



# **STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES**

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## STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Mr. Dan D'Autremont, Chair  
Cannington

Ms. Danielle Chartier, Deputy Chair  
Saskatoon Riversdale

Mr. Larry Doke  
Cut Knife-Turtleford

Mr. Muhammad Fiaz  
Regina Pasqua

Mr. Todd Goudy  
Melfort

Mr. Warren Steinley  
Regina Walsh Acres

Hon. Nadine Wilson  
Saskatchewan Rivers

[The committee met at 19:00.]

**The Chair:** — Okay, thank you very much. Welcome to the Human Services Committee for April 30th, 2018. I would like to introduce the members here: I'm Dan D'Autremont, the Chair; MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] Larry Doke; MLA Muhammad Fiaz; MLA Todd Goudy; MLA Warren Steinley; the Hon. Nadine Wilson; and substituting for MLA Danielle Chartier is Ms. Carla Beck.

I would like to advise the committee that pursuant to rule 148(1), the estimates for the following ministries were committed to the committee on April 18th, 2018: vote 37 and vote 169, Advanced Education; vote 5, Education; vote 32, Health; vote 20, Labour Relations and Workplace Safety; vote 36, Social Services.

I would also like to advise the committee that pursuant to rule 148(1), the supplementary estimates — no. 2 for vote 32, Health were committed to the committee on April 10th, 2018.

**General Revenue Fund  
Education  
Vote 5**

**Subvote (ED01)**

**The Chair:** — Tonight we will be considering the estimates for the Ministry of Education. We now begin our consideration of vote 5, Education, central management and services, subvote (ED01). I would like to welcome Minister Wyant here with his officials. Mr. Minister, if you would please introduce your two officials sitting at the front with you and others as they might come to the table. You may proceed with your opening statements.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Well thank you, Mr. Chair. Well good evening. It's my pleasure to be here tonight joined by my chief of staff and ministry colleagues to speak to the Ministry of Education's 2018-19 budget.

With me today to help answer questions that the committee might have, Rob Currie to my right, the deputy minister; Donna Johnson, assistant deputy minister to my left. Behind me, Clint Repski, assistant deputy minister; Susan Nedelcov-Anderson, assistant deputy minister; Rory Jensen, executive director of corporate services; Kathy Deck, director of corporate services; Gerry Craswell, executive director of information management and support; Tim Caleval, executive director, priority action team; Kevin Gabel, executive director of programs; Alison Hopkins, provincial librarian and executive director, provincial library and literacy office; Janet Mitchell, executive director of early years; Kim Taylor, director of early years; Flo Woods, acting executive director, student achievement and supports; Phil Pearson, executive director of infrastructure; Doug Volk, executive director of the Teachers' Superannuation Commission; and Josh Kramer, director of education funding.

Mr. Chair, this year's education budget is about keeping Saskatchewan on track by controlling spending, delivering high-quality services for Saskatchewan people, keeping our economy strong, and returning to balance in 2019-2020. For

Education this means ensuring that our students continue to receive high-quality learning and support services in our schools. Our government is committed to education, and we understand the importance it plays, not only today but for the future of this province.

Knowing that, we remain committed to the goals set out in the plan for growth and the education sector strategic plan to ensure all students are able to reach their full potential. We're continuing to work with our education stakeholders as we strive toward these goals and begin to plan beyond 2020. We've heard from our education partners that, like us, they too are committed to ensuring that we're all putting our students first by ensuring that they are well supported and able to reach their potential, no matter where they live in Saskatchewan.

With that in mind, our government is proud to be following through on Premier Moe's commitment to increase school division operating grants for the 2018-2019 school year by \$30 million. Overall funding this year for education for the 2018-2019 fiscal year is \$2.5 billion. This funding will continue to support pre-kindergarten to grade 12 classrooms as well as early years and childcare, libraries, and literacy across Saskatchewan.

The ministry's budget also reflects the change to the provincial collection of education property taxes. Overall funding for school divisions include operating funding, capital investments, and funding for teachers' pension and benefits. Operating funding for school divisions, including education property taxes, will be \$1.87 billion for the 2018-2019 school year. And that represents, as I mentioned, a \$30 million or 1.6 per cent increase over last year's school year.

We recognize the past few years have been challenging, and I've heard from many school division trustees that this funding will go a long way to help divisions deal with the pressures that they're feeling. We're committed to continuing to work with divisions as we move forward to ensure that the focus remains on the classroom and on our students. Mr. Chair, while this funding represents the equivalent of up to 400 teachers and other educational support staff, we know that school divisions are in the best position to allocate that money, based on their local priorities.

Included within this coming year's school operating funding is \$282.7 million for supports for learning. This represents a nearly 15 per cent increase of our operating funds earmarked specifically for pre-K to 12 [pre-kindergarten to grade 12] students that require additional supports. We're also providing \$20.5 million to continue to support 316 pre-kindergarten programs serving more than 5,000 three- and four-year-olds around the province.

Our government remains committed to improving First Nations and Métis education and employment outcomes. With this in mind, we are continuing our investments to respond to the recommendations made by the task force for improving First Nations and Métis education and employment outcomes.

This government's overall investment for joint task force initiatives remains at \$6 million with \$5.1 million invested in

education. This includes \$2.4 million to continue the 16 invitational shared services initiatives; 1.6 million for the continued implementation of Following Their Voices; \$1 million for Help Me Tell My Story and Help Me Talk About Math; and \$100,000 for on-reserve Microsoft software licensing.

In addition to the task force initiatives included in the school operating funding, the 2018-19 budget continues to provide \$3.8 million in funding to targeted initiatives, accountability, and promising practices that directly impact educational outcomes for First Nations and Métis students. This funding will enable school divisions to continue to actualize their First Nations and Métis education plan in order to improve student literacy, numeracy, and engagement.

We're also providing \$500,000 for summer literacy camps. Hosted by a number of our school divisions, these camps support the higher achievement of all students, but especially that of First Nations and Métis children, by providing rich learning experiences during the summer months.

This year's budget provides \$76.4 million in capital funding, which includes 22.7 million to advance the two ongoing school consolidation projects in Rosthern and Weyburn. There are no new capital projects planned for the '18-19 year. To meet fiscal challenges, we must balance competing priorities, and at this time we're focused on preserving and rejuvenating our government's record capital investments.

We'll continue to invest in improving the safety and quality of our existing schools by once again increasing our investment in preventative maintenance, renewal, and emergency funding by nearly 15 per cent over last year for a total of \$49.6 million.

We're also providing \$3.1 million for relocatable classrooms. This will allow for the purchase of six new classrooms and 15 moves to accommodate the growing needs in our province. Including this year's commitment, I'm proud to say that our government has provided approximately \$1.6 billion in capital funding since 2007.

The 2018-19 budget provides \$418.9 million for teachers' pension and benefits, which is a small decrease of \$104,000 over last year. This decrease is due to the reduced amount required for the Saskatchewan teachers' retirement plan offset and increases to the other teachers' pension and benefits program.

Mr. Chair, our government is also maintaining our commitment to early years. We know that the first few years of a child's life are among the most formative, and high-quality services and care during these years can lead to future success. That's why this year's budget provides \$76.8 million in funding for child care, including the \$20.8 million in federal investment through the Canada-Saskatchewan Early Learning and Child Care Agreement. Our province is very grateful to the federal government for their investment in early learning and child care within our province. The federal government has provided us very specific guidelines for these investments focused on the zero-to-six age group and primarily on those who are most vulnerable.

The federal investment will also allow for the creation of an additional 2,500 licensed child care spaces by 2020, including centre- and home-based spaces and 65 francophone spaces. With this new investment, we'll have allocated funding for nearly 7,000 new child care centre spaces across Saskatchewan since 2007, which is a 73 per cent increase. This year's budget also provides continuing funding for KidsFirst at \$15.5 million and early childhood intervention programs at \$3.9 million.

Our government remains committed to supporting the library and literacy sector in our province. We heard loud and clear the importance libraries play in our province, which is why we are continuing to provide \$11.1 million in operating funding. This includes \$6 million in resource-sharing funding for the seven regional libraries and \$974,000 for the northern library system. We're also providing \$1.3 million for municipal libraries in Regina and Saskatoon and \$2.8 million to support universal library services and infrastructure, including Internet connectivity and the single integrated library system.

Mr. Chair, these are the highlights of this year's education budget. Our government is proud of the investments we've made, and we are committed to keeping Saskatchewan on track by ensuring that our residents continue to have access to high-quality early learning, education, library, and literacy services.

So, Mr. Chair, this concludes my opening remarks and I look forward to our discussion today. Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Are there any questions? I recognize Ms. Beck.

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you for that introduction, Minister Wyant, and welcome to all of your officials and thank you.

I'm going to focus my questions tonight largely . . . We'll check in with the time, but I'm going to start with the subvote (ED01), and then I'm going to move on to early years and then into capital funding. So just to give a sense for the officials that are here. And then we'll see where we're at for time.

My first question is just a general question with regard to the number of FTEs [full-time equivalent] allocated under the subvote (ED01).

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — It's 272.

**Ms. Beck:** — And is that static over last year or is that a reduction?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Increase of a half an FTE.

**Ms. Beck:** — I do note that there's a decreased amount allocated under salaries in this year over last.

[19:15]

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — That was due to the minus 1 per cent, which was the directive which had come out last year.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. That leads me to my next question. In the budget remarks, the Minister of Finance noted that there would

be a further reduction required in this year's budget of \$35 million, or that was the target. Are there plans within the Ministry of Education for further efficiency measures?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — There will be . . . We'll be dealing with about a \$220,000 reduction by way of vacancy management within the ministry, which is our share of that amount.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay, that's your share. Okay, thank you. I think I will move on to subvote (ED08), that being the early years funding, and my first question again is just with regard to the number of FTEs within the early years branch. How many FTEs are allocated in this budget? And is that a reduction or an increase from last year?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — There's 49 FTEs, which is an increase of one and a half over last year.

**Ms. Beck:** — So just some questions, some higher-level questions with regard to the number of licensed child care centres. How many licensed child care centres are currently operating in Saskatchewan? And how many spots, individual spots, are present in those child care centres?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — There are 2,053 which are in 227 licensed family homes, and 14,176 in 331 licensed child care centres. And that was at December of '17.

**Ms. Beck:** — You anticipated my next question. The question I have next is with regard to statistics or data that you have with regard to wait-lists and the demand for space. Is the demand or wait-list still, is it outpacing the number of existing spots?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — We don't have a number with respect to how many are on the waiting list. Individual centres, individual homes keep their own list. Of course some parents would have their child on numerous wait lists, so we don't have a number in terms of how many children would be waiting for licensed child care spaces.

**Ms. Beck:** — Do you have a sense if there are areas of the province that are experiencing more of a shortage or more of an intensity for spots? Are there places that have an adequate number of spaces or an abundance of space?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Well I think anecdotally we would say that the need is greater in the larger urban centres, certainly in the growing, larger urban centres, but as I mentioned before, we really don't have a number. But I think it would be fair to say that that's where the demand would be to the extent there is.

**Ms. Beck:** — So you haven't received feedback from centres about . . . say in Saskatoon or in Regina or in smaller urban or rural centres, with regard to the demands that they're facing, the adequacy of the supply in their area, or within neighbourhoods within cities?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — We don't have the details of that available, but we're happy to put together what we have in terms of information and provide it to you at a later date if that's all right with you, Ms. Beck.

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you. Minister, with regard to the number

of spaces that you have already noted in the province, how many of those spaces would be available in 24-hour or non-standard-hour centres?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — I understand that the demand has been fairly low for access to 24 hour or at least extended hours. But we don't have that information with us, or not sure whether it's even available. But we know that the demand is fairly low.

**Ms. Beck:** — Fairly low. Okay. Do you have numbers with regard to the number of infant spaces that are available?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Across the province? Is that . . .

**Ms. Beck:** — Yes.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Okay. As of March 2018, the total number was 1,373. I can break those down by region if you like. In the central region it was 626; 71 in the northern region; and 676 in the southern region. And that's a total of 1,373.

**Ms. Beck:** — Good. Thank you. Do you have numbers with regard to the number of children experiencing disability participating in child care or early learning programs?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — As of April 2017, the number was 263.

**Ms. Beck:** — Is that an increase over the year previous?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — It was 227 the year previously, so there's an increased number.

**Ms. Beck:** — And do you have numbers with regard to the number and percentage of children who have access to licensed child care?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Sorry?

**Ms. Beck:** — The number and percentage of children who have access to licensed child care.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — The number is 8.1 per cent of the children who have access to that service.

**Ms. Beck:** — As of what date is that, Minister Wyant?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Sorry?

**Ms. Beck:** — As of which date? When are those numbers from?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — December 31st.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. And is that an increase or a decrease over the previous year with regard to percentage?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — It's fairly stable.

**Ms. Beck:** — Minister Wyant, I note in the Ministry of Education plan for 2018-19 that one of the performance measures around inclusivity is the number of children experiencing disability participating in child care or early learning programs. I'm just wondering how that term,

“experiencing disability,” how that’s defined.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — We’ll have one of the officials answer.

**Ms. Mitchell:** — Hello, I’m Janet Mitchell. May I ask you to repeat the question?

**Ms. Beck:** — Certainly. I’m looking at the Ministry of Education’s plan for 2018-19 and under the performance measures — I’m looking off page 4 right now — with regard to inclusivity, one of the performance measures is the number of children who are experiencing disability participating in child care or early learning programs. And the question is how that term, “experiencing disability,” how that’s defined. Is that by diagnosis? Or what’s the criteria for that measure?

[19:30]

**Ms. Mitchell:** — So what happens is when there is a child who the parents feel is experiencing disability and the child care centre agrees, they have a referring professional and they complete a process collectively around, does this child have a significant disability requiring some additional support? And when they do, then we put a plan in place for that child.

**Ms. Beck:** — So there are some parameters or there’s . . . So if a parent were looking to access that, there would be some information available for them to understand that they might have some eligibility.

**Ms. Mitchell:** — Absolutely. And we ensure that the parent is involved in that process as well.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. But not necessarily a diagnosis.

**Ms. Mitchell:** — It’s not necessarily a diagnosis, no. But we do require a referring professional.

**Ms. Beck:** — Who’s counted as a referring professional? Which professions would be counted?

**Ms. Mitchell:** — It could be any number of people, and it really depends on the community where they might most often come from. So certainly a physician would be a referring professional, but we also have a whole number of other people who could do that. For example a speech pathologist, occupational therapist, a whole number of people could have that role.

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you. With regard to funding for child care centres — correct me if I’m wrong — there is a base grant amount for operating that’s available for centres. Just wondering, was there an increase to that amount in this budget?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — There was no increase this year over last year.

**Ms. Beck:** — When was that amount last increased?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — I’m sorry, your question is when that budget line was last increased? Which budget year?

**Ms. Beck:** — Yes.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — In 2015-16 there was a 1 per cent increase.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. And I know this question is technically a Social Services question, but the last time that the ceiling amounts to qualify for subsidy for child care were raised . . . Do you know the last time that that happened? And the reason for my question is this: I’m getting at affordability and access to licensed care, some of the pressures that child care centres and parents are experiencing with regard to affordability.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Minister, if this does not fall within your purview then you do not have to answer this.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — I think we’ll have a little bit of information, Mr. Chair, and if we do, we’ll answer it; otherwise we’ll defer.

We don’t have that information readily at hand, and I wouldn’t want to speculate on . . .

**Ms. Beck:** — No, that’s fair. That’s fair. I do have some understanding that it’s been a number of years since that happened. And I guess the question was around if you’re hearing any concerns with regard to the affordability of child care spaces.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Maybe I’ll just answer that this way, and this kind of was one of the things that I wanted to speak to. But Saskatchewan has some of the most affordable licensed child care in Canada. Saskatoon and Regina rank number eight and ten among the 28 large Canadian cities for lowest cost.

So I’m not sure that answers your question. But really in terms of affordability relative to 28 largest cities in Canada, we rank pretty well.

**Ms. Beck:** — I just had a follow-up question with regard to the number of infant spaces. I understand the answer was 1,000. Are you hearing . . . Is that an area where there is more demand than there are spaces? A particular area of availability being outpaced by demand?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — There is anecdotally a higher demand for infant spaces than for other spaces. The number that we had quoted earlier, I think, was 1,373 for infants. But certainly I think our perspective is that there is a higher demand for infant space than other spaces.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. Getting to the Canada-Saskatchewan Early Learning and Child Care Agreement. Of course as has been noted, this is a three-year agreement. \$20.8 million of that flowing this year — I think I’m quoting from your news release — supporting the existing 16,000 licensed spaces. And there’s a plan to increase to 2,500 more spaces by 2020.

Note that more than half the money flows in this first year of that three-year agreement. How will the rest of that roll out over the next two years?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — So the amount is \$6.9 million in the first year. Because of the timing when we signed the agreement, the balance of the amount that would otherwise be available in the

first year is carried over. Twenty million in the second year, and then the balance in the final year.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. So I note the \$12 million is allocated for early learning pilots for children needing additional supports. Is that flowing this year? And can you tell me a little bit about those pilot programs?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — I hope this answers your question. It's \$8.6 million over three years. Because, again because of the timing of the agreement, it's more heavily weighted in the second and third year, that \$8.6 million.

**Ms. Beck:** — So the total amount is 8.6 million?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — For the early years intensive support pilots.

**Ms. Beck:** — I'm just reading from a document, I believe it's from the ministry, Student First. It notes "12 million to pilot early learning opportunities for children requiring intensive supports." I'm just wondering why the discrepancy between this document and the amount that you just noted?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — The difference would be the \$2 million which would be for supports for rural and remote communities, and 1.72 for pilots for preschool children who are deaf or hard of hearing, at \$1.72 million.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. So maybe, Minister, if you could provide some detail with regard to those three programs within that 12 million that you just noted.

**Ms. Johnson:** — I'll add a few points to what's been said already. The \$1.72 million that's earmarked for deaf and hard of hearing services is something that is under development right now. We've been working with the Human Rights Commission and we're currently in the process of conducting a survey online with parents who have preschool-age children who are seeking services in this area. So once the survey is complete, the programs will be developed and delivered in time for the September 2018 school year.

With respect to the 2 million for the supports for rural and remote communities, we're looking at getting that up and running for September of 2018 as well. So what's really been begun, I guess since the signing in the middle of March, is the rolling out of the early learning intensive support pilot in Regina and Saskatoon through the four school divisions in Regina and Saskatoon.

[19:45]

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you. If you could provide some detail about those pilot programs within Regina and Saskatoon.

**Ms. Johnson:** — All right. So in year one here, so in what is the balance of the '17-18 school year . . . Sorry, I'm going to have find my right place here.

Okay, I will double check these numbers in terms of '17-18. My memory is telling me that currently in '17-18, since the agreement was signed, we're serving in the neighbourhood of a

dozen children across the four school divisions. And for the '18-19 school year we have already received 52. And when I say we, I mean the school divisions. The four school divisions have already received 52 applications for children to be served in these pilots, and we're projecting that there'll be 112 children served across the four school divisions.

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you for that. What I'm looking for is some detail with regard to what those dollars are funding. What is the support that is being provided with that funding?

**Ms. Johnson:** — Generally the support is for the educator and the assistants who are serving the children, so either a teacher or an individual with similar accreditation that focuses on providing services to children that have intensive needs.

**Ms. Beck:** — So are these additional spaces that will be created with this funding?

**Ms. Johnson:** — Considering the number of children that are being served in 2017-18, I would say yes, these are additional spaces.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. So I do recall last year when we sat at the table, the then minister had noted that programs like the Discovery Preschool programs and the Communication Preschool programs, that they would not be allowed to be cut but yet they subsequently were. What were the number of spaces that were lost in the discovery preschool programs? I believe there was the Sunshine Preschool program, the Communication Preschool programs last year.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — There would be 18 in Regina Public. In the Discovery Preschool, there would have been 18. The Communications Preschool, there would have been 12, and 6 at SCEP [Socialization, Communication, and Education Program].

**Ms. Beck:** — Those were the total number of spaces that were lost last year as a result of the funding cuts?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — We're going to have to speak to the school divisions and get back to you with those numbers because those weren't our programs.

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you. The term "pilot" or "early learning pilots" would imply that these are programs that will be under evaluation and I would expect to have to meet some criteria. I'm just looking for specific outcomes: what you're measuring with these pilots, what you're looking for, and what would a successful pilot look like in securing long-term funding for these programs.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Well I guess that's the whole idea of a pilot. If we deem it to be successful, it would be something that we would want to expand into other school divisions.

**Ms. Beck:** — Yes, I guess I'm just looking at the evaluative criteria, how they're being evaluated . . .

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — How they get valued?

**Ms. Beck:** — Yes.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Well I guess we determine success based on, you know, what the needs are that are presented by each individual child, so there would be an individual assessment. I can't tell you today what the criteria would be for assessing. That would be done on a case-by-case basis depending on the needs of an individual child because they're all different.

So for instance, if there would be a successful transition to kindergarten, that would be a criteria upon which, you know, we would deem the child to have successfully completed that program. So that's really kind of the valuation criteria. But each individual child would present different challenges, right? So there wouldn't be a kind of one thing fits all for all the kids because the criteria would be . . . the needs would be different depending on how they presented.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. I guess maybe I'm not being clear in what I'm asking. What outcomes would you deem successful and then look at implementing this program in other jurisdictions, other areas, or first securing long-term funding for these programs?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Well we'll have to define . . . We'll certainly have to make the case to the federal government with respect to whether the programs are successful or not in order to secure, you know, funding past the three years. And so that will be really determining what criteria and what case we have to put forward to the federal government. That will be something that the ministry needs to work on in terms of the presentation of what we consider to be successful in terms of the pilot projects because obviously the ultimate for us would be to ensure that we can secure long-term funding. So it will be dependent on how we present this case to the federal government in terms of what we consider to be successful on a per-student basis.

**Ms. Beck:** — So with these pilot programs, they're targeted for pre-K programs. How would they look different than a typical pre-K program that already exists?

**Ms. Johnson:** — So perhaps I'll reply to that question. Essentially the intensive pilot is focusing on the three- and four-year-olds. So in that regard it is similar to the ministry-designated pre-K programming that is delivered by school divisions.

The main difference, I think, between the federally funded program that's being delivered now and what continues to be delivered with provincial dollars is that in the federal program students that come from a range of backgrounds are eligible as long as they're presenting with intensive needs, whether that intensive need is autism or another physical or mental disability.

But in the provincial pre-K program we look at vulnerability factors, generally the socio-economic vulnerability factors. And so students that are served through the school divisions, through the ministry-designated pre-K are coming from that kind of a background.

**Ms. Beck:** — So in terms of ratios particularly, they're the same for the two programs?

**Ms. Johnson:** — Are you referring to provider- or adult-to-student ratios?

**Ms. Beck:** — Yes, number of spaces. That's right.

**Ms. Johnson:** — No, the ratios are different as well or can be different. Yes, often higher ratios in the intensive-needs pilot because of the nature of children being served.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. And how do children qualify for the federal program? When you describe intensive needs, what criteria is set out for eligibility into those programs?

[20:00]

**Ms. Johnson:** — The criteria for the children entering into the intensive support pilot is actually being developed in concert with the school divisions. They're the touchpoint that parents go to when they have a three- and four-year-old that they feel would benefit from early entrance into the school system. So we don't have a really hard and fast checklist of the child must present with A, B, and C in order to be eligible. We really are working with school divisions to have them let us know who has contacted them looking for early entrance and what are the needs of those children. And then, you know, we'll sort out with the school divisions just how far the service can be provided.

**Ms. Beck:** — So at this point if parents have a child who they believe has intensive needs, they should be contacting one of the school divisions and getting on a list and seeing if they meet this criteria that is being developed now?

**Ms. Johnson:** — Yes, absolutely. And when we signed the agreement we did the news release and the usual backgrounders and there was some information that was posted on the Saskatchewan.ca website that talks about the early learner and intensive support pilot and that same information is posted on the school divisions' websites as well. So it gives parents an idea of who the programming is targeted to and gives them the opportunity to think about, you know, whether or not they should pursue contacting the school divisions. But certainly if parents believe that their children would benefit from the early learning opportunities they should be in touch with the school division.

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you. I'm going to move on to the remaining \$8 million as noted in this document. It's noted that there's \$8 million for training and equipment grants. Could you describe in some detail what that 8 million is to go towards and how that will roll out with regard to this 3-year agreement?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — To enhance the experience of children in licensed child care by investing in training and resources for licensed child care providers to ensure high-quality programming, the total investment of \$5.993 million provides a one-time grant to support the quality of environments in licensed child care centres and family child care homes in alignment with play and exploration; invest in focused training and supports to support children with intensive and unique needs to increase the quality of licensed child care; enrich the learning experience for children with disabilities; specialize training for all child care directors focusing on developing leadership skills and



supporting staff to deliver quality programming.

Support licensed child care home providers by investing in training to support implementation of play and exploration; provide a one-time grant to licensed child care providers to purchase equipment and resources that motivate active play in children, and to improve access to early learning and literacy for children who would not otherwise have access to those opportunities.

There's a total of \$2.2 million to support and improve literacy for preschool-aged children, including opportunities for children with little or no access to programming.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. And so this would be literacy programming, literacy training that would be provided to child care providers? Is that the second piece of that?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — It's certainly part of that, but there's a significant amount that's really dedicated to the play and exploration piece of that too.

**Ms. Beck:** — So a lot of it will flow through that grant process, that already existing grant process.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Right. That's right.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. Is there a particular program that's been chosen with regard to the literacy programming to train child care providers in, or will that be developed? Or will it be left up to them to find a literacy program?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — It hasn't been decided yet. We're working on that with the child care centres.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. Will that be delivered in person or through a web-based PD [professional development]?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — There'll be multiple options. Certainly some people can't leave a home care situation, so there'll be multiple options for the delivery.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. Thank you. I think the last piece in terms of the dividing up of the pie is the \$1 million to develop 65 francophone child care spaces. Is there a large wait-list for these spaces at current?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — There would be a wait-list, but we'd have to contact the child care centres to determine exactly how long or how many people are on that list.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. So I guess a bit of an overarching question is just how the funding priorities were determined with regard to this funding agreement, how the funding was allocated.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — I'm not sure this is going to quite answer your question, but the federal government identified the framework and then the province made an assessment based on, you know, where our focus would be within that framework.

**Ms. Beck:** — Was there a document or guiding principles that were guiding the province's focus within that framework?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Yes, there was . . . The funding was to improve, certainly to focus on affordability, accessibility, inclusivity, flexibility, or quality of child care for those early learning programs. So those were kind of the parameters that were applied in terms of determining how it was going to be utilized.

**Ms. Beck:** — Were there consultations that were undertaken with those in the sector prior to the penning of this agreement?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Well I guess . . . not right to say, not really. We're certainly in constant contact with the providers. So to the extent that there was any ongoing discussions, really based on that. Legislative Secretary Marchuk, when he was here, had done some consultations.

**Ms. Beck:** — Which year was that?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — '14-15. That time frame.

**Ms. Beck:** — Were there any requests or priorities that were identified by providers or by early childhood groups in the province with regard to this funding?

**Ms. Johnson:** — In terms of what was requested, I guess, many things, of course, came up through Legislative Secretary Marchuk's conversations across the province. But certainly child care centres, particularly in the larger urban centres, were making note of a need for additional spaces, which is why this plan comes forward with more than 2,500 spaces.

There's also regular identification from child care centres that parents are seeking spots for children that have some level of disability. So, essentially using our current terminology for the enhanced accessibility grants, they were looking for additional spaces that could be providing service to children with some level of disability.

We've also been focusing on the importance of the early years as we've undertaken the education sector strategic plan. And through the work of the sector strategic plan, we've noted some other areas that would be important for good transitions for kids to go from being three- and four- and five-year-olds into entering grade 1, and one of the key observations coming out of that is the importance of quality or certified early years educators. So certification and access to training was, again, something that was identified by school division, from people within the school divisions — whether they're school principals or kindergarten teachers or what have you — and from other educators, and of course from the child care centres as well because they all employ people who are ECE [early childhood education] certified.

**Ms. Beck:** — I understand that a delegation from the early years, early learning, and early learning sector in Saskatchewan had opportunity to meet with the federal minister prior to this agreement being signed. Was there any such meeting with the provincial Minister of Education?

[20:15]

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — I understand — well I know for a fact — that Minister Morgan had signed the framework agreement last

June and had met with officials, and Minister Eyre had met with officials from the federal government when she was the minister.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. I guess my question was, was there a meeting prior to the signing of this agreement between the Minister of Education and representatives of the early childhood sector in the province?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — The . . . [inaudible] . . . officials from the ministry were not included in the discussions between the sector and the federal government.

**Ms. Beck:** — Ms. Johnson, I believe you noted one of the goals was stated was the number of trained providers. Do you have statistics in terms of the number of trained ELCs [early learning centres] at the I, II, and III level in the province currently employed?

**Ms. Johnson:** — We do have that information. I just need to take a quick look here to see if I have that with me.

I'm sorry. I don't think I have that information with me. But, as you can well imagine, we do, with our education sector plan, survey the school divisions on a semi-annual basis to find out from a kindergarten perspective how many of the kindergarten teachers have what level of certification. So I can follow up and provide that information to you.

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you. I guess I was thinking more specifically with regard to child care centres and the ratios within the child care centres. Do we have numbers on how many are employed at each of the I, II, and III levels?

**Ms. Johnson:** — We don't have that handy with us, but our regulations do define how many providers have to be present given the number of spaces that the centre is licensed for, and again depending on whether the space is an infant space or a preschooler. So it is defined in legislation, and we can certainly follow up and get you specific numbers.

**Ms. Beck:** — And are you working closely with the polytechnic, for example, with regard to you're increasing the number of spaces to ensure that there is future planning to ensure that you have enough of the trained professionals at each of those three levels?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — We are working with Sask Poly. We're also working with the provincial child care association and the Saskatchewan Professional Teachers Regulatory Board with respect to alternate career and alternate career pathways, and SIIT [Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies].

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay, great, thank you. Do you keep statistics with regard to turnover rate or the number of professionals that are leaving child care on an annual basis or intermittent basis?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — How many professionals are leaving?

**Ms. Beck:** — Yes.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Given that we're not the employer, I mean we would know how many are there, but we wouldn't

necessarily know what the turnover rate would be.

I did want to clarify though with respect to Sask Polytechnic there are a number of programs, as you know, that are available through Sask Polytechnic whether that's level I programming, level II certificate programming, or level III diploma programming. So we do work closely with Sask Poly.

**Ms. Beck:** — I guess what I was getting at with my question was the extent of which you hear concerns from the sector about staff turnover within centres and difficulty to staff the centres with the appropriately trained ECE professionals.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Well we certainly hear some of that. You may know that we've increased funding for improving wages and benefits in staff in child care centres by about seven and a half million dollars since 2007. I'm not sure if that helps you or not with your inquiry, but certainly there's anecdotal information about turnover.

**Ms. Beck:** — One of the reasons I bring up the concern is, speaking with directors that's a main concern that is brought to my attention. I believe I spoke with one director who had turned over her full staffing complement three times in the span of less than a year. So it was brought up as a concern.

Do you keep statistics or have an idea of the average wage for someone employed within ECE?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — I've got the average hourly wage from 2014-15. We'll see if we can get updated numbers, but they were, for level I, they were 14.41 an hour. For level II, they were 17.47. For level III, they were 20.19; and for a director, \$23.71. We're just checking to see if we have any updated numbers.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Those are the most recent numbers that we have with us tonight.

**Ms. Beck:** — Do you know the last time that those . . . the amount for wages within the grant was increased?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — We don't know because we're not . . . I understand we're in the process of updating our labour market analysis. But not being the employer, we speculate that there was the 1 per cent increase in '15-16. And I'm not aware of what other increases there have been since that time. But that's not to say that there haven't been any.

**Ms. Beck:** — The last time that an increase in the funding provided to centres was in 2014-15?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Right.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — '15-16.

**Ms. Beck:** — '15-16. Excuse me. I wanted to ask about the role of the daycare consultants, a bit of a job description for the work that the daycare consultants do.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — The primary responsibility of the ELCC [early learning and child care] consultants is to enforce *The Child Care Act* and the regulations and to support child care facilities to provide high-quality child care for children. That delivery staff are also available to assist families in making choices about the most appropriate services given their needs.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. How many of these consultants are there in the province?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — There's currently 21 located in 11 offices across the province. There's one in Humboldt, one in La Ronge, one in Melfort, one in Moose Jaw, two in North Battleford, one in Prince Albert. There's six in Regina. There's five in Saskatoon. There's one in Swift Current. There's one in Weyburn, and one in Yorkton.

**Ms. Beck:** — And all of those positions are currently filled?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Yes.

**Ms. Beck:** — I was just looking for a little more detail about the Play and Exploration and the Active Play grants. How much is allocated in the budget for each of those grants, and what the goals and activities are, expectations with regard to those grants.

**Ms. Taylor:** — Hi. It's Kim Taylor, director in the early years branch. Both of these grants are a part of the Canada-Saskatchewan agreement. There's approximately \$2.5 million for both of these grants.

One, as you know, is to support Play and Exploration. So each of the licensed child care centres and homes that are active as of now, based on how many spaces they had, would have been given an allocation that could support them to purchase equipment or to maintain their environment or do something that would allow them to create a quality space that would support that quality programming in line with Play and Exploration. So I'm not sure if you know what Play and Exploration is, but it's essentially our foundational document — our curriculum, if you will — the principles of early learning that allows for that environment and the development of the children.

And then the other grant is actually to support Active Play. So this could again either be interior or exterior, and again was based on the size of the centre, so how many spaces you had would determine the amount of money that you received. And again it was for those that were currently existing to enhance their environment that support the ideas of being active as a child.

[20:30]

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you for that. What type of equipment typically would centres purchase with the grants?

**Ms. Taylor:** — It depends. We did, as a part of that grant, offer a package that kind of outlined different types of equipment that would be suitable. It really depends on the age of the child, but it could be items that allow for manipulation, so different natural resources that kind of do the fine and gross motor skills.

It could be items for their outdoor space that get them playing active, moving. It could be different pieces that support their literacy. It really varied. But we did provide them with a bit of an outline that would help them in managing what they were purchasing.

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you. And how many centres have access to each of those grants?

**Ms. Taylor:** — So what we've done is actually put out the application or . . . the application, for lack of a better word for it, and we're in the process of receiving back their plans on what they would do. So I can't say for certain how many at this point. With the signing of the agreement on March 16th, that wasn't a lot of time to get it to actually fruition but the commitment has been made to all, as I said, the existing centres and homes.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. So there's a bit of an approval process and then they will hear about the grants at some time in the future.

**Ms. Taylor:** — They have been notified of what they would be eligible for. So now it's just a matter of gathering the information about what they would actually be purchasing to ensure that it's in line with the purpose of both of those grants.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. Thank you. With regard to the inclusion grant, of course there was some significant changes to the inclusion grant and how that was allocated last year. I'm just wondering how that's been received and have there been any . . . How has the rollout of those changes been?

**Ms. Taylor:** — Just for clarification, are you referring to the change from the centre block inclusion? Yes, so as you know, we made the change that we were no longer offering that grant to . . . It was only actually offered to 10 of 310 centres across the province, but instead allowing children who would be eligible for what we call our enhanced accessibility grant, eligibility for that. So we actually did have a lot of transfer of children moving into the enhanced accessibility grant, and to date have not received any referrals regarding a specific child who wasn't able to transition.

**Ms. Beck:** — So in terms of feedback, that transition was a smooth transition? Were there any concerns that were noted with the loss of the block funding?

**Ms. Taylor:** — As I said, we didn't receive any referrals specifically noting that a child wasn't getting supports that they required that they might have been receiving previously.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. Thank you. I guess just details with regard to the number of the individual grants that were accessed in the last year. The individual inclusion grants, do you have numbers on that?

**Mr. Currie:** — Maybe if I may be permitted to go back to the addition and enhance that response a bit, that we found that we wanted to make sure that the students, the children, were served based on their needs. And we found that the efficiencies of the opportunities provided to them was greatly realized when they were given directly the financial resources to go and access the services that they would need as opposed to having block

funding to any certain environment regardless of the number of children there and the needs that were required.

So this was found to be an effective way to allocate the resources directly to the child of need, and they could access the resources within the community.

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you. I did have a specific question with regard to the new spaces that were allocated in the new P3 [public-private partnership] schools. One of the concerns or things that has been brought to me, that there was an amount that was paid, expected from those centres to be paid to Johnson Controls. Do you have details about that?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — We don't have that information.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. I'm going to move specifically now into the allocation for KidsFirst and just a broad question about the program: who does this program support? What are the aims and the benefits of this program?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Well maybe I'll just describe it. The program provides vital child development and school readiness supports such as home visits, events, and tools to support learning and development, information and mental health services, and connections to community programs in urban and rural communities across the province.

Its targeted regional programs play a good role in supporting the education sector's strategic plan and the early years plan for providing the tools and resources to increase the likelihood that children successfully enter into more formal learning environments.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. How many KidsFirst programs — you noted the regional programs — how many centres currently have KidsFirst programming?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — There's a number of KidsFirst targeted sites in the Battlefords, Meadow Lake, Moose Jaw, Nipawin, in the North in La Ronge, Prince Albert, Regina, Saskatoon, and Yorkton, and then there's KidsFirst regional service areas. These are really all defined by the health authorities as they once were. So there's Cypress, Five Hills, Heartland, Kelsey Trail, Prairie North, Prince Albert, Regina Qu'Appelle, Saskatoon, Sun Country, and Sunrise.

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Maybe I'll just . . . Did you want the difference in the two programs or is that your next question?

**Ms. Beck:** — No, it wasn't my next, but go ahead. Go ahead.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — The KidsFirst targeted and the early learning childhood intervention program are both home visited programs, but the programs target different audiences, needs, and services.

The KidsFirst targeted supports the needs of families who are vulnerable due to factors such as social isolation, poor parent-child attachment, food and housing insecurity, single parenthood, teen parenthood, or mental health and addictions

issues.

And the KidsFirst regional, that offers groups of activity-based program delivery in all domains of child development including linguistics, social, emotional, cognitive, and fine and gross motor skills. So that's offered in rural communities and small cities not served by KidsFirst targeted programs.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. In terms of the allocation, how much is allocated to each of those two sub-programs, the home visitor program and the group program?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — The KidsFirst targeted site, the total allocation in '18-19 was \$14.759 million. And the KidsFirst regional service program, the total was \$769,000 for a total of \$15.528 million, approximately, for both programs.

**Ms. Beck:** — And how are families currently being selected into the programs?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — So it's kind of three ways here. It's either voluntary, by referral, and some with respect to the in-hospital birth questionnaire. There's about 1,700 families, vulnerable families annually with approximately 1,000 families participated in any given time.

**Ms. Beck:** — So in terms of the hospital screenings, how many of those are currently, how many are being done or how many were done last year with regard to the screen at the hospital?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — 70 per cent of all births.

**Ms. Beck:** — And those screens are done on all labour, delivery units in the province?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Well it varies across the province. For instance in Saskatoon it's done on pretty much every birth, but in some smaller communities around the province it's hardly done at all.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. Are there reasons why it's not done with . . . I mean my understanding that initially this was a universal screen that was conducted for KidsFirst.

[20:45]

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — I don't have a direct answer for you on this but we can certainly get back to you on . . . try to answer the question for you, if that's all right.

**Ms. Beck:** — I guess what I'm trying to get a sense of is the number of at-birth screens that would be screened positive, so would be eligible for KidsFirst support. Do we have numbers?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — We'll endeavour to try to get that for you.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. I think the Chair was looking for a break at quarter to 9, so maybe I'll just load up a few questions, if that's okay. And if we don't get to them, I think we're back in estimates next Monday as well. Okay.

**The Chair:** — Perhaps we should take a break at this time and we'll reconvene at 10 to 9.

[The committee recessed for a period of time.]

**The Chair:** — Okay, we will reconvene again, at 7 minutes to 9. Ms. Beck.

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you. Before we broke I was asking questions about KidsFirst and the number of families that are screened positive for the program and how many of those are entering the program. I believe you did give a number with regard to the number of families that are accessing the program.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Yes. There was 1,700 vulnerable families, serves approximately 1,700 annually with about 1,000 participating at any one time, I think I answered, was the most recent numbers that I have. In '16-17, which is the year that the most recent data was available, there was 175 communities and more than 25,000 parents and young children receiving services delivered by regional KidsFirst.

**Ms. Beck:** — Do you have numbers on the number of years or months on average that families are accessing the program, remaining with the program?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — We don't have those numbers but certainly kids do move in and out of the program. But I don't have those numbers.

**Ms. Beck:** — Do you have numbers in terms of the number of families that are accessing the program with the hospital screen as opposed to the self-referral or referral by agency?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — I don't believe we have that breakdown either.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. Could you describe some of the supports that families that are receiving service from the KidsFirst program, the types of supports that they would receive.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Well I mentioned before that they provide some, you know, child development, school readiness supports, home visits, events and tools to support learning and development, information, mental health services, and connections to community programs in urban and rural communities.

**Ms. Beck:** — And what would . . . On average, how many hours per week would families be accessing supports of a home visitor, for example?

**Ms. Johnson:** — So with respect to that, depending on the needs of the child and where they are in the whole process, it will vary. So for instance, at the beginning when the child and parent combo are first brought into the program, it could be about an hour a week for a weekly visit. But as time progresses, that amount of time, you know, the commitment of the home visit time to that parent-child combo will decline over time.

**Ms. Beck:** — How many home visitors are currently employed through KidsFirst?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Okay. The home visit supervisors and the home visit FTEs, the budgeted amount for '17-18 is 117.56. That's the number of FTEs, a total number.

**Ms. Beck:** — And is that . . .

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — That takes into account all the regions.

**Ms. Beck:** — Right, okay.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — The collective number.

**Ms. Beck:** — And that allocation, is that static over last year or is that an increase or decrease?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — There's been no change, so it would be static.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. So the funding, as far as I could look back, I note that since at least 2015-16 levels, the funding for the KidsFirst program has been flat. When was the last increase in funding to the KidsFirst program?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — '15-16 was the last increase to the program.

**Ms. Beck:** — Last increase, okay. So some of the supports that you've mentioned, Minister, were supports around school readiness, which is of course included in the ed sector strategic plan, addictions, mental health, food security. Those rates of . . . Those concerns, have they remained static over the last few years as well? I'm trying to get a sense of, is the availability of programming through KidsFirst, is it . . .

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Programming demands.

**Ms. Beck:** — Demands, yes.

[21:00]

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Yes, okay. Well the focus is really on age zero to three. Formerly the focus was on zero to six. And so the nature of the demands has obviously changed, because there's been a focus on the younger age group as opposed to zero to six. Not sure that really answers your question, but the nature of the demand on the service would change simply because of the age group that they're now focusing on.

**Ms. Beck:** — So those supports are more directed to the zero-to-three age group. Okay.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — That's right.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. Are there any significant changes that are being contemplated? I've got a few questions. I guess maybe I'll put them forward. Plans for the program going forward? Any program reviews that have been done? Any concerns that you're hearing or hopes that you're hearing from those who administer or work in or receive this program?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — We have, the ministry has an intention of doing a program review, but the timing of that hasn't quite been decided yet. So going forward, there would be no anticipation of changing the program until that review was done and the results of that review were known.

In terms of whether we've heard any concerns — I think that

was the third part of your question, whether we've heard any general concerns — we're not aware of any specific concerns that have been expressed with respect to the delivery or its . . . the program or its delivery, I think it would be fair to say.

**Ms. Beck:** — You did mention a review. Do you have any terms, the scope of that review, when that might take place?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — There's only been a discussion about doing a program review, so the parameters of that review or the timing haven't quite been decided yet.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. Thank you. I'm going to move along to the allocation for the early childhood intervention program, ECIP programs. Could you provide a broad description of the program, where it's delivered, what is unique about this program as compared to other early learning and child care programs?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Maybe I'll go through just kind of a general description of it. As you know, in the '18-19 budget, that maintained funding for ECIP at \$3.95 million. The early intervention offered through ECIP increases a child's readiness for school, increasing the number of children who are ready for school success, which is of course a priority for us, and identified in the ESSP [education sector strategic plan] and the early years plan. So I hope that answers . . . Is that sufficient enough for you?

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. Where is ECIP programming offered? A number of locations that it's offered in. And what's the program delivery model? How is it delivered in those communities?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — There's 14 ECIPs across the province to support children who are experiencing developmental delays in their families. There's the 14.

There's the Battleford early childhood intervention program; there's the board of education, Holy Family Roman Catholic school division; board of education for Southeast Cornerstone; the Children North early intervention program; the early childhood intervention program, Regina region; there's the Meadow Lake and area early childhood services; the Midwest Family Connections; the Northeast early childhood intervention program; the Parkland early childhood intervention program; the Prince Albert early childhood intervention program; the Saskatoon region ECIP; the South Central early childhood intervention program; the Swift Current and District ECIP; and the West Central ECIP.

And that was, the total amount for those programs was \$4.089 million through '18-19.

**Ms. Beck:** — I note that there's a difference in terms of the allocation in the budget and the, I believe you said, 4.89 million.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Right. 4.089.

**Ms. Beck:** — 4.089. So is the rest of that funding coming under another allocation?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Which funding?

**Ms. Beck:** — You mentioned there was 4.089. I noted that in the estimates the allocation for ECIP programming is 3.953.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — The total includes \$91,000 shortfall which was incurred in the '11-12 fiscal year when the school divisions took over delivery of ECIP, and an additional 45,000 allocated to the Children North ECIP agency, and that was on a one-time basis.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Make up the . . .

**Ms. Beck:** — Make up the difference.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — The difference, yes.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. I believe as you've noted, out of the 14 programs most of them are delivered on a community-based non-profit model. There's two programs that are run out of school divisions, Holy Family and Southeast Cornerstone. I've heard them described as pilots. What is the reason for the difference in the program delivery model between the community-based ECIPs and the school division-based ECIPs?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — In '11 and '12 the local ECIPs in that area closed and so those programs were picked up by the school divisions.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. So are they pilot programs, or that's just how those programs are being delivered in those areas now?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — I wouldn't refer to them as pilots. They're doing a very, very good job in terms of delivering the programs.

**Ms. Beck:** — Are there differences between how those programs are delivered when they're delivered through school divisions as opposed to the community-based programs?

**Mr. Currie:** — We see that the benefits of these two school divisions that have stepped forward and become partners with community-based organizations to offer the opportunity is aligned and is very similar to the other community-based organizations that are offering similar ECIP programs.

So in terms of a difference, I wouldn't recognize a significant difference. What we're recognizing is the interest and the support of the school divisions in enabling the ECIP programs to be evident and supportive in those respective communities.

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you. Could you just briefly go over the criteria for entering the ECIP programming and how families access this program?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — It's typically by parental request and then there is an assessment done by the ECIP to see whether or not they qualify for the program.

**Ms. Beck:** — And what is the criteria for being accepted into the ECIP program?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — It's really kind of broad. It's families with children experiencing developmental delays that require support

and assistance. That's really the general criteria.

**Ms. Beck:** — Are there wait-lists to access the ECIP programs?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Currently, no.

**Ms. Beck:** — I note that funding for ECIP programs is flat, going back to 2014-2015 I believe. I think there was a \$40,000 increase that year. There isn't any increased demand for that program going back to 2014-15? Or the reason that that funding has remained static.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Can't say that there's been any increase in demand which has required any increase in funding in that particular budget line. There certainly hasn't been the demand for that. So I think that's fair to say.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. I understand that there was a strat planning process that was undertaken with ECIP that occurred in the last five years. And there was a data collection system that was put in place, and there was some work that was undertaken towards a work plan. Can you update any progress or finding with regards to those processes for ECIP?

**Ms. Mitchell:** — We started strategic planning processes with the ECIP agencies in 2014. And at that time we brought together the ECIP executive directors and also some of the board Chairs — not all, but some of the board Chairs — to talk about what were their priorities, what were their areas of interest, their areas of focus. That strategic planning session regarded in a number of initiatives, and I don't have the paper with me but I do recall it was a very important day for us.

So they're very interested in how to meet the needs of children and then how to get better outcomes for those children. So one of the pieces that was developed that day was a process to make sure that we're focusing on the outcomes for children, rather than just talking about the number of children that were served and that sort of a thing. So that's something that's been very important to them, and it's something that we've now reflected in the annual agreement that we have with the ECIP agencies.

**Ms. Beck:** — So that strat plan was finalized. Is it published anywhere, that strat plan for ECIP?

[21:15]

**Ms. Mitchell:** — No, that was never published. But it's very much an organic and living document. We meet with the ECIP agencies several times a year and focus on the priorities that they have.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. Was there work that was undertaken towards a funding model for the ECIP programs? And if so, where is that process at?

**Ms. Mitchell:** — So last year we began some work taking a look at how the ECIP agency should be funded. Right now the funding arrangements are based on the population in the geographic area that the ECIP agency serves, and we've been contemplating whether or not that funding should more reflect the population of children that live in that area and should it reflect the number of children with significant disabilities or

delays that live in that area. So that work is ongoing.

**Ms. Beck:** — So I'm inferring from that that there are regions of course where you have a higher zero-to-five or zero-to-three population and populations where there would be higher percentages of children with intensive or increased need within a spot.

**Ms. Mitchell:** — Yes.

**Ms. Beck:** — And to have a funding model that reflects that.

**Ms. Mitchell:** — So we would like to make sure that the funding model is as responsive as possible. Of course you have to keep in mind many other things too. So geographic distance for example, in some of the rural agencies or rural areas they are compelled to drive longer distances to serve the families, that sort of thing, so the funding formula needs to be fair to everyone concerned.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. Given the flat funding going back to 2014-15, but knowing that there are cost increases just year over year — just because of inflation, cost of gas of course, things like that — has that meant that static funding year over year has decreased the number of families that are able to access programming through ECIP?

**Ms. Mitchell:** — We have seen no evidence of that. So there are a couple of other factors. The ECIP agencies generally all do some fundraising as well. So many of them might have, you know, found some resources there. They've also expanded their lines of business and provide some other early childhood services now in their communities.

**Ms. Beck:** — So for example, contracting with on-reserve communities . . .

**Ms. Mitchell:** — Yes.

**Ms. Beck:** — Through federal funding. Okay. What is the number of ministry FTEs that are associated with the ECIP program?

**Ms. Mitchell:** — So we would have two that I would consider would work directly with the ECIP programs. So we have a program consultant who's not quite their full-time job is to work with ECIP agencies, but close to it, and then the director responsible for that person.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. And both of those positions are currently filled?

**Ms. Mitchell:** — They are. They are.

**Ms. Beck:** — Similar questions that I had with regard to the KidsFirst program, and that is with regard to plans for this program going forward. Are there plans for a review of the ECIP programs similar to the KidsFirst program? Any significant changes that are being contemplated in the upcoming year or in the near future?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — There's no current plans for this time.

**Ms. Beck:** — No current plans for changes? Okay. So just some general updates for other programs that are supported by early years. Does the SCEP program receive early years funding from the ministry?

**Ms. Mitchell:** — The SCEP program received some funding from the Ministry of Social Services, and some school divisions contract with the SCEP agency as well.

**Ms. Beck:** — The Early Learning Centre?

**Ms. Mitchell:** — Yes, the early years branch does contract with the Early Learning Centre, Regina Early Learning Centre.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. And the allocation, were there any significant changes year over year to allocation for the ELC?

**Ms. Mitchell:** — No.

**Ms. Beck:** — No, okay. What about the family resource centres? Is there early years funding that runs into the family resource centres?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Sorry, your question was . . .

**Ms. Beck:** — Support for the family resource centres, the budget allocation.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — There is a total of \$750,000 for each of three early family resource centres. That's \$250,000 each, and that's the same funding as in previous years.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay, thank you. I'm just going to go through this to make sure I'm not missing any questions. Just to confirm, with regard to pre-K program funding, that there were no new pre-K programs that were announced in this budget, just to confirm.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — No.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. I think that I am done with, for now, with subvote (ED08). And I'm going to move along into subvote (ED03), specifically focusing on capital.

So just looking at page 44 of the Estimates book, the allocation for school capital is decreased significantly over last year. Of course last year there were a number of capital build projects that were finalized. If you could just break down where that 76 million is allocated, Minister Wyant.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Would you like a breakdown for each, for that \$76 million?

**Ms. Beck:** — Yes please.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Okay. Well there was 10.47 million for the Rosthern Elementary School. There was 12.232 million for the Weyburn elementary consolidation. That was for a total of 22.702 million. There was \$44.1 million for preventative maintenance and renewal, 5.5 million for emergent funding. There was 2.3 million for relocatables, and there was \$1 million for the Ameresco software and facilities audits. That was for 52.9 million. And then the balance was \$811,000 for joint-use

school relocatables, and that was for a total of \$76.413 million.

**Ms. Beck:** — So the amounts that were allocated for Rosthern and Weyburn, are those the final amounts, or is there more that will be coming in next year's budget for those two bills?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — For example, in the Rosthern Elementary School, the total ministry cost of that project was \$15.7 million. There were \$750,000 made available in last year's budget, primarily for design costs. So with the \$10.47 million this year, the balance will be in out years for the completion of that project.

For Weyburn it was \$25.8 million, \$1.3 million in last year's budget. And with the 12.232 in this year's budget, the balance will be in the out years for the completion of that project.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. Thank you. With regard to, I believe you said 44.1 for PMR [preventative maintenance and renewal]. Is there any conditionality attached to that PMR funding?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Well there is a measure of conditionality, I think it's fair to say. So it's to assist in the proactive inspection, detection, and correction of incipient failures and others before they occur. It's to be used to ensure facilities meet the regulatory requirements; replace major components based on their lifestyle; preserve and improve educational areas to meet program requirements; meet accessibility requirements and intensive support needs; and replace or upgrade building components to improve energy conservation and efficiency resulting in cost savings. So to the extent there's any kind of conditionality, it's fairly broad.

**Ms. Beck:** — But within that context the boards are free to use it where they deem . . .

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Right.

**Ms. Beck:** — Most need. With regard to, I believe you said 5.5 in emergent capital funding. How is that allocated?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — On an application basis throughout the year.

**Ms. Beck:** — So is there a deadline for application, or it's ongoing throughout the year as those conditions emerge?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — There's no deadlines for it. As needs arise, then the applications are made and they're assessed.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. The amount, I believe it was just over \$3 million for relocatables outside of the joint-use schools. That amount is a decrease from last year for relocatables?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — It's a small decrease from last year's budget, which was \$2.8 million.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. Sorry, last year's amount was 2.8 and this year's amount is?

[21:30]

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — So you'll recall that we talked about this



a little bit earlier on, that there was \$2.3 million in relocatables, but there was also \$811,000 for joint-use project relocatables. And that's where the total of \$3.1 million comes from.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Sorry if I confused you with those.

**Ms. Beck:** — No, no, that's okay. So there is obviously significant increased student population moving into some of those joint-use schools. Where are those joint-use school relocatables to be allocated? Which schools?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — The 811,000 is for Harbour Landing Catholic school in Harbour Landing.

**Ms. Beck:** — It's moving portables in or moving portables out?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — In.

**Ms. Beck:** — In. Okay. It will be a tight squeeze. There's a bit of a projection in the budget documents, the smaller '18-19 provincial budget document. So this year's allocation for schools, including joint-use schools, so that's the piece that's broken out for joint-use schools projects, that \$800,000. Is that correct?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — This is the other relocatables?

**Ms. Beck:** — Yes.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Yes, \$2.3 million in general relocatables, and then 811 for the joint-use school projects.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. So moving forward then, the balance of the Rosthern and the Weyburn schools will be included in that \$36.3 million, or \$36.4 million, as targeted for the 2019-20 year?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Do you mean in terms of major school capital?

**Ms. Beck:** — Yes. I'm looking at page 19, sorry, under the Saskatchewan capital builds plan.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Please go through those numbers you're looking at again.

**Ms. Beck:** — I'm looking at . . . So on the chart on page 19, the Saskatchewan capital builds plan, 2018-19 to 2021-22, looking specifically now at the line, "Schools (including Joint-Use school projects)." Moving ahead to the target for next year, just confirming that the balance on the Weyburn and the Rosthern projects are included in that \$36.4 million.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Yes, they will be.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. And I note in this year's budget document . . . I think last year was a new budget line and that is the P3 joint-use schools maintenance and interest charges. Can you break out the amount for each of those items out of that \$13.5 million?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — So you want the break out between the maintenance and the interest charges?

**Ms. Beck:** — Yes, please.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — On that 13.5?

**Ms. Beck:** — Yes.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — We can't break those numbers out because of the proprietary nature of the contract with JUMP [Joint Use Mutual Partnership]. So I can't break that number out for you.

**Ms. Beck:** — So I do note under classification by type, the debt charges last year and this year, so this year being 8.6 million, are there other debt charges outside of the P3 schools that are included in that number?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — You'll have to excuse me, but I'm going to have to report back to the committee on that.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — I want to consult back with SaskBuilds with respect to the number.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. So that line item which encompasses the allocation, the P3 schools maintenance and interest charges, so an increase of 9.7 last year up to 13.5 this year, that represents, if my math is correct, about a 39 per cent increase in that allocation.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Well it would've been nine months last year and 12 months this year, right. So yes, it would've only been nine-twelfths with respect to the '17-18 estimate.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. Okay, that makes the math harder.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Yes. I don't have my calculator either.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay, so of the 28 . . . So is that amount then stable going forward?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Yes. You mean the amount for maintenance and interest? Yes.

**Ms. Beck:** — That's right.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — The maintenance piece of that component of that will change from year to year because there's some scheduled items that get done on a, you know, not regular year maintenance. I guess for instance the HVAC [heating, ventilating, and air conditioning] would be a good example of that. It has to be replaced at some point in time and so there would be upcharges for maintenance in those particular years, reflecting the fact that those major systems have to be replaced at certain times.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. And so that schedule, that projects how far into the future?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — The end of the 30-year term of the

contract.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. And of course those are obligations that the ministry has to pay for the next 30 years.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — That's correct.

**Ms. Beck:** — The number of facilities that are operated by the 28 school divisions, do you have a number for that?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — The number of schools or . . .

**Ms. Beck:** — Of facilities, yes. I don't have it in front of me.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — We fund 639 schools. There's some other facilities that aren't funded, so it's . . . With respect to the number of schools, it's 639.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. I guess the line of questioning that I'm getting at is the . . . I mean the PMR, that it is increased, and I know that that was appreciated this year by divisions, divided up by all of those facilities.

Then we're seeing a significant amount . . . I don't know if those debt charges are all attributable to the P3 schools, and we're looking at almost \$5 million in maintenance for essentially 18 brand new schools. And of course those obligations will have to be met 30 years into the future.

One of the things that has been noted, and the minister will know I have brought this up in questions, and that is sort of the changing way that capital . . . the B-5 list is being presented and is accessible in terms of information. So there was a time when you could go on to the ministry website and find a full listing of the capital requests and then the approvals. Of course last year there was . . . I'll find it here. Last year's list noted the approved major capital projects; this year it's more difficult to find. The 2010 top 10 major capital requests is presented in no particular order or cost or prioritization. I'm just wondering what the reason was for that change in how those lists are presented.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Well I guess the easiest thing, the simplest way to put this is that these are the top 10 that represents the projects that could be easily or feasibly approved within a five-year time frame. So that's the explanation.

**Ms. Beck:** — Is there an amount requested attached to each of these capital requests?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — There are estimated costs for each of these projects.

**Ms. Beck:** — Do you have a global number for these top 10 projects?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Sure. We just have to add them up. Just going to take a second.

**Ms. Beck:** — Or if it's easier we could just go school by school, request by request. St. Paul's . . .

[21:45]

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — These are all in today's dollars. Perhaps I'll go through these. There's St. Frances School, which is in St. Paul's in Saskatoon. The estimated cost is \$22 million. Holy Trinity, Sacred Heart, St. Mary School, that's new construction and joint-use project, \$26 million. In Regina, the new Argyle elementary school, that's a replacement. That's \$21 million. I should have just mentioned that the St. Frances School in St. Paul's was a new school replacement.

In the North East School Division, Carrot River Elementary and High Schools. That's a consolidation project. That's seventeen and a half million dollars. In Lloydminster, the new joint-use elementary school between the two school divisions is . . . The Saskatchewan share of that is \$26 million. That's at 41 per cent of the estimated cost of that project is 63, but as I say, Saskatchewan's cost would be approximately \$26 million. École St. Mary school, that's a new school project. I'll check the cost of that for new schools — \$30.2 million. Holy Trinity, St. Michael is a new school replacement for \$29 million.

The Yorkton Regional High School, there's asbestos abatement, code upgrades, mechanical upgrades, building envelope upgrades and roof replacement; that's \$24 million in the Good Spirit School Division. In Regina, École St. Pius, a replacement school, that's \$30 million; and Holy Trinity, École St. Margaret, that's a renovation at \$2.3 million. I think that's it.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — About \$228 million.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. So each of the school divisions would have been requested to submit their B-5s, their top three capital project requests?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Yes. They're asked to submit their business cases. They're not B-5s anymore.

**Ms. Beck:** — Oh, they have a new name?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — It's a throwback. Yes. That's what I would have called it too.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. What are they called now?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Business cases.

**Ms. Beck:** — Business cases.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Yes. And they're asked to submit their top three.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. In ranked order?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — That's right.

**Ms. Beck:** — So there are instances where the number one request of a division hasn't made the list but a request further down the request list has made the list. I'm just trying to get a sense of how this list is arrived at, this top 10 major capital request list is arrived at.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Just before I get to that, I just want to

make sure that we're clear that those are, all those projects would have to be RFP'd [request for proposal], and of course those have to go through design, and they're all simply estimates at this point in time.

**Ms. Beck:** — Right.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — So your question was with respect to the top 10, the priority list that the ministry maintains based on the top three that the school divisions provide?

**Ms. Beck:** — Yes. How do those business cases translate into the list that we see in front of us?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — So the ministry ranks for the major capital funding based on three components, and I don't think this has changed much since you and I were on school boards together, but health and safety, efficiency, and facility conditions. So those are the three components upon which the ministry ranks the major capital funding, based on those three components.

**Ms. Beck:** — So the . . .

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — So then there's a facility priority index that then calculates all requests by weighing the potential combined impacts of those components and are ranked in order based on the calculated FPI [facility priority index] from high to low.

**Ms. Beck:** — So as has been noted, there were no announcements of capital approvals in this year's budget. Were one of these projects or some of these projects to be approved, it doesn't move right from approval to release of the funding for that build. There's a step. There's the design step . . .

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Yes, that's right.

**Ms. Beck:** — I'm forgetting . . . So the steps that would go through for these projects . . . So we know that there's no new capital next year. What would a board that's looking for approval for one of their projects next year, what would the first step be? What would they be looking for in next year's budget?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — So the first step, of course, would be, in terms of a budget allocation, there would be planning money that would be allocated through the capital . . . through the capital budget.

**Ms. Beck:** — And typically how much is forward or . . . Based on recent years, how much is forwarded for the planning and design phase?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — It really depends on the size and the scope of the project. I think I pointed out that with respect to one of the . . . Rosthern was \$750,000 I think from, if I'm not mistaken, the number that I quoted. \$1.3 million is for a significant project, so . . .

**Ms. Beck:** — Three-quarters to one and a half, or just over one and a half?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Yes, I would say . . .

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — That would be a fair scope, I think. It depends on the complexity of the project. You know, a joint-use school requires a little bit more.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. So going back to the capital builds plan, next year's amount, the 36.3, how much of that is allocated for — I think I could go back and do the math, I suppose — but for the Weyburn and the Rosthern projects?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — There would be 16.7 in that amount for the remainder of those two projects.

**Ms. Beck:** — Sorry, could you repeat that amount?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Give me half a second, Carla. Can you just repeat the question? Sorry. Can you repeat the question?

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. I just about forgot what I had asked you.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Sorry. So did I. That's why I asked you.

**Ms. Beck:** — In the capital builds chart that's presented again on page 19 of the budget document, the 2019-20 target is stated at \$36.4 million. Earlier I asked the outstanding amounts after this year's allocations to Rosthern and Weyburn. How much of that 36.4 will be allocated to finish up those two projects?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — We calculated that to be about twenty-nine and a half million dollars. I think we've calculated that right. It's late at night but I think we've calculated that right.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — I think it's twenty-nine and a half million dollars.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. So that, it's just about 7 million on top of that. Okay.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Just to be clear, that's not our . . . I mean that's what . . . The twenty-nine and a half million dollars is required with respect to those two projects. It doesn't reflect what our capital budget may or may not be for next year because we haven't set that capital budget yet.

**Ms. Beck:** — So there may be changes next year to that capital budget amount.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Yes, yes. You shouldn't assume that that's what our capital budget's going to be that year or of course in the target years going out as well because there's no new capital in any of those years.

**Ms. Beck:** — So then I'm wondering what this capital builds plan does represent.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Well it represents the commitments that the government has made to date with respect to capital.

**Ms. Beck:** — Already made to date. Okay.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Right, correct.

**Ms. Beck:** — So there could be increases to this track. Okay. That's helpful.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Yes, certainly in those target years.

**Ms. Beck:** — So these are . . . What's provided here is just the amount to wrap up existing commitments?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Just to be clear, if you look at the preventative maintenance and renewal line, that's indicative of the government's commitment to get to 1 per cent with respect to our PMR. So that's why that number in that line is increasing from 49.6. But again those are projected amounts based on budgets that haven't been approved by the government.

**Ms. Beck:** — Right.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — So that's what we like to see happen in those out years with respect to preventative maintenance to get to that target.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. And so that's a target to get to, that 1 per cent of PMR?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Yes, in terms of the PMR, that's right.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay, but the school, the capital spending, the line above it is not a target. Those are already allocated amounts?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Those are commitments, yes, commitments that the government's made.

**Ms. Beck:** — Those are commitments. Okay. So there may or may not be increased amounts over those commitments is what you're saying.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Right.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay, okay. That is helpful. With regard to the existing building stock of schools, how many of the existing stock would be schools of the post-World War II era? So schools that maybe had a 30- to 50-year life expectancy that would be well past. Do you have a list of age of that school stock, the building stock?

[22:00]

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — We have a list of aged schools. I'm sure you don't want me to read out all 639 of them, but I could.

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you. Well we could easily get to 10:30 with that.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — So there's 414 schools that are over 50 years old, which is about two-thirds of the inventory of 639.

**Ms. Beck:** — In terms of the life expectancy or how those schools — the post-World War II era schools — were built, what was their . . . when they were built, what was their life expectancy? What could have reasonably been expected?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — It really depends I guess on the . . . Well it depends on the nature of the construction and how they were built. But some of the better schools that were built have a life expectancy of about 75 years, it would be fair to say. It's hard to give you an exact number, because there's, you know, all those . . . Yes.

**Ms. Beck:** — Well I'm asking a broad question. So 75 years, and then some would be . . . I mean, I've heard numbers as low as 30, but 30 to 50 years.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — That's possible. I'm not . . . I can't comment on that.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. Do you have numbers on how many schools have commissioned engineers' reports with regard to structure within schools?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — School divisions will typically do an engineering report, you know, when they have an issue with one of their schools, and primarily with the intention of making sure that they're utilizing their PMR money appropriately. We do do facility audits, about 125 a year on all the schools within the . . . so that you can . . . There are the facilities audits that are done on a regular basis . . . [inaudible] . . . 25 a year, so that's about 20 per cent about.

**Ms. Beck:** — I guess the question I was asking with regard to the engineers' reports, so you know, if a school . . . I mean, I know that boards do a good job, and the ministry, in ensuring that the schools are safe. But what my question was, was with regard to engineers' reports that have been conducted, if there are facilities that are nearing the end of their structural soundness as noted in those engineers' reports.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — That factors into the analysis. And as I mentioned before with respect to the prioritization of major capital projects, the facility condition component is part of that.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — [Inaudible] . . . that gets built into the business case that the school boards provide.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. Are there any changes with regard to . . . We've already noted the change from the B-5s to business case. Is there substantially different information that's forwarded to the ministry, what used to be on a B-5 as opposed to business case?

**Mr. Pearson:** — Phil Pearson, executive director of infrastructure. So in 2013 we did undertake a revamping of the process for major capital, primarily to focus on increases in utilization growth within the province. The B-5 was a form that was submitted by the boards back in 2012 and earlier. And primarily on the B-5 all you listed was the name of the school, the year in which you planned to do the renovation or replacement, and then estimated cost. There really wasn't substantial details behind it.

So with the changes that we brought in, we felt the focus on health and safety was important and . . . as well as the growth within that school. So we started requiring more information

such as an engineer's report to substantiate the health and safety claim, future enrolment projections to substantiate utilization pressures. So we have a business case template that needs to be submitted along with supporting documentation to help our prioritization rather than really a wish list, perhaps, of 10 to 20 projects that a division may have.

**Ms. Beck:** — So some increased information. And so all submissions, all business cases require engineers' reports?

**Mr. Pearson:** — If the school division feels that the project poses a health and safety risk to the students, then yes, they would submit an engineer's report to substantiate it.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. Is there any increased cost or allocation of administration time associated with this move from the B-5 to the business case? Have you heard anything back from boards about that?

**Mr. Pearson:** — We haven't. I mean the first year obviously was a learning curve for boards to figure this out, but they were collecting this information already. Engineers' reports is just good due diligence on their behalf. And many of them had them in place, just we didn't have that information being collected on our side. So I think some growing pains in the first couple of years, and now it's a fairly smooth process from our feedback from the sector.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. Thank you. Are there any further changes that are being anticipated? I know one of the things that I am hearing a lot is difficulty planning. Do you use your PMR budget or do you wait and see if you get major capital funding? Are there any changes that are being contemplated with regard to predictability within the capital funding model?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — The ministry isn't hearing particularly any concerns with respect to, you know, that issue, and if you're hearing them we'd like to hear. But the ministry isn't hearing any concerns about it.

**Ms. Beck:** — I believe that some of it has been in the news. But I mean the specific concern is when you're planning, spending PMR and you've got a school on the major capital request list, do you take the bulk of your PMR and invest it in a roof? Or do you wait and see, use that PMR for other projects that need it, and hope that you have approval of that project? And I mean, it reasonably presents a difficulty in planning, boards doing their due diligence in trying to make those capital dollars stretch.

**Ms. Johnson:** — So I'll take a stab at answering your question. When it comes to the building maintenance, it is important for school divisions to keep in mind that they will need to keep their buildings in good repair and that a stitch in time saves nine. Basically, that the sooner they address a problem, the less cost is associated with the fixing of that problem.

So despite the fact that they may have put in a request for a major renovation or a school replacement, given that we are looking at up to three requests from each division each year, there is only so many major projects that can be accomplished in any given year. So it is incumbent upon a school division to make sure they keep their schools in good repair until such a time as they have received approval for moving to a design or

construction phase.

**Ms. Beck:** — I wonder if, with regard to what has been called as an infrastructure deficit, or requests or total requests for capital funding . . . At one time there was a *StarPhoenix* article that the Finance minister noted that there was outstanding 2.5 billion in capital infrastructure repairs that were required. Is that still the number, or is there a different number that we have now?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — As I understand, that number was the sum total of the wish list of all capital projects that were put forward by various school divisions back in 2012. It certainly doesn't reflect what might otherwise be called an infrastructure deficit, which is simply a grand total of the capital costs of all the projects that have been put forward.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. Is there a total for all of the projects that have been put forward by boards?

[22:15]

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — We've provided the number to you for the 10 projects that are on the top 10 capital list, which is what can reasonably be built within the next five years. So that's the only number that I have.

**Ms. Beck:** — The only number. So there isn't a number for . . . As we noted, each of the 28 school divisions would forward . . . Well I guess I'm guessing about that. Did each of the 28 school divisions forward three business cases for capital requests? And is there a global amount associated with those requests?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — I don't have a number with respect to all the capital projects that have been put forward. Certainly a number of capital projects that would have been put forward by various school divisions, that just represents their wish list. So it doesn't necessarily represent or at all represent any kind of an infrastructure deficit in this sector. So I don't have a number with respect to all that.

And each school division had, you know, has put forward up to three capital projects for consideration by the ministry. So we've given you the number with respect to the 10, but there's certainly no number with respect to all of the projects together.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay, so that not a total that's kept. Okay. I think I just have one last question, and that was with regard to some of the concerns we heard about restrictions in the first year of the use of the P3 schools, not being able to open windows and hang things on the walls. Are there any ongoing concerns that you're hearing from divisions, and how are they being addressed? I know that some of that was the first year of the heating and cooling systems, I believe.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — I understand that there's been really no significant issues with respect to the operation of any of these joint schools other than, you know, what might typically happen with respect to a new construction. And so those issues are dealt with, with the proponent team as they come up.

**Ms. Beck:** — And there's a help line or a line for those in the schools to call if there are any concerns. Is that correct?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Yes, there's a help desk, that's right.

**Ms. Beck:** — Do we know how many calls that that help desk would receive, or is that with the provider?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — I'm told there's been about 30 calls over the 18 schools since . . . But those are, you know, generally minor issues with respect to the operations, typical things that you would expect with a new construction.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. Looking at the time, and I think before I go into another subvote, I think that I'm going to conclude my questions for this evening. I want to . . .

**The Chair:** — We can go till 10:37 if you want to ask more questions. That'll be half of the time that was proposed for this estimate.

**Ms. Beck:** — I think that I'm prepared to call it 3.5 for tonight if that's all right with the Chair?

**The Chair:** — You're going to call it 3.5 so we're half done?

**Ms. Beck:** — Yes.

**The Chair:** — Okay, then I would call on . . . Does the minister have anything he would like to say to wrap up?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — No, just the comments that I would typically make, Mr. Chair, with respect to estimates, just to thank the Chair and thank the committee for their time today. I thank all my officials for being here. I'm very thankful that they're here tonight. Ms. Beck, for your very respectful questions, thank you very much. And to Hansard, thank you very much for your attendance tonight.

**The Chair:** — Ms. Beck, do you have something you'd like to say?

**Ms. Beck:** — I think I'm going to echo much of what the minister said. I'd like to thank everyone for being here late into the evening during playoffs and spring and all of those things. I suspect there was some scores being checked back there, but I do appreciate your time, and committee members and Hansard and the legislature staff tonight. Thank you.

**The Chair:** — Okay, thank you. I would ask a member to move a motion of adjournment. Mr. Fiaz has moved. All in agreement?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. This committee stands adjourned to tomorrow, May 1st, 2018 at 7 p.m. Thank you, everyone.

[The committee adjourned at 22:20.]