding how that works with the money upfront.

CHAIR: Mary.

MS GOSS-PROWSE: What happens is they are paid a quarterly amount, but it is in advance of the quarter. At the end of the quarter, they send in their enrolment statistics and some other pieces that we require for oversight. Depending on if they have met their number of seats that we – I believe it is a 90 per cent enrolment. If they are lower than that, we will adjust their next payment. If they are higher than that, we will adjust it the other way.

MR. KIRBY: That is way different. I would say if you were able to give them that information you would probably get more people even applying because that is way different.

CHAIR: Minister, do you want a word?

MR. S. COLLINS: Yes. Dale, more to that point, we recently met with AECENL. That was something they had said. They were very positive about it because they understood it.

They said a lot of the people out and about do not get it. So I think we recognized that day, if not before, that we need to make sure of our communications around it because it is a fabulous program. The people who know about it think so as well, but it is trying to reach out.

Janet had mentioned – with regard to the information session we had in Bay Roberts and one that is upcoming in Gander in the near future – when we went out there the uptake and the interest in it was great. We have to do a better job of that because the product we have to offer is good. If people do not know about it and they are not aware of all the intricacies, obviously it is not much good to anyone.

CHAIR: Okay. Lorraine.

MS MICHAEL: Thank you.

Looking at 3.5.04, Family Resource Programs, I think we still have thirty of them. Could we have a list of the thirty and how much each receives, please?

MR. S. COLLINS: Yes.

MS MICHAEL: Great.

How many of these centres have child care centres?

MR. S. COLLINS: Mary.

CHAIR: Mary.

MS GOSS-PROWSE: I would not be able to give you a solid number, but I could go back and find out.

MS MICHAEL: We would like to have that information, yes.

Thank you very much.

Is there any plan for the establishment of new centres?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: We are always interested when groups come forward and give them advice regarding a needs assessment and how that is done. We have some monies to help and assist with that. That is one of the things we would like to grow and it is certainly part of the child care strategy that we would consider growing that piece.

I would say to you, that given the ones we have there now we will also want to look at the types of programming and try to bring some consistency to the type of programming. That is another piece that we have been looking at as well.

MS MICHAEL: Is there anybody in the department, in the division who works with them in terms of consistency around programming now?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: I will pass it over to Mary. It used to be Regan Power but I believe right now that has changed to – is it Marie-Anne Hudson?

MS GOSS-PROWSE: Yes, it is.

MS MICHAEL: The centres themselves, is there a sense of a network where they communicate with each other? Do they, in any way themselves, communicate with each other about what happens in the various centres?

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: There are some that are hubs that have several centres and there are some that are single. In terms of the types of programming, obviously, we have a common person here. Anyone who wishes to start, we would look at whether that is a single site or part of a hub.

Mary, would you like to add to that?

CHAIR: Mary.

MS GOSS-PROWSE: They do have their own association. They share a newsletter and they do a conference every couple of years. That would be their main source of collaboration between themselves.

MS MICHAEL: Right. When they do that, for example, holding a conference every couple of years, does the cost of that have to come out of their operating money or does the department put money into that to help them do that?

CHAIR: Mary.

MS GOSS-PROWSE: I believe it is built into their operating money. So it would come from their normal travel budget.

MS MICHAEL: Okay.

When we receive the list of the centres, could we have the information showing the hubs?

MR. S. COLLINS: We can break that down because when looking at this I see a centre that is out my way, Dover and Area Community Family Coalition, that is the hub, but there are a number of offshoots of that as well in Hare Bay, Glovertown, and Eastport. So, yes, it is a bit misleading. It is much larger than it appears on this list, I think –

MS MICHAEL: So if we could have it done that way –

MR. S. COLLINS: We can have a breakdown, yes.

MS MICHAEL: Okay. Thank you very much.

I think we are at the end of this section. That is all the questions I have. Dale may have more.

CHAIR: Dale, are you done?

MR. KIRBY: I am wondering if we could get a list of the recipients and the amounts for that last one, 3.5.04.

CHAIR: I think that has already been agreed to, Dale.

MR. KIRBY: Okay.

As has been the practice in other committees, I am wondering if the minister could give us the relevant sections of his briefing binder from 3.5.01 down to 3.5.04. I think the other ministers have provided sections of the binder that they were using for that.

MR. S. COLLINS: Okay. It sounds good.

MR. KIRBY: I think the minister said yes.

MR. S. COLLINS: Yes, I would be more than happy.

CHAIR: The minister did say yes, I heard him.

With that being said, are you done Dale?

MR. KIRBY: Yes, bring in the other one now.

CHAIR: Lorraine.

MS MICHAEL: I do not know if Dale asked for this, but under 3.5.03 with regard to subsidies. Could we have a breakdown of the numbers of families and children –?

CHAIR: Yes he did.

MS MICHAEL: Did you ask all that?

CHAIR: Yes he did.

MS MICHAEL: Okay, great. I missed that.

Thank you.

MR. KIRBY: Thanks for your time.

CHAIR: I am going to ask the Clerk to call inclusive to subheads, please.

CLERK: Subheads 3.5.01 through 3.5.04 inclusive.

CHAIR: Will 3.5.01 to 3.5.04 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, subheads 3.5.01 through 3.5.04 carried.

CLERK: Total.

CHAIR: Shall the total carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, totals carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the Estimates of Early Childhood Development without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, Estimates of the Department of Early Childhood Development carried without amendment.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister, for your time. You are off the hook.

Maybe this would be a good time, we only have one person downstairs, so if we took five minutes that would allow the individual downstairs – Minister Dalley will get in and we will get started right away. If that would be good to the committee, we will recess for five minutes.

Recess

CHAIR: Good evening everyone.

Thank you for your patience.

Welcome, Minister Dalley. It is nice to see you, Sir.

Again, for Committee purposes, the minister has asked that the questions be directed to him and he will direct his staff if he so chooses.

Minister, you do have a few moments of opening remarks if you want, or we can go right to 1.1.01. It is your choice, Sir.

MR. DALLEY: I think we will just get right into it. It has been a long day for everybody.

CHAIR: Okay.

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

CLERK: Subhead 1.1.01.

CHAIR: Subhead 1.1.01.

Dale.

MR. KIRBY: Okay, welcome.

I just wanted to start with the Minister's Office, 1.1.01.01, Salaries. There has been an increase of just over \$70,000 more than was allocated for last year. Is there a staff position that you are filling that you did not have filled last year? Is there a new hiring or a new position?

MR. DALLEY: Yes, that was back in October of last year. A Parliamentary Secretary and Constituency Assistant were appointed to the department. That was offset by employees on a lower step than budgeted. So that is the difference.

MR. KIRBY: The Parliamentary Secretary's assistant?

MR. DALLEY: A Parliamentary Secretary – and correct me here, Janet. When a Parliamentary Secretary is assigned to a department, then the Constituency Assistant of the Parliamentary Secretary is also assigned to the budget process of the department. It is financing, really.

MR. KIRBY: So, whereas my Constituency Assistant would come under House of Assembly, theirs comes under an actual department?

MR. DALLEY: Yes, once they are assigned to a department.

MR. KIRBY: Okay, that makes sense.

Under Transportation and Communications, there was an increase over what was budgeted.

Was that ministerial travel or staff members' travel, or both?

MR. DALLEY: A portion of that, roughly \$7,000, was ministerial travel to Japan for the Council of Ministers of Education of Canada, CMEC, and it was a shared-cost trip. So that was our portion of that trip.

MR. KIRBY: The minister was not chair of CMEC for that year, was she?

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: She was leading the Canadian delegation, or CMEC, and it was a conference on sustainable development.

MR. KIRBY: Okay.

Moving on to Property, Furnishings and Equipment, there was nothing budgeted but \$4,200 spent.

MR. DALLEY: The two items there were a new ergonomic desk and the purchase of an iPad. One of the ministers broke their iPad.

MR. KIRBY: It happens.

That travel expenditure is not online, by the way, or not on the online expense report. I guess there is some delay in –

MR. DALLEY: Is that the Japan trip?

MR. KIRBY: Yes.

MR. DALLEY: Yes, we will look after that.

MR. KIRBY: Under Executive Support, that is the next one down –

CHAIR: Subhead 1.2.01.

MR. KIRBY: Yes. There was a slight decrease and then the other question was around the – it seems the Director of Communications for the Minister's Office is listed there for Salaries rather than above in the Minister's Office. Is that the case?

MR. DALLEY: Yes, it is.

MR. KIRBY: What was the reason for the under expenditure in 2014-2015?

MR. DALLEY: I am sorry?

CHAIR: What was the reason for the under expenditure?

MR. DALLEY: Pardon?

MR. KIRBY: For the under expenditure in –

MR. DALLEY: In Salaries?

MR. KIRBY: Yes.

MR. DALLEY: In Salaries, it is basically due to a vacant position. As well, what you will see in, I think pretty all of the salary items from here on, the last twenty-six pay period did not get put in this year's budget. It had to go into next years because of the last pay period of the month, the way it fell.

You will see there is a slight increase as well in 2015-2016, because that pay period did not get put in the budget for 2014-2015. It never got paid out. You will see a slight change there.

MR. KIRBY: That \$33,000 basically, the bulk of that is what you are referring to, right?

MR. DALLEY: Yes, along with the percentage of salary increases for all staff. The combination would be some vacant positions for a short period of time, the payroll period which got pushed out into the next year, plus the salary increases which will be showing in 2015-2016.

MR. KIRBY: That is for ten positions in Executive Support?

MR. DALLEY: I am sorry. How many positions, Janet?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Nine.

MR. DALLEY: Nine.

MR. KIRBY: Nine.

That \$30,100 is for Transportation and Communications. That is all it cost for nine

people's transportation and communications for the year?

MR. DALLEY: Yes, budgeted \$40,100 but through discretionary spending and we certainly scaled back on transportation and communications.

MR. KIRBY: That increase then, back up to what it was budgeted before, is all entirely due to the relaxing of this –

MR. DALLEY: It is the base budget.

MR. KIRBY: – discretionary spending cap.

Is that the same explanation for the under expenditure by \$4,000 in Purchased Services?

MR. DALLEY: Yes, it is.

In Purchased Services, obviously, discretionary spending and just a requirement less. That is not a budget you are necessarily going to expend every year. It just depends on the type of work you are doing, printing, or things like that. So that would have been offset as well.

MR. KIRBY: Are there any particular areas of policy or program that the Executive Support staff have been focusing on in the past year? Are there any reports that came out of any of the work they were doing?

MR. DALLEY: The line item here?

MR. KIRBY: Yes.

MR. DALLEY: Which one?

MR. KIRBY: Executive Support, 1.2.01. Are there any particular policy areas that Executive Support was focused on?

MR. DALLEY: I would have to ask Janet.

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Mr. Kirby that is more of an oversight function on the executive. Included in that is my position, as well as the three ADMs. So it is more on all policies that would come up through. It would be an

oversight function for the ADMs and the Deputy Minister.

MR. KIRBY: Okay.

Does that include staff in the department who carry out Access to Information functions, who facilitate Access to Information requests for the department? Is your ATIPP co-ordinator in there somewhere?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: No, our ATIPP co-ordinator would not be in that nine.

MR. KIRBY: They are under General Administration are they?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Our ATIPP co-ordinator would be under Information Management and Special Projects.

MR. KIRBY: Okay.

Under 2.1.01, Administrative Support, there was a decrease of just in excess of \$25,000 from what was allocated in the revision. Is there a reason for that? Is that a position or a part-time position or something?

MR. DALLEY: It is higher overtime related to payroll project manager positions. It was filled at a higher step than budgeted, and it is partially offset by two positions being vacant for a period of time.

MR. KIRBY: There are fourteen permanent positions there in the 2015-2016 Estimates. That is a reduction of two positions from last year. Is that permanent positions?

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: In the areas of General Administration and Human Resources there are fourteen permanent, eleven temporary, for a total of twenty-five.

MR. KIRBY: The two permanent positions that were reduced, what were the functions of those personnel?

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Mr. Kirby, are you referring to the two vacant positions for a period of time?

MR. KIRBY: Oh, is that what it is, vacant? Yes, there were fourteen and two of them are vacant. Is that what it is?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: That was part of the savings there, yes, for a period of time.

MR. KIRBY: Okay; and they are no longer vacant?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: That is correct. We anticipate that they will be filled.

MR. KIRBY: I am out of time there, Glenn?

CHAIR: Yes.

Lorraine.

MS MICHAEL: I will just continue on from there.

I take it that the increase in 2015-2016 over last year's budget would be just the natural step increases, et cetera?

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. DALLEY: Yes, the 3 per cent salary increases, and partially offset by attrition as well.

MS MICHAEL: Okay. Thank you.

Let's move to the next one, Employee Benefits. I am going to guess that the drop of \$34,000 had to do with discretionary spending?

MR. DALLEY: Yes, that is correct.

MS MICHAEL: Okay. I will not waste time on it when it is one of the obvious ones.

Under Transportation and Communications, it went down quite a bit from what was budgeted. So I am wondering if there is something you anticipated that did not happen. Let's answer that question first.

MR. DALLEY: The savings was primarily due to a discretionary spending freeze. We had less travel, but we also had much less postage. More and more things are becoming electronic, so we had less postage as well.

MS MICHAEL: Okay.

Could we have a breakdown of what was savings in postage and what was savings in travel?

MR. DALLEY: Yes, we can get that for you.

MS MICHAEL: Okay, thank you.

Then coming over to 2015-2016, the amount is below last year's budget as well, \$64,500 lower than what was budgeted last year.

MR. DALLEY: Yes, essentially rightsizing the budget based on where we feel we are going to be with Transportation and Communications.

MS MICHAEL: Okay. Thank you.

Under Supplies, you budgeted \$55,000 and spent \$35,500.

MR. DALLEY: The difference there is \$20,000, and if you noticed in the Purchased Services you will see roughly an increase of that amount, or close to it. Basically, what happened there is money got transferred to Purchased Services and deleted from Supplies. That is primarily photocopy costs.

MS MICHAEL: Photocopy costs. Okay, thank you.

Obviously, it is more a service than a supply, yes. I think Property and Furnishings that is not a big issue.

Under Grants and Subsidies, what would be the grants subsidies here in number one?

MR. DALLEY: Grants and Subsidies here would be grants that we would put out to schools through application, \$500 grants here or there. We get – I was going to say requests every day from schools and groups doing different special activities. It is just a small

amount that we can put out to schools on application.

MS MICHAEL: Could we have a list of the schools that received grants or subsidies last year, please?

MR. DALLEY: Sure, no problem.

MS MICHAEL: Thank you.

If we could (inaudible) with them to, not just the name because the name will not necessarily tell us where it is located, so also the school's name and where it is located, please.

MR. DALLEY: Sure.

MS MICHAEL: Thank you.

Revenue – Provincial, we will need an explanation here.

MR. DALLEY: Basically, it is miscellaneous revenue, like overpayments. It is in and out money. Sometimes you may pay someone or someone may use their phone for personal use and have to repay, or you may make an overpayment for someone who is planning to travel and they did not travel, so it is paid back in through there.

It is just budgeted revenue of \$80,000; we ended up with that amount. As well, money from a settlement of a bankrupt insurance company for a claim for a school fire at Regina High School in the late 1980s. There is some issue there as well where we received some funding, and that is for the \$66,600. Between that and the amount of money that is in and out is basically where that –

MS MICHAEL: Something major is happening in 2015-2016. Is there something anticipated here? Because it is an increase of \$750,000.

MR. DALLEY: Yes. The increase of \$750,000 will be recovered for the transportation management software. If you recall, we had put a million dollars into routing software for buses to the school board. When they went to tender, it is my understanding that it was way out of anyone's expectation. So as a result of that, we have pulled back; \$750,000 will be returned and

that is showing as a line item here, and \$250,000 will be left with the board to consider next steps. It is not a base funding, but it is earmarked to continue to look at routing software and some of the busing challenges.

MS MICHAEL: Could you give it more of an explanation with regard to what you have just said in terms of the tendering?

MR. DALLEY: Yes, I will ask Janet to give you a little more detail.

MS MICHAEL: Thank you.

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: As a result of the school transportation review there was a million dollars granted to the English School District for an RFP, not just for routing software but for fleet management as well, and some other factors to improve the busing.

The RFP went out. The bids, they did it separately for each portion but they were much more detailed and significant than first thought. So as part of the deficit reduction, the \$750,000 will be coming back. We will keep the \$250,000 and work with the \$250,000 with the school district to concentrate on the routing piece first, which was the original intent, to see where we could go with the \$250,000 for routing first.

MS MICHAEL: Okay, thank you. That is helpful.

Coming down to 2.1.02, Assistance to Education Agencies and Advisory Committees. I do have a list from before. I am going to read them out and if there are others than this, then you could give us the information.

One is CMAC, CAMET, the Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training, Federation of School Councils, TI Murphy, Encounters with Canada, and Cultural Connections. They are the names of ones we have had from the past. Are there more than that who have received grants and subsidies?

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. DALLEY: The only other one to add would be the Learning Disabilities Association. There is \$25,000 given to support them, particularly around tutoring as well.

MS MICHAEL: Okay, thank you.

Then, Minister, could we have – you have just given us the figure for Learning Disabilities. Could we have the breakdown in terms of what each one of those receive, please?

MR. DALLEY: Sure you can. I can give you that right now if you would like.

MS MICHAEL: Sure.

MR. DALLEY: CMAC is \$100,400; CAMET is \$119,000; Federation of School Councils, \$25,000; Cultural Connections Strategy, \$872,900; TI Murphy Centre, \$691,400; Encounters with Canada, \$21,600.

MS MICHAEL: Thank you.

Now, Minister, I notice the budget went up by \$129,000 over what was budgeted last year. The revised was \$1.8 million and it is still \$1.8 again. Who got the extra money? Was it a new group?

MR. DALLEY: There is no extra money. It was actually rightsizing the budget. There has been no change, to my understanding, from the previous year. There was just some error there in terms of that budget item.

MS MICHAEL: Do you mean between the budget and the revision last year?

MR. DALLEY: Yes.

MS MICHAEL: Okay. Thank you very much.

If it is the same then as last year, why would a group like the Federation of School Councils receive less money? Because that is my understanding.

MR. DALLEY: It is my understanding they are getting the same amount as they got last year.

MS MICHAEL: So they were cut last year but not this year.

MR. DALLEY: Yes. I think they were thirty, they were cut to twenty-five, and they are getting twenty-five this year.

MS MICHAEL: Okay, thank you very much.

Coming down to 2.1.03 – I only have fifteen seconds left, so you can go to Mr. Kirby.

CHAIR: Okay.

Dale.

Where are we first, Dale, so we know that everybody –

MR. KIRBY: I did not hear you say the Newfoundland and Labrador School Boards Association in that list, 2.1.02.10. Are they funded directly by the two remaining school districts then? The Newfoundland and Labrador School Boards Association.

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Funding directly to the Newfoundland and Labrador School Boards Association was cut in Budget 2013. So there is no direct funding to the Newfoundland and Labrador School Boards Association. Money was given to the school districts for some PD to the National Association, sent directly to them, but there has been no direct funding to the school boards association since Budget 2013 when that phased out that year.

MR. KIRBY: Okay. So that is where their funding is coming from. Okay, we will take that up with the school district then.

The next one, 2.1.03, Policy and Planning. Salaries was underspent last year. Why?

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. DALLEY: It was primarily vacant positions for a period of time. When the positions were backfilled they were at lower pay levels. So that is the difference in the funding.

MR. KIRBY: What was going on, on the other line there?

MR. DALLEY: The difference for 2015-2016, you are seeing a lower step in salary scale, as well as the 3 per cent salary increase.

MR. KIRBY: Then you underspent significantly in Professional Services. What was it that was not spent?

MR. DALLEY: It is just a lower requirement than originally budgeted. It was \$41,800 less.

MR. KIRBY: What did the \$63,100 pay for?

MR. DALLEY: The Professional Services was around different studies or evaluations. Safe and Caring Schools were funded through here. There was a consultation on teacher evaluation, as well as new implementation of PeopleSoft, a teacher payroll system.

Is there anything else, Janet?

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: No, that is it.

Normally, we use this for our valuation purposes. The Safe and Caring one was more so out of the Safe and Caring budget, but the ones that the minister mentioned are the ones this year and we did not have the uptake as we would have had in other years. We had put aside some monies for other things, but that particular year that is the only ones that we did.

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. DALLEY: Just a point of clarification, teacher valuation, not teacher evaluation. There is a difference; just to be sure.

MR. KIRBY: In here it says, just out of curiosity, “... support for the entities reporting to the Minister.” Who are the entities reporting to the minister? It sounds like a bad horror movie.

MR. DALLEY: Where are you?

CHAIR: That is in the top, Minister, where it says Policy and Planning.

MR. KIRBY: In the explanatory note.

CHAIR: The last part, “... and support for the entities reporting to the Minister.” It is General Administration.

Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: That would be the public libraries board, and our other entities would be the school districts.

MR. KIRBY: Okay, good.

Moving on over to the next one there –

CHAIR: Lorraine, are you good with 2.1.03? Do you have any questions on that?

MS MICHAEL: Yes, I do have one, especially picking up on what the DM just said. Is there going to be an evaluation of the amalgamation of the school boards into the one English School Board?

CHAIR: Did you get that question, Minister?

Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: There is nothing planned for a formal evaluation but I can assure you on all aspects that we are very closely connected to both school districts. We certainly have been following the amalgamation of the four boards into one and looking at all aspects. We are on a regular basis in conversations of where the pressures are and where the things that are going well, in regular conversation. I must admit, we are very pleased with the way things have moved along with that, with the strong leadership that we have, but there are always challenges when you are combining financial services and things like that, that we certainly have worked through.

Given the time frame that we had, we are very pleased actually with the consolidation but it has been more of an informal evaluation of different aspects of the consolidation. We have been monitoring very closely.

MS MICHAEL: Is there any thought of going further, making it more formal so that – I will be quite blunt. It is fine for the department to say they have seen everything, they feel good about it, but what about the Federation of School

Councils? What about parents in general? What about the communities? Do they also – and if there is nothing formal done, how do they have any input into evaluation?

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. DALLEY: I would agree with you, that it is fine. That the Department of Education, whose responsibility is to deliver education to the students of the Province, see the very – the entire process, overall, has been positive, not without challenges. I think I would support the idea of formal evaluations but I think any time you do something of that magnitude you have to give an opportunity to work through all of the entire process, whether it is on the ground, in a classroom; as you can appreciate, the issues with the NLTA, the seniority list, and these kinds of things, the whole financial picture.

I think down the road when they are given a fair opportunity to be able to bring all this together and make it all work, to be able to do a formal evaluation and look at what the strengths are, what the needs may be through that whole process, it will certainly makes sense to do so when they are given a fair opportunity to be able to work through all these kinds of issues. I would concur with you as well, that the other stakeholders, like the school council groups and – again, we all want them to be engaged and have input and have that opportunity.

So, as we go through, I think in coming years, this certainly would warrant to be able to go back and look at where are we, what do we need to do, what are we not doing? You could identify that through a more formal process, for sure.

MS MICHAEL: I want to thank the minister for saying that, because it would be good, for example, if we knew that after three years there is going to be an evaluation, or after five years there will be. I think it would be really good to have that kind of discussion inside the department and have a decision on that.

MR. DALLEY: I would agree. It is just that it is important, whether it is Education or whatever program or policy, you have to give it time so you can do a fair evaluation. I do not believe we

are there yet, but it is certainly a fair point to raise.

MS MICHAEL: Thank you.

CHAIR: I am going to ask the Clerk to call the first subheads to 2.1.03.

CLERK: Subhead 1.1.01 through 2.1.03 inclusive.

CHAIR: Subhead 1.1.01 to 2.1.03 inclusive.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, 1.1.01 through 2.1.03 carried.

CHAIR: Shall the total carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, totals carried.

CHAIR: Okay.

Now we are moving on to 2.2.01, page 16.6, and I will ask for seven minutes, is where we left off.

Okay, Dale, go ahead. I am sorry.

MR. KIRBY: Okay, no problem.

In Information Management and Special Projects, 2.2.01, it lists in the explanatory note the Youth Internship Program. How much of that salary there is for the Youth Internship Program?

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: The full amount there, the \$414,000, is federal money. That fully funds

that program, and that is distributed by an application process. The grouping – I think we added those up this afternoon. I think there might have been sixty-nine that we added from last year, Mr. Kirby, who would have been successful in the application process from last year.

There are two different programs. You have the summer work and then you have the career work, which goes on throughout the year actually. So, overall, that is fully funding that program.

MR. KIRBY: Sixty-nine positions?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Not sixty-nine positions, sixty-nine applications of which that would be determined as to what entailed in each of those specifically.

MR. KIRBY: Okay.

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. DALLEY: That would be positions that are out across the Province, the public libraries. I think all the public libraries would have applied. There is a massive list. They would apply under the Youth Internship. That sixty-nine is what is out there in the public libraries.

MR. KIRBY: That is a summer career work experience program. Is that what it is called?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: There are two types of positions, and often they are in previous cap sites or library sites, community centres, which are involved in delivering Internet and computer sessions in their communities as well.

MR. KIRBY: Those agencies, they accept applications from people in their communities and then those applications go to the department for approval?

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. KIRBY: Approval of the individual position application?

Do you approve the position or the individual, I guess is my point?

CHAIR: Joan.

MS MORRIS: Mr. Kirby, my understanding is that the organization makes application and then upon review, if the proposal is successful, the individual would be identified and then the salary payments made to the individual based on the proposal.

MR. KIRBY: Okay.

Those positions that are in place, the ones that are not summer, how long can they be? You said they can be during the calendar year, not necessarily summer. How many weeks are we talking, or confirmed weeks of employment? A range would be fine.

MS MORRIS: Mr. Kirby, normally the positions can run anywhere from 200 to 700 hours, and could be paid between a range of \$11 to \$14 per hour, depending on the work performed by the individual.

Earlier you mentioned the actual names. It is actually called the Summer Work Experience Program. The other component is Career Focus.

MR. KIRBY: Okay.

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. DALLEY: I think the age for this program is fifteen to thirty. Is that correct?

OFFICIAL: Yes.

MR. DALLEY: The age is between fifteen and thirty for eligible applicants.

MR. KIRBY: Okay. I do not have any other questions under that one.

CHAIR: Okay, you can move on, Dale.

Do you want to go to 3.1.01?

MR. KIRBY: Sure.

CHAIR: Go ahead.

MR. KIRBY: I want to ask some more questions of a more programmatic nature, if I

could. If you can provide responses, then that will be good, and if you cannot, you cannot.

I wanted to ask a number of questions with respect to full-day Kindergarten and its implementation.

MR. DALLEY: Just so I follow, are you moving off the line item now?

MR. KIRBY: I am going to ask them under Teaching Services because it either falls under there or School Board Operations, one or the other, but I will ask them here. If it is more appropriate to ask them later I can ask them later, but I do not want to move off the heading before I ask.

MR. DALLEY: Okay, so we are still on 2.2.01?

MR. KIRBY: Subhead 3.1.01, under Teaching Services.

CHAIR: No, we are on 3.1.01, Minister. We have moved forward.

MR. DALLEY: Okay.

CHAIR: Okay?

MR. KIRBY: I will ask them under there.

A couple of ministers ago, when Minister King was the minister – on August 27, 2014, the minister talked about the team teaching model that may be employed in schools, for two fully qualified teachers to a classroom. I get a lot of questions about that.

You have a list here that was appended to that press release dated August 27, 2014, of all the schools that are going to offer the full-day Kindergarten program in the Province. I was just wondering is it possible to find out which of these schools are going to have team taught classes of full-day Kindergarten because there is a lot here on the list.

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Mr. Kirby, since that time all schools have been assessed for full-day Kindergarten. At the time there were some that were not. All schools at this time have been

assessed for full-day Kindergarten. In moving forward, the population changes, so we have our plan, but that can change very quickly with one or two, as you can imagine. That will be firmed up again when we have our enrolments in the fall.

We have a plan. In terms of the number of modulars, the number of renovations, the number of asbestos abatements and everything that has to happen in all these schools, we have our plan forward. That is going to need to be tweaked based on some of the changes that exist in terms of enrolments. Sometimes there is room that is actually found in schools, if there is space where the numbers are down. We will be firming that up.

In terms of the model that you are referring to with two teachers, that was a model where we were not able to offer it one to twenty. We will be determining exactly how many. At this time, with the number of modulars that we are able to do, we feel we have reduced that number. Actually, we will be able to be a bit more specific when the numbers are finalized.

Right now we have numbers from KinderStart that would be from the registrations of Kindergarten now, which would be KinderStart in the fall. We will be able to have a little bit more of firmed-up numbers as we enter into the times when KinderStart sessions will start.

I would pass it over to Ingrid Clarke, who is the ADM of Infrastructure, who could probably provide you with a little bit more as to the planning that we have done regarding the infrastructure needs. It is not just modulars; there is a fairly significant bit of work regarding renovations that we are doing here. I am going to pass it over to Ingrid.

CHAIR: Ingrid.

MS CLARKE: Two modulars were purchased last year. They were placed at Riverside Elementary in Shoal Harbour. We have issued a tender for five more modulars with an option to purchase five more. That has been tendered and awarded.

There are two tenders in the paper. They will appear in Wednesday's paper, I believe, but they

are already on the website. That is for links for modular classrooms to be added to St. Bernard's. The second one, which escapes me right now – it might be Shoal Harbour, but that is information that is available on Transportation and Works' website.

Significant planning has been undertaken at a lot of the schools. Particularly, we will be ready to go to tender very soon for additional classrooms for St. Francis of Assisi and Mary Queen of Peace.

CHAIR: Thanks, Ingrid.

MR. KIRBY: Sorry, you will be issuing tenders soon?

CHAIR: Ingrid.

MS CLARKE: Yes.

MR. KIRBY: Is that for St. Francis of Assisi and –

MS CLARKE: Mary Queen of Peace.

MR. KIRBY: – Mary Queen of Peace.

CHAIR: Dale, do you have a follow-up to that, or I will go over to Lorraine?

MR. KIRBY: I have a bunch of other questions, but I will come back to this.

CHAIR: Okay, Lorraine.

MS MICHAEL: Subhead 3.1.01, staying there, the question with regard to the supports to deaf and hard of hearing. How many teachers are still working with the deaf students and hard of hearing students?

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. DALLEY: Four.

MS MICHAEL: Where are they, Minister?

MR. DALLEY: I am going to get Janet to give you an indication of what schools they are in.

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: We have four teachers who are under that heading of Supports for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students. The vast majority of those who were at the School for the Deaf have gone through now and graduated. We have very few – in fact, I think there may be just one of the final numbers there who are still there. We still have deaf and hard of hearing students, and some severe, who require the speciality of a teacher for deaf and hard of hearing. These would be in different schools.

Some of these would still be in Gonzaga because the students sort of fed through a couple of schools here within the city. That particular allocation is not all in St. John's. Where it is needed, they provided that. In Central there was one as well. I am sure I could get for you exactly where they are.

MS MICHAEL: I would be interested in knowing and wondering – I mean you have a lot of information, but we do not. It is an issue that I still have people coming to me and talking to me about.

If we could get a sense of what is happening with regard to the inclusion of these students in the mainstream, which ones have one-on-one support and what has happened? I mean how many students out there in the mainstream are being identified as deaf and hard of hearing separately, the separate numbers, and what are the services that they are getting?

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: We actually have 386 students who are identified as deaf and hard of hearing – or deaf or hard of hearing, I should say – and 123 students who identify as blind or visually impaired.

We have supports for both. We have itinerants as well at the school district. I am just going to find the numbers that we have here for the school district regarding the – I believe there are nine. If you give me a chance to find my notes there on that, I can be able to tell you exactly how many itinerants we have. We have itinerants for deaf and hard of hearing and we have itinerants for the blind and visually impaired.

For the blind and visually impaired we have nine, and for the deaf and hard of hearing there are eighteen. These are itinerants who work and have caseloads for those students who I mentioned before.

MS MICHAEL: If they are itinerants, then the students do not have somebody with them all the time. Correct?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: No, they would not. However, the four who you are referring to there for the deaf and hard of hearing would be working with students. Sometimes that is split to half positions, depending on how that works. I will get a listing of where they are. Where the needs are severe, then you would need that support.

MS MICHAEL: Do you have available – if not, is it possible to get it – information regarding the retention rate of students who are deaf or hard of hearing, and also the rate of graduation right through until the very end of the school system?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: I know we have very close records regarding the students who came through the School for the Deaf. I would need to go through – and that would be with us here at the department because we followed those very closely. Regarding the large numbers that we are referring to there, I would need to go to the school districts for that information.

MS MICHAEL: Would you be able to do that for us, please?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Yes, certainly.

MS MICHAEL: Thank you.

These are physical disabilities. Where do you keep track of students, or does it just come under – I do not know where it comes under, for example, students who require assistance who are autistic or Asperger's?

CHAIR: Minister or Janet?

Minister.

MR. DALLEY: There are multiple ways. The Annual General Return, the AGR that is provided by each school – I think it is by the end

of September, early October – which will clearly identify the numbers and the number of students who are identified with exceptionalities.

Beyond that then we also have a registry, through the guidance and educational psychologist support system, to identify who has been identified with an exceptionality, and who is on the list to be assessed, internal assessment in schools and so on. So, there is tracking that way as well.

Then added to that there is an allocation of student assistants, which is another layer of consideration as to who has been identified as an exceptionality and what their needs are. That is done at the district level, between the school and the district level as well.

Also involved in that you would get your program planning teams, your ISSPs, and your IEPs. All of that, along with the special services supports at the school level would be involved with a student with respect to identifying. Not only identifying it, the other piece I know I found when I was there is ensuring as kids go through the system – because sometimes they go from one school to another school, and making sure that the continuity, the recognition of the exceptionality and the supports that are required moves to another school as well.

Often they need less and less as they go through the grades, but it is important in terms of any identification of exceptionality that it is carried through as well with the student into another school.

MS MICHAEL: Basically, it is not seen as a responsibility of the department. It is just seen as the responsibility of the school boards.

MR. DALLEY: No, no. It is a shared responsibility here that is not done in isolation. The schools do not work in isolation, nor do the districts, nor does the department.

The department has to be aware because we do allocations. We do our allocations every year to the districts. There are multiple formulas around allocations; special services, the IRT allocation, pervasive need allocation, and student assistant allocation. We would have to know what those

needs are, so there is quite a bit of collaboration, consultation back and forth, and identifying.

As you know, there are a lot of needs out there and it is important. With everybody involved, then it is less likely that something can be missed.

MS MICHAEL: Okay. Thank you.

The institutional schools, where are they located? I am aware of a couple of them so I am just wondering which ones.

MR. DALLEY: Actually, there is only one now; it is the Whitbourne correctional facility. It has three teachers and one administrator.

MS MICHAEL: That is the only one?

MR. DALLEY: Yes.

MS MICHAEL: Okay.

I notice then that the budget line for them last year was \$378,000 and it went down to \$319,900. This year it is basically the same. What was that drop of \$58,000?

MR. DALLEY: It is due to teachers on a lower step on the salary scale. When someone moves out, someone comes in on a lower scale.

MS MICHAEL: Okay.

MR. DALLEY: Whether it is your years of experience or your level of post-secondary.

MS MICHAEL: Thank you. So there is just the one.

Okay. Subhead 3.1.02, "Appropriations provide for the administrative and operational costs of the Province's schools, the school insurance program and the payment of allowances to those students who are required to live away from home in order to attend high school."

First of all, how many students in the Province do we have under that category?

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: We have fourteen.

MS MICHAEL: Fourteen?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Fourteen.

MS MICHAEL: Okay. Do they come from mainly one area?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: No, they come from many different areas. We provide them with \$500 a month.

MS MICHAEL: Okay.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: One example would be South East Bight down on the Burin Peninsula. Where that school goes to Grade 10, students would board for the other Grades 11 and 12.

MS MICHAEL: The \$500 is supposed to cover all of their expenses, living arrangements, food, et cetera; those things?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: It is a bursary to assist.

MS MICHAEL: It is a bursary. Okay.

Under Purchased Services, under the Operating Accounts, the budget was \$1.8 million and \$380,900 was the underspending. Can we have an explanation of that please?

MR. DALLEY: Yes, the insurance renewal rates were lower than budgeted. As a result of that there was a savings.

MS MICHAEL: Okay. Then what you have come back up to you think is realistic for this year. Would that also still be just only insurance under that line?

MR. DALLEY: Yes it is.

MS MICHAEL: Okay. Thank you very much.

I think my time is up.

CHAIR: Okay, Dale.

MR. KIRBY: I just had a couple of more questions on the full-day Kindergarten.

CHAIR: So we are back at 3.1.01 because that is where you are putting them.

MR. KIRBY: Yes.

CHAIR: Okay.

MR. KIRBY: I know that Ms Vivian-Walsh had said that you would be able to provide an update on some of the projections post-KinderStart, or you would have a better idea. I mean that will be September when KinderStart is fully underway.

I was just wondering, in the interim would it be possible to get a list of the schools – that are provided in the addendum to the August 2014 press release, the backgrounder – that are anticipated, as of now, to not follow the standard classroom setting. Does the department anticipate now which classrooms are not going to follow the standard classroom setting?

MR. DALLEY: To that point, obviously when you do the initial review and look at the situation of what the potential could be, some decisions made around projection of numbers potential, as well as around what the capital expenditures would be, you look at all of those and try to make some of the decisions around that and the planning; but the reality is the actual delivery of the full-day kindergarten, we are not going to know that exactly until we get a better handle on numbers.

In terms of the pre-kindergarten, that will be very important. The other thing that will be important as well and that we will get a better handle on come late September, because we still see some significant movement of students and availability of space – for example, class caps have changed. Will that have an impact on class space, school space? People move – and I recall years where there has been five or six students or eight students show up in September that you never expected to come. So that will be challenging to your space.

So, to finalize that is going to be hard to do with planning, moving forward, getting a lot of it done where you are fairly certain of how some things are going to happen; but there will be considerable need for adjustment, and we will not really know that until October.

MR. KIRBY: I understand that final enrolment will not be known until perhaps October in some

schools, but the department would have to have, as of now, some projection of which of these schools in particular are likely to have full-day kindergarten classrooms that do not follow the standard classroom setting, correct? I mean, because we will be putting modulars, for example, at some of them.

MR. DALLEY: Yes, I know what you are asking, but I think it would be premature to lay that out. I think you know, and I think you would be one of them, but particularly parents and teachers and so on, I do not think it would be appropriate right now to lay this out and create an expectation, false or otherwise, that this is how it is going to be. If we laid that out and said this is what it is going to be and we are not sure, I think that would create a discussion and a debate that would not be necessary, whether it is a good one or a bad one.

Do you know what I mean?

MR. KIRBY: See, I would completely disagree with that, though. I think it is really important to have that – and not for me, in my role, but for teachers and just for people who are planning on buying a house. There are all sorts of considerations that people would have around their preference for their kids who are starting kindergarten in September.

MR. DALLEY: I think you make an excellent point, and you just justified my point. If we were to say that there would be one teacher, one classroom, and something should change, and you are after going out paying a half a million dollars for a house because you expect one teacher and one classroom, well, we cannot change a decision because you have bought a house. We have to do what is right for the system, and then when we have to make that change, because of multiple factors that will come, as you understand –

MR. KIRBY: Yes.

MR. DALLEY: – then all of a sudden somebody has made a decision and they are going to blame us, and that is not fair.

MR. KIRBY: I hear what you are saying, but I just want to say for the record that I would like to see and I know that there are folks who would

like to see what the department is projecting right now in terms of schools, in particular, that are not anticipated to follow the –

CHAIR: I think the minister is not prepared to go down that road right now, so I am going to ask you, Dale, to move on.

MR. DALLEY: I will just make one quick point. I mean, I understand –

CHAIR: Yes.

MR. DALLEY: – what he is looking for, and it is certainly not an attempt to avoid what his intent is, but I think our concern as to when we are able to make this more accurately available, not only for parents' planning – a very important issue – but for teachers, administrators, and districts as well, in terms of allocation, there is 142.5 new units going to be added, that is an incredible amount of work that has to be done. We are not going to lay that at someone's feet the last day, but until we get further along here, it will be premature to have that information circulated in the public when it is not accurate and could very likely change.

MR. KIRBY: Okay, I just have some associated questions then. The other thing that Ms Vivian-Walsh had said was that there may be some change from their initial plan then around the ratio and range for class size caps for two-teacher classrooms. Was I wrong – no? Okay, because in the press release it said that in these cases the maximum student-to-teacher ratio would be in the 14 to 1 range or two teachers for a maximum of twenty-eight students. That is still the plan?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Yes.

MR. KIRBY: Okay, that is still the plan.

At the time that this was released, there were twenty-one schools where the implementation plan was ongoing or to be finalized, that has all been finished, the twenty-one schools that had not been finalized as of this?

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Yes, all schools have been evaluated by the department staff and the school district.

MR. KIRBY: Of the twenty-one schools that as of August 2014 were to be finalized or ongoing, were any of those twenty-one schools deemed to be requiring modular classrooms or extensions?

CHAIR: Ingrid.

MS CLARKE: I would have to get that information for you.

MR. KIRBY: Are you able to provide that to me, what the outcome of that was?

Okay, and I just wanted to also –

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. DALLEY: Just so we are sure, in terms of the twenty-one schools and the assessments that had to be completed, basically what do we see in terms of capital requirements?

MR. KIRBY: What was the outcome, where would they fall, yes.

MR. DALLEY: Okay.

MR. KIRBY: Is it modular classrooms or extensions that are going onto Pasadena Elementary School in Pasadena?

CHAIR: Ingrid.

MS CLARKE: Pasadena Elementary is going to receive a modular.

MR. KIRBY: It is going to be a modular.

The other one that was not mentioned was St. Peter's Elementary in Mount Pearl.

MS CLARKE: St. Peter's Elementary will be addressed through an extension, which was announced in this year's Budget.

MR. KIRBY: Okay, so that is extension. Then there was a list of 163 schools, it was just that there are plans in place to offer full-day kindergarten for 2016. So, of that list of 163 that were not noted as needing additional

classroom space or ongoing, have any of those since been deemed to be in need of modulars or extensions, the 163?

MS CLARKE: My recollection is that they do not.

MR. KIRBY: They do not, okay. I think I am okay with that.

I just had a couple of curriculum-related questions there; it should be fairly quick. The Completely Kindergarten curriculum is going to be the stuff that is basically being used for the half day, currently, is going to be used for the full day. Has the Completely Kindergarten curriculum been pilot tested with a full-day group here in this Province, or is there any intention to pilot test that with a full-day class?

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: The Completely Kindergarten program was designed for full-day kindergarten in mind –

MR. KIRBY: Okay.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: – when it was done and first brought in. So, in the long-term plan that it could have been, there will be professional learning. We have not formally done a pilot, but that is the curriculum that has been used in the Province here for several years. We plan extensive professional development – that has already started – with teachers and the early learning framework. So there will be professional learning for all kindergarten teachers prior to full-day kindergarten.

MR. KIRBY: I just have one related question.

CHAIR: A follow-up, yes.

MR. KIRBY: Has the Completely Kindergarten curriculum been used in any other jurisdiction for a full-day program?

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: I would have to check on that for you, but I could pass it over to Ed, if he would know that.

CHAIR: Ed.

MR. WALSH: I am not aware that the specific curriculum that we have is used in other jurisdictions, but the philosophy of a play-based curriculum is consistent with other jurisdictions that offer full-day kindergarten.

CHAIR: Okay, I will hold you there, Dale.

Lorraine.

MS MICHAEL: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Coming back up to 3.1.01, I just wanted to ask a follow-up question with regard to the process of your getting information from the school districts with regard to meeting the needs of children with exceptionalities.

I am aware, as I am sure you are, that there are children – the ones I am aware of are mainly children who are autistic – who are not in school anymore because the schools have indicated to the parents that they just cannot meet their needs. The children, they consider them – they are not appropriately placed to be in the school. So, I am aware of students, kids who are at home, not in school. When you get those reports, do they report on the number of children that on paper it looks like they might be in a school but they are not? I believe it is a growing number.

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. DALLEY: It is a fair question, I think, when we look at kids who are not in school. There is mandatory attendance, number one. School administration, in particular, would be required to deal with attendance. It is laid out in the Schools Act. So that is the first issue, but we know there are situations where kids are not in school.

Some kids just do not want to be in school, and it is very challenging. You work with those, the administrator works with those, but it is a challenge sometimes. Sometimes you do not have parent support to get the kids in school. There are multiple, multiple factors that could be considered.

There are also situations where kids are not in school for other reasons, whether it is mental health, whether it is some exceptionality, whether it is autism or otherwise. It is very challenging circumstances. Again, many factors have to be considered, whether it is the child, it is the home, the parent, whether it is the school, the learning environment, how the school operates. It could be the transportation, all kinds of factors.

I think what is important there and what we encourage is that in those situations parents need to be in contact with the school. We would fully expect the school, through the administration, guidance, the program planning team, to be able to work through those issues. Sometimes those issues can be resolved and they are, and other times you need to go another step. You need to go to the district level, and sometimes the district will bring it to the department level. We have consultants who will engage and work directly with parents if need be, work with teachers, come to the school to help resolve some of these very complex situations.

That is the general approach to it. If there are situations out there where kids are not in school then we would fully expect whatever resources we have to work with them and find ways to have them in school, is what we would do.

MS MICHAEL: Minister, do you have the number of kids who are not in school and who are under the mandatory age limit?

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: The school district has the attendance records, but in addition to what Minister Dalley said, because you mentioned autistic children in particular. There are children who are not in school for other reasons, as the minister said. Some of them are older children and it is very challenging for the parents to get them there.

Mandatory attendance is as of age six, so kindergarten is not mandatory. Some parents decide not to send their child to kindergarten. Whether they are autistic or not, some parents decide that.

There are also some children who are attending partial days. That is planned at the school level through the program planning team, and the staff would be aware of that. In fact, the guidelines for partial day attendance, we have the guidelines through the department and the school district, of course, follows those guidelines. There is consultation with the senior education officers in the district when we are talking partial days. That is a more challenging one to determine what is appropriate but sometimes that is an agreed upon piece from a medical perspective as to how long a child is able to stay in school. That is one piece.

There are also families who decide to home school, which is a completely different process, and those families have to apply to the school district. There is a process, and the school district would have access to all of those records. From a parent who decides that it is home schooling, there is still an obligation for registration of that process, approval of that process, and the child is attached to a school. In terms of could we get the numbers of home school students? Absolutely. In terms of partial guidelines, I am sure the district could give us those numbers of students.

The students who are attending and not attending, who sort of stop attending, there is definitely a process where the teachers and the administration are to make contact with home, trying to engage the families to get children back to school. One of those initiatives which we were involved in with older children would be the pass program, which was meant and intended to try to bring students back to try to finish their number of credits in the high school. That is a program that continues. We have that program in eight schools. It is certainly a program that we would, in the future, look to expanding. It has been very successful between credit recovery and credit rescue.

There is ownership and responsibility on everyone's part regarding the mandatory attendance piece. It is very challenging as the child gets older in terms of the parent dropping the child off and the child leaving school, but I think there is quite a range there in terms of children who are not in school.

MS MICHAEL: I will ask my question even more clearly then, because I am asking specifically around children with autism. Do you have the numbers of children who are autistic and are at home because the school has advised the parents that it is the best place for them because the school cannot cope with them anymore? I have a number of parents who have come to me personally in that situation.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: I am aware that the school district has partial attendance and certainly some where there has been discussions on when to return a child to school, if there needs to be any kind of medical absence, but I am not aware of any child where basically a parent has said I will not have them in school beyond six and there has not been communication back and forth with the parent and the school regarding programming for the child.

MS MICHAEL: I will come to you with further discussion outside of this venue.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. DALLEY: We have many, many situations, as we can all appreciate, and some are not easy for parents and students. We would all acknowledge that. A tremendous amount of effort and resources – we will support these kids and their families. Teachers and guidance and Ed Psych people, overall they do a great job, but there are situations that are still very difficult.

I would encourage you, if you know of someone or a situation that you want to share and ensure that appropriate attention, engagement, and communication is ongoing, then by all means bring it forward. I would be only too glad to ensure that someone follows up and provides the supports. Let's get kids back in school. I would agree to that.

MS MICHAEL: Thank you.

I will come back down, then, to 3.1.02. I asked the Purchased Services – Allowances and Assistance, that is where I was; budgeted \$75,000, \$4,500 was not spent, but keeping the base of \$75,000.

MR. DALLEY: That was budgeted for fifteen students to be away from home. The uptake was fourteen students.

MS MICHAEL: Fourteen. Okay.

MR. DALLEY: So that is a bursary program right there.

MS MICHAEL: Great.

Okay. Thank you very much.

I only have forty seconds left so I will pass it back.

CHAIR: Okay.

Dale.

MR. KIRBY: Some other questions with respect to School Board Operations. This heading here –

CHAIR: Subhead 3.1.02?

MR. KIRBY: Yes.

CHAIR: Okay.

MR. KIRBY: Are there any school board personnel who are included in any of that?

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. DALLEY: Janet.

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Yes, the school board personnel would be under the Administration Grant.

MR. KIRBY: Okay. Are there additional school board personnel who are not included in here somewhere else?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: There would be some as well, Mr. Kirby, under the Regular Operating Grant.

MR. KIRBY: Okay.

Do we know how many are in either one?

MS MORRIS: Mr. Kirby, we would have to go back, I think, and get specifics for you on that. We certainly do have the information at the department, but I do not have it here available.

MR. KIRBY: Okay. We can follow up with it.

MS MORRIS: Yes.

MR. KIRBY: If I were to look for the \$12.9 million in savings that was achieved by amalgamating the English language school boards, where would I find that in this budget?

MR. DALLEY: Go ahead Janet.

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Mr. Kirby, you are referring to the savings since 2013.

MR. KIRBY: When we had the Estimates for the year that the school districts were merged, the Minister of Education at the time, Mr. Jackman, said that there would be \$12.9 million worth of savings achieved. At that point in time he had an Excel spreadsheet that he was able to produce delineating and breaking down the savings.

If I was to look for that number, is that reflected in the \$204 million, et cetera that is under School Board Operations? Is that somehow in there?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Mr. Kirby, it is very difficult to tell you where to find it. The ministers of the day have both publicly stated that there was \$5 million in savings from the executive positions and through the closure of the regional offices.

At the time in 2013, the money was taken from the budget. It would have been taken in 2013. What were included in that amount of money Mr. Jackman would have mentioned then was – on top of that would have been reductions that school boards came forward with at that time. Those monies, for the most part, were taken at that time.

Since that time, there have been some supports put back. You basically would have an up and down here, and also increases that would have

been normal, for example, busing; a huge increase since 2013.

Last year when we were here, when you looked at School Board Operations – which is the area that you would find what you are referring to – it would be very difficult. There is an up and a down and an up and a down of all of these things and an increased cost in busing. We are now up to \$61 million there, so an increase in the contracts there. You would definitely see, even last year, from an up and a down. Basically the money was taken in 2013.

In terms of the types of savings that you will see, the \$5 million was basically what you would have found that the ministers of the day would have said were saved for sure. Then on top of that, in terms of the other savings, I would say to you that even with the money we have given back this year to the English School District or the francophone district – but in particular the English School District which was \$2.5 million – that was given to the school district in terms of operating. Even with that, there would be more savings than \$5 million from 2013.

MR. KIRBY: Okay.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: It is very difficult for me to take a line item and say to you because of the changes on the 2 per cent, the 3 per cent, the signing bonus, and the busing increases that would be there – that would sort of not give you the full impact, but the monies were taken in 2013.

MR. KIRBY: The savings that were achieved by merging the boards have been reallocated to other lines in here.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: For example, the \$2.5 million that I just mentioned to you, last year we gave the board some monies for instructional grants that would supplement what they had as well.

I guess what I am trying to say is that there is no way to just take a line item here, there is that much up and down. You have last year as well and 2013, so from 2013, the Budget where the monies were taken. Then you have 2014 where we added the 2 per cent and the busing pieces, the bonus, and now again.

It is very challenging to do that, but I can say to you that the money was taken in 2013. I can find out exactly to you the piece on the instructional grant from last year, but I know that we returned that last year to the school district. I know that there is \$2.5 million this year in an operating grant.

MR. KIRBY: Is the department still on track to save \$12.9 million over – was it three years? That was the claim, I believe.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: I think Minister Jackman – that number you are referring to there. Approximately \$12 million was what he was saying at that time. What I am saying is that given that was taken at the time, then the other pieces have been put back, as I just mentioned.

MR. KIRBY: I guess really what I am suggesting is if the department was on track to save that \$12.9 million, then you would be able to produce a budget that shows the reallocation of the amount that was saved. Even if it was taken and put towards other uses, even if it were inflationary increases in cost, you could show that this increase in the line item or this increase in expenditure, all or in part, has been arrived at or is a reallocation of funds from savings from the school district merger.

CHAIR: Minister, or Janet?

MR. DALLEY: Go ahead, Janet.

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Mr. Kirby, in terms of the original amount, as I say, at the time it was announced as approximately \$12 million. As that time went on, the ministers of the day said, you know, it is not an exact science as you can imagine, especially where the increased costs come in. There was certainly an understanding that certain pieces we would put back at a particular time.

Right now this year, we have given the school district \$2.5 million in operating monies to assist with repairs and maintenance, and in terms of some financial pieces and technology that were identified, similar to what Ms Michael was mentioning when we were monitoring what is

needed, what was looked at there. These are the pieces that came forward, that they needed more positions in terms of finance, where we had consolidated the finances, and there was another piece regarding the technology. Again, though there was no formal evaluation, there was a monitoring of what was needed, and that was acknowledged this year.

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. DALLEY: If I understand the question and to reiterate a little bit, the savings were achieved, but I think it is important to acknowledge that every year there are considerations in education with respect to budget and to whether savings can be found or added pressures, negotiated agreements, and so on. So budgets will change invariably whether there are savings or otherwise. The savings would have been achieved, but pressures through repair maintenance, whether it is pressures through negotiated agreements, contracts, all of this stuff, you still have to find the funding. The actual number in 2013 was a number, but it is not a static number because we have to deal with the other aspects of education.

For that reason, the change in numbers and the varying of lines does not mean that we have taken what was saved and now we are going to try and spend it all over here or not. At that time, there was a savings; but, going forward, we still have to deal with the line items and the board and the district needs, and invariably the negotiated increases as well.

MR. KIRBY: Has anything changed with the Auditor General's ability to have a look at these school district's books? I know I was at a Public Accounts Committee meeting one time and we were talking about the Western School District. Could the Auditor General or the Public Accounts Committee look at the books of the English Language School Districts, should they choose?

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: The Auditor General has certainly done, I guess, work in the previous school districts. It has the ability to do so. I would not be able to speak to what their intentions are, but I know that the Auditor

General certainly has done a review in the past of certain aspects of district operations.

MR. KIRBY: That has not changed with the merger?

MR. DALLEY: No.

MR. KIRBY: Okay.

CHAIR: Lorraine.

MS MICHAEL: Thank you.

Under 3.1.02, under Grants and Subsidies also with regard to the Administration Grant, the budget last year was \$12.8 million and it went up almost \$2 million to \$14.8 million. Could we have an explanation of that, please?

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. DALLEY: That is primarily the redundancies, severance, and the paid leave expenses for executive management and union staff for the former school districts who were made redundant during the Budget of 2013. By the merger, you had to deal with staff as you took out positions as well.

MS MICHAEL: Okay.

This year, 2015-2016, it is still up in the \$14 million range.

MR. DALLEY: Yes, primarily the 3 per cent salary increases and the increased pension costs as well, and some of it was offset by the attrition management program.

MS MICHAEL: Okay, thank you.

Under the Student Assistants, did they also get a raise? I notice this line has gone up by \$1.2 million from last year's budget.

MR. DALLEY: Yes, they would get the 3 per cent salary increase as well and there is an increase in hours as you know.

MS MICHAEL: Right, thank you.

I have a couple of related questions with regard to the Transportation of School Children. A

couple of the Deloitte report recommendations around busing – I think we have had an answer about the routing software, thank you. What about the driver training for private operators? What is happening with that?

CHAIR: Joan.

MS MORRIS: The district is currently in the process of finalizing an RFP to go out to the marketplace to obtain various modules for driver safety training. The anticipation, I think, is that those modules will be done electronically so that anyone who provides a service across the Island will be able to do that through computer-based learning.

MS MICHAEL: Do we know how many drivers this includes at the moment?

CHAIR: Joan.

MS MORRIS: Well, under private contracts we currently have in excess of 500 buses. So, presumably there are more than 500 drivers who would be impacted by that.

MS MICHAEL: Okay. It sounds like the training that is being looked at is not the practical training of somebody going out behind the wheel with them; it is more of a knowledge-based training –

MS MORRIS: Right.

MS MICHAEL: – and you have analysis that indicates that it is the big problem?

MS MORRIS: That is would be a problem you mean for it be implemented that way?

MS MICHAEL: That there is a need with regard to actual knowledge, not so much practice but knowledge of the responsibilities would be one thing.

MS MORRIS: Well, I guess it would be just to confirm with the drivers to make sure that they are adhering to appropriate safety practices. For instance, when they get on their bus in the morning, making sure they do a visual inspection of the outside of the bus, also inside to make sure there is no hazards, those kinds of things, and then the proper use of their lighting

systems and swing arms and those kinds of things.

MS MICHAEL: Okay, thank you.

I think that another one of the recommendations had to do with having a new contract template with the companies. Has that been put in place?

MS MORRIS: That is currently in process. The template has been drafted and is currently undergoing some legal review.

MS MICHAEL: Right. Okay, thank you very much.

I will move on to 3.1.03; I only have one question there and that has to do with the reduction in that line. The budget was revised down and the estimate for this year is also beneath the budget for last year.

MR. DALLEY: The salary budget?

MS MICHAEL: Yes.

MR. DALLEY: The revised reduction is that the position was filled at a lower step than budgeted, and a position was vacant for a period of time.

MS MICHAEL: Right.

MR. DALLEY: That is primarily the reduction there. The increase – well, I guess the reduction from the initial budget is savings due to employees on a lower step of the salary scale, and partially through attrition, as well as the 3 per cent salary increase. So between all of that, the offset is roughly \$10,000 less.

MS MICHAEL: Okay, thank you very much.

Subhead 3.1.04, under Transportation and Communications, first of all, there was nothing budgeted last year and \$183,000 was spent, and this year it is up to \$190,000. Could we have an explanation?

MR. DALLEY: It is primarily the shipping and courier charges related to the purchase of textbooks. If you notice down in Supplies there is a reduction in what was budgeted and revised, and that reduction shows up in Transportation

and Communications. This was generally covered under Supplies, but we were advised to move it up in the line for Transportation and Communications.

MS MICHAEL: Okay, thank you very much.

Under Purchased Services, what was the \$1,600 expenditure?

MR. DALLEY: It was shredding services for out-of-date resources and curriculum guides.

MS MICHAEL: Okay. Thank you very much.

The next one is 3.1.05 in the salary line. Again, we have a revision downward from the budget, down to \$484,400, but in this year's budget the estimate is back up to \$543,000 – an explanation.

MR. DALLEY: The reduction was due to a management position being filled at a lower step than budgeted. As well, I referenced earlier around the twenty-six payroll that never got out in 2014-2015.

MS MICHAEL: Oh yes, right.

MR. DALLEY: That would add to that reduction. Equally then, that would see an increase in the 2015-2016 budget, along with the 3 per cent salary increases. Again, it is offset a little bit by attrition as well.

MS MICHAEL: Thank you.

Under the Operating Accounts, Employee Benefits, \$900 was spent that was not budgeted for.

MR. DALLEY: That was basically staff training and development.

MS MICHAEL: Was it a special training that took place that you had not expected?

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: There were four people who went to four different conferences. One of them would be the registrar for teacher certification, who went to a registrar's conference. Another one would have been a

conference that assisted our employee for collective bargaining for the next round regarding the teacher's piece there, and there were two other smaller conferences there for two other people. There were four all together for the registration costs.

MS MICHAEL: Okay. Thank you.

Under Supplies, there was a revision upward of \$800 under Supplies and this year the estimate is down to the base that you had last year.

MR. DALLEY: Yes. The Supplies would be the discretionary spending freeze, and just maintain the base budget.

MS MICHAEL: Great. Thank you very much.

I think that is all I have for that section.

Oh, under Revenue – Provincial, there is a \$36,800 differential between the budget and the revision last year.

MR. DALLEY: That line item there basically is revenue from the applications for teacher certifications and upgrades. There is a process through the teacher certification board, in-house board to evaluate these applications, teachers looking for certification; or, if they have done more courses and there are upgrades, they have to do a process here. That is basically it. The reduction is that we had less applicants than expected.

MS MICHAEL: Okay. Thank you very much.

I only have twenty-seven seconds so I will stop there.

MR. DALLEY: Okay.

CHAIR: Dale.

I am going to remind both individuals, we are getting down to the three-hour mark. You have about two sessions left of ten minutes each. So you have twenty minutes. After that, we are going to have to have the minister's blessing to go beyond.

Dale, it is up to you.

MR. KIRBY: I will keep that in mind.

Subhead 3.1.02, School Board Operations. Minister, I understand the new constitution for the school district relies on some piece of work that is being done in your office around the final approval for the boundaries of the zones for the election of trustees. Is that a piece of work that you are going to do, you are going to approve?

MR. DALLEY: When the merger took place – and I will reserve it here for Janet to correct me – the school board was tasked with developing a constitution to go forward. The constitution has been submitted to us for review. We will have a legal review and an internal review as well with respect to the Schools Act and so on. So once that is all done, then I guess it would have to be approved by me, as minister.

MR. KIRBY: Do you see that being done by the next school year, by September? Assuming you are in this role until then. Let's just assume you are in this role.

MR. DALLEY: I would assume the work – we expect the work to be progressing on this. This is one of the things we want to get accomplished. The board has done their work. We want to do the work, obviously, within the department.

Can I put a time frame on it? No, I cannot.

MR. KIRBY: The Schools Act puts a legislated time frame on it for the adoption of a new constitution of bylaws, as far as I know.

MR. DALLEY: Janet, maybe you can give a little more detail.

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: That is accurate, Mr. Kirby. That is in the Schools Act.

It was very challenging for the first group of – the board was given the task, the interim board which became the board on September 1, to do the task of dividing up the Province in electoral zones. That was the role of the school board. That is part of the constitution. There are other parts to the constitution in terms of how the board operates and thus, that came in to us from

the school board. They put in their request for the review of that in the fall. That is the piece we are doing now regarding the legal piece, but it was their responsibility at the time of the consolidation for them to come up with their zones.

The time frame from 2013 was a challenging piece of work for them. They did take a fair bit of time to come in. So even though the boards consolidated in 2013, the constitution that the minister is referring to came in in the fall of 2014.

MR. KIRBY: I am not sure what the legal implications are if someone files suit in Provincial Court about the act. I do not know if it would be anything other than a reprimand, but –

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: We have checked that, Mr. Kirby, regarding that aspect of it. In terms of the ongoing pieces, we have been advised they are able to carry on from a legal point of view.

MR. KIRBY: Okay.

I would like to ask a couple of questions about school bus transportation. That is under this as well.

I am sorry; I just skipped ahead a page.

CHAIR: That would be under 3.1.02, Transportation of School Children.

MR. KIRBY: Yes. So, of the \$61 million, et cetera, that is there, can you confirm how much of that is for board-provided busing versus contracts with private operators? Is that split out into two anyway?

CHAIR: Joan.

MS MORRIS: Excuse me, I have to check and see if I have it here. I might not have it offhand.

Mr. Kirby, I will have to follow up on that question for you. We do have the information; I just do not have it readily available.

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. DALLEY: Just by way of information, there are 849 buses, 302 are board-owned, and 547 are private. We have thirty-six private vehicles, and there are also 289 in alternate transportation.

MR. KIRBY: Minister, when new buses are purchased, is that authorized by your department?

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: The actual certification of the buses, the registration, Mr. Kirby?

MR. KIRBY: The purchase.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Oh, the purchase. We are involved with the purchase. It is actually one of the efficiencies that we get through CAMET. We actually, with the other Atlantic Provinces, take advantage of the size and the numbers that you would order in quantity for board owned. That would be done through us to help the school districts with that piece. The private operators would not be included in that. This would be for board owned.

MR. KIRBY: The purchase of new school buses is included in the transportation of school children?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Yes.

MR. KIRBY: Is that reflected in new purchases for this year?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Yes.

MR. KIRBY: New board – how many new ones?

CHAIR: Joan.

MS MORRIS: We provide for the financing costs to the district to obtain those buses.

MR. KIRBY: You do not have a number of how many new buses that are going to be purchased this year by the board? How many new ones?

MS MORRIS: I think it was approximately sixteen.

MR. KIRBY: Okay, thanks.

In the Throne Speech there was mention of a curriculum renewal for the K-12 system. Have there been any funds budgeted for a curriculum review for the K-12 system?

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. DALLEY: I will ask Janet to just give you a brief overview of the curriculum review. It is something that is ongoing all the time with respect to our curriculum. We have been able to bring in new curriculum right through the system, as well as some through a schedule that we will get to and advance through.

Maybe I could ask Janet to give some idea of where that is.

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Yes, curriculum renewal is an ongoing progress that is included in our regular budget, Mr. Kirby. We have a schedule for all curriculums as to when it was last reviewed and when it is needed to be reviewed again.

This current school year, 2014-2015, we would have had the Grade 11 English Language Arts, Grade 2 English Language Arts, Grade 6 English Language Arts, art in Grade 9 and Grade 8, and the writing course in high school with 2203.

MR. KIRBY: I am sorry to interrupt, but I am running out of time here. Am I correct to assume that curriculum review would have proceeded if we did not have a Throne Speech this year? If it had not been mentioned in the Throne Speech, we would have still had the curriculum review. We were mandated to do that, right?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Yes. It was called curriculum renewal in the Throne Speech. Then ongoing for 2015-2016, we have actually even more that would be ongoing.

MR. KIRBY: I guess my question is: Would that just be a normal curriculum review process that the department would have done?

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. DALLEY: There would be some normal curriculum renewal review, I guess. It is certainly highlighted with the respect that we want to do more and move forward, not only with that, but as well looking at K-12, the graduation requirements, and the discussion about math.

MR. KIRBY: So if I am waiting for a big announcement for you to kick off the curriculum renewal, I am going to be disappointed.

MR. DALLEY: Well I will be sure to make sure you are invited.

MR. KIRBY: With respect to the review of the mathematics curriculum, am I to assume that was something that was not planned? The review of the mathematics curriculum; were we up for a mathematics curriculum review in any case, since it was sort of fully implemented to all the grade levels, I believe, in the current school year?

MR. DALLEY: No. You are right in that is now implemented throughout the entire system and recognizing it is still new. As you would know, we are hearing a lot of discussion and concerns about math. Most people would point to the curriculum. It may be some aspects of the curriculum, but this is a national curriculum in many provinces. We parallel what is going on.

Our initiative and our plan and discussion is that we want to have a discussion about math. We want to drill down, whether it is curriculum – there are many other variables that we want to have a look at and have a discussion about, to consider not only what we are doing, but maybe what is happening in other provinces with respect to whether it is the allocation of time on math, whether it is teacher training, the university, the post-secondary process.

The announcement was not a review of math curriculum; it was that we are going to have a math conversation. It is important. There are issues out there. There are concerns. We are not prepared to point only to curriculum, there are multiple factors. We want to start having those conversations and see if there are other

things that we need to be doing to support the challenges that people are having in math.

Is it K-12 right through? Are there issues bridging between graduation and post-secondary? What is happening in other provinces? How much time do they allocate to math training, whether it is in the K-6 level, junior high, and so on? So there are multiple things. We want to engage people and have input. Let's take a good look at math.

MR. KIRBY: It is a good idea. Is there a particular sum of money that is included in this budget? Is there a dollar amount that is attached to the review of mathematics that is coming up?

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: This would be handled within our current budget, Mr. Kirby. I will say that though the math was fully implemented, there is tweaking going on all the time. We have a representative on a pan-Canadian committee who looks at the WNCP curriculum, and we make the tweaks as we are going through, and actually grades that we have already implemented, going back to doing more professional learning in that area.

Though as the minister mentioned, the conversation we are talking about and the conversation on performance, which is what we said in the Throne Speech; that would happen within our current budget. We are currently trying to frame that up right now in terms of providing what that would look like.

As the minister said, though the curriculum is one piece of that, there are many other areas that we would like to look at because there are many high-performing provinces using this current curriculum. We do not want to limit it. We do not want to say that it cannot be discussed. Obviously it is factor we will discuss and have at that table of performance with experts in the area, but there are many other factors, as the minister outlined.

In terms of how we will do that, we are framing that up now. That is exactly what we are working on right now with staff, what that would look like.

CHAIR: Minister, for a follow-up.

MR. DALLEY: Just briefly, our view of this is that it would be a very positive exercise. It is not looking to blame or challenge, whether it is our teachers or our school systems. Basically, we need to get into the guts of what these issues are and let's have the real conversation about math.

We have a brand new curriculum. It seems to be working in other provinces and not in ours. Let's take a look at it. Maybe there are things in the curriculum – maybe there are other things. I think we just kind of need to take the gloves off a bit. Let's have a look at it. Let's have the conversation.

CHAIR: Lorraine.

MS MICHAEL: Thank you.

Subhead 3.2.01, and in the interest of time I am not going to ask about minor – I think we have general answers to some of the minor variations. Under Professional Services the budget was \$17,700, but it was revised up to \$132,000. Could we have an explanation of that, please?

CHAIR: That is 3.2.01, Minister, Professional Services.

MR. DALLEY: Yes, the increase there is a part of the energy efficiency program that was introduced to the schools. It was \$140,000 that was inappropriately budgeted to School Board Operations. It was transferred to Professional Services, \$111,500, and Purchased Services \$28,500. Essentially why you are seeing a change in number is that the money that was allocated for the program to the Board Operations got realigned and booked here in this line.

MS MICHAEL: Under Curriculum Development?

MR. DALLEY: Yes. It is tied into the curriculum and delivery within the school system.

MS MICHAEL: Okay, thank you.

MR. DALLEY: It was to engage the kids in the learning process.

MS MICHAEL: I realize now, thank you.

They are all the ones I have under that. Subhead 3.2.02 I am going to do the same thing and here we have the Language Programs. Transportation and Communications, you have kept the base amount in this year's estimates from last year's but \$107,600 was not spent last year.

MR. DALLEY: That was basically a freeze on discretionary spending, less travel.

MS MICHAEL: Totally less travel, okay.

MR. DALLEY: That is what I have. I do not know if somebody has something – that is primarily what it was, right? Joan?

OFFICIAL: (Inaudible).

MR. DALLEY: Just so you know, it was less travel but some of it was reallocated within the lines there as well. As you see, there is an increase down in the Grants and Subsidies, so some of that would have gotten reallocated.

MS MICHAEL: Okay. Where the amount of money went up?

MR. DALLEY: Yes, like you see down in 10, Grants and Subsidies –

MS MICHAEL: If the purpose of the exercise was to save money –

MR. DALLEY: We did save money through a freeze on discretionary spending and less travel, but some of that money in that item would have gotten transferred over to Grants and Subsidies.

MS MICHAEL: Well, then could you give us an explanation, Minister, of Grants and Subsidies?

MR. DALLEY: Sure.

MS MICHAEL: I am going to ask that we get a breakdown of what actually was spent last year under Grants and Subsidies, the amount, where it went.

MR. DALLEY: Sure. This grant is a part of the federal-provincial agreement on Official Languages in Education and it basically provided increased opportunities to support the goals of the OLE Action Plan. We worked with the Francophone School Boards in the opportunities that were there. We had an opportunity to support some of the things that they wanted to do. An actual breakdown, we should be able to get that for you.

OFFICIAL: Yes.

MR. DALLEY: We can get that for you.

MS MICHAEL: Okay, thank you.

Then, coming down to the federal money, last year they gave much more than had been estimated or budgeted. So \$4.3 million, was that something very special just for last year?

MR. DALLEY: No, that was basically a delay in getting the funding from the previous year.

MS MICHAEL: Oh – this happens with the federal government.

MR. DALLEY: It does. A delay in reporting and getting the work done and getting it back, so that is a process.

MS MICHAEL: Yes, thank you very much.

Subhead 3.3.01, again the Salaries one I think we have; that will be the usual answer that we have received. Coming down to Transportation and Communications, there is a \$14,700 variance between the budget and revision last year.

MR. DALLEY: The increase there is a switch into which accounts the consultants in the department – this travel was originally charged to Individual Support Services, the ISSP budget, and it got placed in this line item for this year. I think it was \$14,700.

MS MICHAEL: That was only for last year that that is done, it will not happening this year because we are back to the base of \$57,000 for this year again.

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: I guess, Ms Michael, that will depend on the need. We would like to keep it at that amount, but sometimes it does have to go over and we find a way through the professional development to handle that.

MS MICHAEL: Okay, thank you.

Under Professional Services, there was an under spend last year of \$45,000 – any particular reason?

MR. DALLEY: Just a freeze on discretionary spending.

MS MICHAEL: Okay. So the discretionary spending came in there as well.

MR. DALLEY: Yes.

MS MICHAEL: Okay.

What is the main thing that gets covered under the Professional Services here? One note I have is that money for professional development for past teachers comes out of this pocket, is that correct?

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: That is accurate through the Poverty Reduction, yes.

MS MICHAEL: Okay, thank you.

Subhead 3.3.02, Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority, could you give us an update on what you are working on with them regarding resources for visually impaired, hearing impaired, and students with autism spectrum disorder?

MR. DALLEY: The APSEA provides services, as you know, for the blind and visually impaired, and a number of things through the database: short-term programs, braille, visual aids, assistive technology, comprehensive assessments, library loans, invitations to summer camps, those things. As well, the autism project, the teacher training where we will have teachers trained in an online delivery for autism and understanding autism. So, that is probably the newest project and one we are certainly

supportive of and so far we have seen positive results, but that will be ongoing.

MS MICHAEL: Right.

Minister, would it be possible to get a note on that – well, you have a note there – just sort of explaining the degree to which we benefit from this.

MR. DALLEY: Sure.

MS MICHAEL: What exactly the services are, and if it involves individuals, how many individuals, et cetera.

MR. DALLEY: Yes, we can get you some data around that.

MS MICHAEL: Thank you very much.

Subhead 3.3.03, under – well, I think that was discretionary, so I am not even going to ask that, in the interest of time – Purchased Services, the variance of \$64,000, was that also based on discretionary spending, or something else?

CHAIR: Subhead 3.3.03, Purchased Services.

MR. DALLEY: Purchased Services or Professional Services?

MS MICHAEL: No, Purchased Services.

MR. DALLEY: Purchased Services.

That number is reduced by about \$64,000. The students of the former School for the Deaf have completed school – I think all but one – and so this funding was for caregiver funding no longer needed.

MS MICHAEL: Okay.

MR. DALLEY: So the expenses is incurred were for accommodations for students as well, and some American Sign Language course. That is basically what the money was spent for, but the reduction is because the caregiver funding is no longer needed.

MS MICHAEL: Right, but you are maintaining the baseline there, though, for Purchased Services at \$85,900?

MR. DALLEY: We are, because it is a base budget line item, and even though it may not be used for the caregiver, it is not specific for caregivers, just for other services, if required.

MS MICHAEL: Okay.

With regard to the services for students, does the ASL interpretation – that is only when they are in school that the service is offered?

CHAIR: Janet.

MS MICHAEL: Or anything related to school activities?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Last year we transferred the monies for the in-school interpreters to the school district. It was easier from an administrative point of view. These interpreters were in the schools and it made much more sense from an administrative – at the department level. Those interpreters – where needed, they would apply for extracurricular activities, and if they needed it for an assembly they were to be used as well for that.

MS MICHAEL: Okay.

CHAIR: Lorraine, I am going to stop you there. Dale, you have the last ten minutes my friend. I do not have a clue where you are, but you are in your last ten minutes.

MR. KIRBY: Oh I have ten more minutes?

CHAIR: You have ten more minutes, yes.

MR. KIRBY: Wow. I did not realize that.

How much, ballpark figure, has the department spent on consulting in the last year? Do we know? How much was spent on consulting and how much is budgeted for consulting?

CHAIR: Janet, are you doing that or Joan?

Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: We have a full total from Professional Services, Mr. Kirby, of \$15.5 million approximately, of which approximately \$14 million of that would be in the school

facilities, whether that be R & M or in terms of new construction.

MR. KIRBY: Does the department have an estimation of what was spent on advertising in the past year?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Pardon?

MR. KIRBY: What was spent on advertising by the department?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Yes we do have that. Just did that today actually; approximately \$135,000.

MR. KIRBY: Okay. Thanks.

Is there a figure for the overall amount of budget spent on publishing material for the department?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Published material. The actual breakdown that I have there of the \$135,000; the majority would be going for whether it be advertisements regarding infrastructure, or also in our early learning, Power of Play campaign. We could provide certainly a listing of what that is.

There is very little regarding any other type of expenditure in terms of the categories. The largest one there we would have would be –

OFFICIAL: Newspapers.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Yes, it would be advertisements, and actually spots from the video campaign from the TV ads and the radio ads for the Power of Play campaign as well. We have a total of approximately \$107,000 in early childhood media, and in school facilities we would have about \$17,000. That is a fair chunk of the \$135,000.

MR. KIRBY: Is there a figure that is allocated to cover the elimination of school book fees? We hear a lot about the elimination of school book fees. Is there a specific dollar amounts that is attributable to the elimination of school book fees?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: That would be \$6.3 million per year.

MR. KIRBY: Where does that fall in the budget? Which of the lines?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: That would be in the school board instructional grant in the operating guides that we give to schools under School Board Operations.

MR. KIRBY: Is there funding set aside somewhere in the budget for the joint inclusion review committee with the NLTA?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Sorry, could you repeat the question?

MR. KIRBY: Is there any funding set aside in the budget for the joint inclusion review committee?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: No, but Mr. Walsh is our representative on that committee. Basically, that is a committee to discuss the recommendations. That would be something coming out of that. I will ask Mr. Walsh. He is one of our representatives on that. We have two district representatives as well on that and three from the NLTA.

Mr. Walsh.

MR. WALSH: Back to your question. The funding for that we are addressing internally through our co-operation with the NLTA. The expenses associated with meetings and stuff like that, we are both sharing that responsibility with the NLTA.

Just a brief summary; the committee has met three times already and another one is planned for the next two weeks. The committee is continuing its work.

MR. KIRBY: Okay.

We did not have an opportunity to go through CDLI in any detail. I was just wondering does the department have a number for the number of small, rural schools that do not provide the full program in senior high, or are unable to provide a full program of credits for senior high school with the absence of CDLI.

Do we know how many schools cannot deliver the school curriculum without CDLI? How

much would it cost to have all of those schools? What are we saving through CDLI, I guess is the point? How many schools absolutely require CDLI because they cannot deliver the senior high school curriculum without it? What would it cost for those schools to actually provide the full senior high curriculum that would be required to graduate?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: The whole idea of CDLI was to provide the specialized teachers in those areas versus having someone – it is difficult to recruit teachers. So the whole idea of the CDLI was to provide that option of a specialist in those areas.

We do have a small school high school model from a teacher allocation point of view. So depending on the size of a school you would have – a high school with an enrolment of less than twenty still would be allocated, based on the high school small model, two units; someone with up to less than thirty-four, two-and-a-half units. That is the high school only, not with the other pieces. A lot of these are K-12 schools as you know.

It would go up to three-and-a-half units for the schools that are approximately seventy-four or less in the parameter that I am talking about there. Our Small School Model still provides for very small schools, but the whole idea of the CDLI was to provide an expertise in areas where you could not recruit, whether that be in a mathematic speciality, whether that be in music because you could still offer music actually through CDLI. There is actually a course in skilled trades through CDLI.

The purpose of it was to be more accessible and provide the speciality, plus the small school piece could allow the school to decide which courses are best taught by the staff on the school and increases their allocation based on their size.

MR. KIRBY: I guess as it has progressed and expanded over the years, the question comes up about whether there is a cost-benefit analysis that can be done to it, or has it been done?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: I am sure we could give you the cost for CDLI. There are approximately 110 schools that, on an average, offer courses through CDLI each year. There are over forty

courses so it is fairly significant. I would have to say to you that from my time in education, the CDLI and the quality of that is something we are very proud of.

In terms of the cost of the whole department – in terms of that division I should say, I am sure we could provide you with that. There are twenty-nine teachers, one guidance counsellor, who are in this division.

MR. KIRBY: Do you have a list of the schools in the Province that do not have access to high-speed bandwidth right now?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: My understanding is that all schools that wish to have CDLI are able to connect. It is my understanding.

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. DALLEY: We can check on that with respect to bandwidth and availability. I think it is pretty well up to speed, no pun intended.

MR. KIRBY: The last information I had was that there were twenty-odd schools that did not have –

MR. DALLEY: Yes. Again, what speed they do have and their connectivity, we can check and see if there are any existing challenges out there. I have not heard of any. I know initially when the program started there was some for sure.

MR. KIRBY: Okay.

I will just ask one final question because everybody has been very gracious with their time. You and I will have plenty of time to spend – well, quality time together –

MR. DALLEY: You have to make the news somehow, Dale.

MR. KIRBY: With respect to the budgeting for full-day kindergarten, is everything on target for the – is it \$10.5 million that was budgeted for the current year? Is that on budget as per the Estimates last year?

CHAIR: Janet.

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Mr. Kirby, now that we have combined the two departments – the Child Youth and Family Services, the Child Development Division – that included the transition piece that we have added to that. That is where you get the \$10.5 million.

MR. KIRBY: Thanks.

CHAIR: Thank you, Dale.

Lorraine.

MS MICHAEL: Just a general question. If we come across something that we did not get a chance to ask you about, we can send you a message and ask?

MS VIVIAN-WALSH: Absolutely.

MS MICHAEL: Thank you.

MR. DALLEY: Yes, sure. Just mention it, come across and have a chat or something. If you need some information I will do it for you.

CHAIR: Dale.

MR. KIRBY: Minister Collins had indicated that we would be able to get a copy of the full briefing binder that both he and you used. Is that still good?

MR. DALLEY: Oh, not a problem. There is lots of good information in there –

MR. KIRBY: If you have not marked yours up we can take the one you have right now.

MR. DALLEY: I have mine marked up with a lot of notes, actually. It is not even education notes.

MS MICHAEL: (Inaudible) have any questions when we get that. So that would be great.

MR. DALLEY: It is not a problem.

CHAIR: Minister, and your staff, thank you so much. You have been very open and very gracious to be here. It has been a long day and I want to thank you for coming and sitting in front of the Committee this evening.

We have a couple of formalities before we can let you go, so just bear with us for a couple of minutes.

MR. DALLEY: Do I get to close?

CHAIR: Pardon?

MR. DALLEY: Do I get to close, too?

CHAIR: Do you want to have a closing remark?

MR. DALLEY: Just a brief comment.

CHAIR: Oh, I did not think you wanted a brief comment.

MR. DALLEY: I will just be brief.

CHAIR: Okay.

MR. DALLEY: Just to say to both, I appreciate your questioning and your interest. As you know, I am an Acting Minister, but I do have background in education, the first love I guess in terms of a career choice. Like both of you, I understand.

We will banter back and forth in the House and have lots of spirited discussions but I would like to think that all of us are intent on doing what is best for kids and the education in the Province. We may have some philosophical differences, without question, but I would like to believe – the way I have always operated, we try and do what is best for the kids and I think if we stay focused on that we will come out in the right place in the end.

I appreciate the questioning and the interest. Again, like I said, we will continue our banter in the House but I think deep down we all know, where we all feel about the importance of education, what we need to be doing.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

I am going to ask the Clerk to call the subheads.

CLERK: Subhead 2.2.01 through 3.4.03 inclusive.

CHAIR: Subhead 2.2.01 to 3.4.03 inclusive.

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, subheads 2.2.01 through 3.4.03 carried.

CLERK: Totals.

CHAIR: Shall the total carry?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

CLERK: Subheads 3.6.01 through 4.1.02.

CHAIR: Shall subheads 3.6.01 through 4.1.02 carry?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, subheads 3.6.01 through 4.1.02 carried.

CLERK: The totals.

CHAIR: Shall the total carry?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

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

CHAIR: Shall I report that the Estimates for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development carried without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, Estimates of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development carried without amendment.

CHAIR: Can I have the approval of the minutes of the Social Services Committee for May 20, 2015, for the Department of Health and Community Services and Office of Public Engagement?

Moved by Mr. Pollard; seconded by Mr. Kirby.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: Carried.

On motion, minutes adopted as circulated.

CHAIR: Ladies and gentlemen, that is a wrap.

A motion to adjourn by Ms Michael; seconded by Mr. Cornect.

We are adjourned.

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen.

On motion, the Committee adjourned.