



STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

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Ms. Joceline Schriemer
Saskatoon Sutherland

[The committee met at 19:00.]

**General Revenue Fund
Education
Vote 5**

Subvote (ED01)

The Chair: — Good evening ladies and gentlemen, Minister and officials and committee members. Being it's 7 o'clock, we will begin consideration of the main estimates for the Ministry of Education.

We are now looking at the estimates for Education, vote 5, central management and education services (ED01), outlined on page 45 of the Estimates booklet. Before we begin, we have a document to table. Ms. Junor wishes to table the following document from this morning's estimate meeting, HUS 53/26 for the Ministry of Health, a written submission entitled 2009-10 RHA [regional health authority] Operating Forecasts.

Committee members and ladies and gentlemen, tonight we have committee member Mr. Cam Broten, and substituting for Ms. Judy Junor we have Ms. Pat Atkinson. And on the government side, we have Mr. Dennis Allchurch, substituting for Minister Reiter. Ms. Doreen Eagles, Ms. Joceline Schriemer, and soon to join us, Mr. Glen Hart.

Before we begin, Mr. Minister, would you care to make any opening statements, introduce your officials. And as the officials come to the mike, I'll just ask them to introduce themselves for the purposes of Hansard.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. And good evening to all the committee members. No, I won't make any opening statement; I think we did that last time. But I will just quickly introduce the group of people here because we have brought many people because we know this is three and a half hours of questions, and Education covers a broad area.

So seated on my right of course is Audrey Roadhouse, my deputy minister. To my left is Helen Horsman, assistant deputy minister and Darren McKee, also an assistant deputy minister.

Somewhere behind me, you'll find the following people. You'll find: Dawn Court, director of finance; Rhonda Smysniuk, executive director; Clint Repski, director; Jan Chell, acting director; Darryl Richter, manager; Jane Thurgood Sagal, the executive director; Sue Amundrud, associate executive director; Lois Zelmer, executive director; Rosanne Glass, executive director; Doug Volk, executive director; Joylene Campbell, an executive director; Maureen Johns Simpson. And I want to say that, Mr. Chair, I failed to acknowledge that Maureen was here last time and that was my fault and I apologize.

Other people here are Simone Gareau, executive director, French education; Elaine Caswell, executive director; Greg Tuer, executive director; and Sonya Leib, senior financial manager. And those are all the people that are with me.

The Chair: — Thank you very much, Minister Krawetz. That's a very speedy introduction. Open the floor. Ms. Atkinson.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you. Well welcome to the minister and his officials. I indicated to you that I was interested, our first set of questions during this particular component of our estimates, in talking about curriculum and what's happened in the curriculum department of the ministry.

I note that, or I've been advised there have been a number of people that are no longer in the ministry undertaking curriculum work. And I'm wondering if you can advise the committee tonight how many, what sort of reductions your ministry experienced in this budget, and how many of those folks were in curriculum?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much for the question. I'll just make an opening comment and Jane Thurgood Sagal, who is our executive director in charge of curriculum, and my deputy minister will make some additional comments.

Over the last couple of years, there's been changes within the ministry. In the first year, of course, we had looked at some reduction. And then in the second year, we had added people. And now in this year, there are again some reductions. And in curriculum, there have been some changes.

And I'll ask Audrey Roadhouse, my deputy minister to highlight some of the changes that have been made in that area, and then Ms. Sagal will also make some comments on curriculum.

Ms. Roadhouse: — Yes. In a general comment, when we moved to 28, now 29 school divisions, the composition as you know of LEADS [League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents] changed significantly. A number of school divisions now have superintendents of curriculum and instruction, and within their offices of course have consultants and coordinators in the curriculum area and have really increased their capacity in this area as well, and in fact have talked a fair bit even about doing a lot of their own curriculum implementation because they tend to know their teachers best. Specifically in curriculum e-learning there have been, there was a reduction of 6.1 positions.

Ms. Atkinson: — That's it? No other reductions in curriculum?

Ms. Roadhouse: — No. There were 16.3 reductions, and 6.1 were in curriculum and e-learning.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay. Now I've been advised by members of the Ukrainian community that we used to have someone that was in charge of Ukrainian education in the province. And then under your administration, that position was changed to part-time Ukrainian and part-time heritage languages. So is one of the positions that we're talking about, is that the Ukrainian/heritage languages?

Ms. Roadhouse: — No, it is not.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — No, and I'm going to just expand a little bit on that because there have been questions, and there have been articles published and letters written by many of the Ukrainian community, many members of the Ukrainian community. And I want to clarify some of the things that have

happened.

Last fall we looked at the position. And I'll call that position the Ukrainian consultant who had responsibilities not only for that position, but she also had responsibilities for English as an additional language. So what was happening of course in the province of Saskatchewan, the Ukrainian program is a very strong program, and school divisions who actually offer that program have a lot of their own support built right into their system. The individual was also spending time on developing curriculum, and that was already completed.

So with the immigrant population arriving in Saskatchewan changing quite dramatically, where we have had other countries that have contributed a lot of students to the province, there was a need to support schools, especially city schools. Both Saskatoon and Regina actually pick up probably about 60 to 65 per cent of our immigrant students. So what we did was we moved the position. And it's not an elimination. Because the letters that I received said, why did you eliminate? The position wasn't eliminated. The position was moved, and the position was moved over to one of the other branches so that it could better offer student and support services because that's what this position is doing. Still has responsibility for the Ukrainian language program, but has additional responsibilities now for many of the other groups in the province that are coming from other countries.

So we've changed the job description to a degree, in the respect that the responsibility for the Ukrainian language curriculum is not there, the services to students in schools for requiring some help in Ukrainian language are still there, and the individual's no longer within the humanities branch and is now in the students and support services branch.

Ms. Atkinson: — So, Minister, at one stage for over 30 years, actually we had I think, a man by the name of George Zerebecky was in charge of the Ukrainian language services, but he also did a lot of work in terms of preparing the road for Saskatchewan to go to Ukraine and to start the whole process of bringing Ukrainian immigrants to Saskatchewan because of the work that was done in the . . . well I'll call it the Department of Education. And then I think a couple years ago that position was changed to part-time Ukrainian language, part-time heritage languages, so if you want to call it ESL [English as a second language], that's okay.

And now this is not, there's no one really in charge anymore in the department of our relationship with Ukraine because George, as I recall, paved the way for former Premier Romanow to go to Ukraine, the partnership that was developed between the Ministry of Education and Ukraine. So who in the department is working on our relationship with Ukraine because there's been a pretty strong relationship in the past several years, and I'm just wondering is that no longer the case. Are we now relying on Immigration to do that work?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — No, actually we've broadened the responsibility. And I can speak for a couple of things that are happening within my ministry. We've established a Ukraine-Saskatchewan committee and that committee has a number of people on it — including the individual who serves as the consultant, was the consultant, still is the consultant —

and that body is responsible for providing ideas on what we can do differently with Ukraine.

They have just concluded a report. And I've received their report, the first report of this committee making a lot of recommendations in the area, education area as well as in other areas, whether they be agriculture or government related to growth of democracies, etc.

One of the other areas that we're relying on of course is the heritage language group because there's a need for greater support for additional heritage languages, whether they be Cree, whether they be, you know, Spanish, to a degree. There are a number of languages — German — that are now requiring more support. So what we have as well is we have a contract with an individual within the heritage languages group that will be providing assistance to us as well because it's a growing . . . There are many more students entering into our system, and we need to provide that support.

What we're also in discussion with the minister responsible, the Provincial Secretary responsible for the francophone, as where we might go with providing more support for heritage languages right across the province, not just Ukrainian but all of the others. And that may be something that we're going to have to expand on because there is a greater need.

I think I'd like to ask Ms. Sagal to comment on the position that is served by the individual that is in the student support services and the responsibilities that that individual has, if I could ask Jane to comment.

Ms. Thurgood Sagal: — Okay. So the person who is currently in the student support services still retains responsibility for Ukrainian language for any agreements we have with Saskatchewan and Ukraine, and for supporting the Ukrainian language programs in the schools that offer it. But she also has now responsibilities, as our minister has said, for supporting English as an additional language.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay. So it's student support and not in curriculum or . . . Okay.

Well all I can say, Minister, is that there has been a lot of concern expressed to the opposition about this because there's been a historic relationship, I guess, between people who are of Ukrainian ancestry in the province of Saskatchewan and that position. And also that position, the person that was in that position for several decades paved the way for our relationship with Ukraine once, you know, there was a free and democratic government in Ukraine.

And I think certainly the activists that I know in the Ukrainian community are extremely disappointed and regret that . . . First of all, there used to be a full-time dedicated position. It then became a half-time dedicated position, and it's no longer, it's no longer in curriculum. But I've only got so many hours, so I'll move on.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — A couple of comments, if I might. You know the point that I wanted to make with all of the Ukrainian community is the position has not been eliminated. The position was moved over to the students' support services and that

support is still there. The program has been adjusted because we need to ensure that immigrants that are coming into this province, who are coming in in higher numbers than Ukrainian immigrants actually, are supported as well. So we're trying to do that in all respects.

One of the things I can tell you is it hasn't . . . I don't think it has changed the relationship between Saskatchewan and Ukraine. There is an exchange that just has occurred a couple weeks ago. I was informed that there was a group of students out of Saskatoon that left for Ukraine. There will be another group of students probably from Ukraine led by, I understand, Andriy Sigitov will also be bringing those students back.

So that hasn't changed. In fact we want to enhance that relationship because I think for students that, whether or not they're going to come here as immigrant students, if we can host students and help them understand what Saskatchewan has to offer, when they decide after, you know, they've been through their school system in Ukraine, if they choose Saskatchewan to come here, it will help.

So we're going to continue to monitor that. Whether or not we add some additional staff in the future to enhance heritage languages, to enhance support for students who are immigrant students, it will also enhance the amount of work being done with students from Ukraine because they're still . . . they had slipped. The numbers of students coming from Ukraine two years ago, I believe, they had to moved to about position no. 5 in terms of number of students coming to this province. And now they're back into third spot as far as the number of students that are coming that are immigrant students.

So Ukraine and Ukrainian students, immigrants coming to this province and still requiring assistance are many, and we want to support them.

[19:15]

Ms. Atkinson: — But I think that that position, Minister, has been in the ministry for over 30 years. That position wasn't just about students coming from Ukraine. It was also about supporting Ukrainian immersion in the province of Saskatchewan.

And my second point is that we've always had exchanges for several years between . . . certainly in Saskatoon. I think it's E.D. Feehan where there's a Ukrainian language program, and we've had those exchanges between Ukraine and E.D. Feehan for some time. But I'll move on.

My next set of questions has to do with how many people are left in curriculum. It used to be quite, the curriculum used to be quite strong in the ministry. I'm just wondering how many people are left in the ministry doing curriculum work.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — My officials inform me that the number of people in curriculum is 45.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay. And can you describe what these people are doing in curriculum, the 45?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Sure she can.

Ms. Thurgood Sagal: — So beginning in 2006, our branch merged with the e-learning branch. That's when we became known as curriculum and e-learning, so that 45 is in the curriculum and e-learning branch. And we really looked at our functions and looked at efficiencies. So since that time, we had a branch of 90 individuals with nine different units, and we now have 45 individuals with five different units.

Part of that is due to moving our distance learning function out to school divisions — that you might be aware of — which took us a little over two years. Also paying attention to what teachers said they needed in curriculum development and bibliographies, we've really streamlined our work in that area.

So of the individuals in our branch, we would have one for each required area of study. So one K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] mathematics consultant, one K to 12 science consultant. We have an early childhood education kindergarten consultant, a practical and applied arts consultant. And those individuals actually develop and write the curricula. They would also review resources and work with two individuals who are our learning resource evaluation consultants who evaluate resources, write annotations for them, and then they're posted on our website.

So every curriculum is accompanied by a list of core resources, which might be 10 titles, and then an additional list of perhaps 30 titles. And this request has come from school divisions saying, just tell us what are the top 10 so we can target our resources.

We also have a technology infusion consultant who supports the use of technology for teaching and learning. We have a network services area. This is the area that supports and looks after CommunityNet for the sector. They also, if you've heard of ROVER [recommended online video educational resources], which is our video streaming service, that's the area that looks after that and would evaluate video resources for that. Of course we do have managers for these areas. We still have one individual who's helping us close down our distance learning function because we have a revolving fund there. And we do have administrative assistants.

I'm just going to look at my colleague to see if I've missed anything key. Oh of course we have an information management unit as well in our branch, and this is the unit that looks after the use of technology within the ministry but also with the sector.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay, thank you. So in terms of people who actually do curriculum, I've got math, science, early learning, practical and applied arts. I have 11. Is that it?

Ms. Thurgood Sagal: — That would be it. And then of course there are administrative assistants that support them, and directors.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay, thank you. So now we've gone to 29 school divisions, and those school divisions have various capabilities and various capacity. Do we still have a provincial curriculum, or is it up to each school division to determine what they want to teach? Because I thought I heard earlier that because the composition of school boards have changed

significantly, they've increased their capacity. I think I heard the deputy minister say a lot are doing their own curriculum.

So I am interested in knowing, is there still a role for the Ministry of Education in terms of curriculum? Because I think we need to have a provincial vision. I believe that. And if there is, what is it?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Well the answer to your question, is there a provincial curriculum, absolutely. We have been doing curriculum changes over the last number of years, and we've just gone through some curricula changes in science and mathematics.

In fact I can tell you, Ms. Atkinson, that the Teachers' Federation has asked us as a ministry to in fact slow down the provincial curricula that we're developing because some of the teachers feel that they've been bombarded with changes to the provincial curricula. So there's no question we develop curricula for all schools in the province. Sorry, I shouldn't say all schools because certain independent schools that are neither associate nor historical high schools, they develop their own curricula, and that's why they're not part of our system.

We also know that, you know, at each of the school division levels there is still a small component that is in every provincial curricula — that is about a 10 per cent component — that is allowed to be developed at the local level. But clearly there is a set of objectives and criteria that is designed for all grades right through from our curricula branch.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay, so there's . . . This is just my view. There's been a dramatic — to me — a dramatic change in the curriculum area of the Ministry of Education, Learning, however its various iterations have been, and there used to be a very large cadre of people that were involved in curriculum development in the province. So it appears as though there's been a change, and we've gone from nine different units to five different units. And now we have, it looks like, in terms of people who actually are involved in the day to day of this, it looks as though we're now down to about 11 people.

So I guess I'm interested in knowing what curricula in the province is presently being redesigned — what curricula in the last, say, three years that is being redesigned, reworked, however you want to describe it — and what is our plan this year? Is there anything new? I heard you say the Teachers' Federation wants things to be slowed down. I know there's been some fairly dramatic developments over the last several years. But say in the last three years, what have we been working on in the ministry, and what's the plan for this year?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Well I'm going to ask Ms. Sagal again to comment on it because it's a very extensive list. As I said, we've been doing a lot of work in especially the areas from K to 9[kindergarten to grade 9], whether they be mathematics or career education or English, health education. A lot of those components have been addressed at various times.

I mean, your question about, you know, you think that we've become so much smaller and are we meeting the challenge. I think with the ability to look at what is happening in other provinces, we do some shared work. The fact that distance

education, distance learning is now in the hands of school divisions, so we don't have a lot of people that are within our ministry doing that any more, I think, honestly I think we've become better at it. We have a green curricula that constantly changes, and we have input coming from teachers, from workshops, from seminars on a continuous basis.

You know, if I think back to my first days of teaching, curriculum development was a big thing because, you know, writers were brought in, researchers were brought in, and then finally a curricula would appear after three or four, you know, years of putting it all together. It was double-checked, triple-checked, and then it became provincial curricula. I think we've advanced. And I'll ask Jane to comment specifically as to what we've done in the last short term and the long term if I could.

Ms. Thurgood Sagal: — So in the early '90s was when we dedicated a lot of energy to looking at the conceptual frame for each area of study, spent a lot of work on the K to 12 scope and sequence within each area of study. So what we've really been focusing on over the last three years is moving from objectives-based curricula where some of our objectives might even be messages for teachers, such as students must experience a variety of ways to learn or something like that, moving to higher level outcomes for each area of study so that we can say in grade 5 mathematics, here are the 10 or 15 things that students must know or be able to do at the end of this grade. And then what teachers have is the flexibility in how they go about helping students achieve those outcomes.

So in the last three years, the first year of that we introduced the K, 1, 4, 7 mathematics outcomes-based curricula. And you might say, well why would we introduce such odd grades? That's because the following year we introduced the grade 2, 5, 8 math. So if a grade 1 student was in the outcomes-based curricula the first year, they move into the grade 2 one in the second year, and in the third year, we introduced the 3, 6, 9 math.

So over the last three years, we've introduced the K to 9 outcomes-based mathematic curricula which is supported by customized resources that we've created in partnership with the four western and three northern jurisdictions through our Western and Northern Canadian Protocol agreement.

In addition to the math, we have looked at all the other required areas of study — the seven of them — plus career education at the middle level. So we've introduced new outcomes-based curricula for grades 6 to 9 for every single area of study.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay.

Ms. Thurgood Sagal: — And this year we're working on the elementary level, grade 1 to 5.

Ms. Atkinson: — So I met with a group of people this afternoon who asked me to raise this because they believe that they're not quite sure what's happening to Saskatchewan's provincial curriculum. Is this now about the Western Canadian Protocol? You know, we've just entered into this New West Partnership, and we've had the Western Canadian Protocol, I think way back in my day. And this was about mobility and

having some of the core elements in curricula so that if a student moved from Saskatchewan to Alberta or back and forth, we basically taught some of the essentials in the same grade. Now is there a move now, given that the ministry seems to have changed, in my view, and is there now a move to a Western Canadian curriculum and this is all being standardized across the West? Is that what we're about to do?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Well the answer to that is no. And first of all I want to clarify that the Western and Northern Canadian Protocol has been in place since December of 1993. So it has been around a long time.

A lot of the agreements have been with Alberta. A lot of the agreements have been with Alberta and we have, as Ms. Sagal indicated, we have developed programs in the last year, especially in the area of math, by consulting with Alberta. We have, you know, recently entered into an agreement with Alberta only, Alberta Education, for the development of customized English and French breadth and depth mathematics courses. So we're working with Alberta to ensure that there is coordination there.

[19:30]

But your question about, are we designing a New West curricula? No. The answer is no. We're going to continue to take advantage of Alberta's development, and I'm sure Alberta takes advantage of our development, as I've had discussions with Mr. Hancock about some of the things we were doing, even something like the implementation of treaty education in our curricula. Alberta's very interested in looking at that.

So those are things that we're moving forward. I do want to add a little bit as you asked a question about what we've done so far. And I made the comment that we've slowed things down. And I'm going to read this because I don't want to miss any of the programs that have happened. And basically this is based on feedback from teachers from discussions with the Teachers' Federation and stakeholders.

And what we've done is now we've . . . The implementation schedule for a number of curricula has been slowed down and pushed back a year. Grades 1 to 5 arts education, ELA [English language arts], health education, science, social studies, and PE [physical education], as well as ELA A10 and B10 were originally scheduled to be implemented in 2010-11, but these have been moved to 2011-2012. Communications media for 10, 20, 30; foundations of math 20; pre-calculus 20; workplace and apprenticeship, which is called math 20; photography 10, 20, 30; welding 10, 20, 30 have been or are being designed and will be introduced to school divisions with the expectation of implementation in 2011-12.

So those are the areas that we're working on right now. And some of the things that were begun last year are now going to be implemented this year. And these have been moved ahead one . . . or delayed by one year.

Ms. Atkinson: — Minister, you said we've entered into an agreement with Alberta. To do what?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Development of a math resources area,

both in English and in French, to be able to share mathematics resources for the programs that we have developed in both Saskatchewan and Alberta. I've interpreted it correctly, so says Ms. Sagal.

Ms. Atkinson: — It's resources. What does that . . . Describe that. What kind of resources?

Ms. Thurgood Sagal: — It would be a mathematics textbook that aligns with the outcomes in the new outcomes-based mathematics curricula.

Ms. Atkinson: — Is this new outcomes-based mathematic curricula, is it from Alberta?

Ms. Thurgood Sagal: — No, it is not.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay. So are the outcomes, are they from Alberta? Or are they . . . They're not from Alberta? The outcomes that we expect?

Ms. Thurgood Sagal: — No, the outcomes for all of the seven WNCPC [Western and Northern Canadian Protocol] jurisdictions, in their particular mathematics curricula, are based on a set of WNCPC math outcomes that can be seen on the WNCPC website. And in Saskatchewan what we've done is taken those and said, okay, if we want 10 or 15 higher level outcomes and we want them contextualized so that teachers have some support for what this might look like at grade 2 or grade 3, we've then done that in our provincial curricula.

Ms. Atkinson: — But Alberta's putting together a textbook for us to meet our outcomes?

Ms. Thurgood Sagal: — Alberta is working, again, with all seven jurisdictions — not just us — to support the development of a text that will align with essentially all of our curricula because we're all basing it on the framework because we're finding that we're a pretty small market for publishers, just one province. But if we can have all seven jurisdictions work together, publishers are then more interested in designing customized resources for us.

Ms. Atkinson: — So in the former days of curriculum development, we used to have teachers that were in the field, that might come into the ministry, work on curricula development, experts who were in the, I guess, in the classroom. Is that how we're doing it now? Or how are we doing it?

Ms. Thurgood Sagal: — We still do that. We've always had the benefit of having what we call some secondment positions, so we can second practising classroom teachers and get the benefit of their recent experience and their recent knowledge of students.

Ms. Atkinson: — And did we second any practising teachers for the 2, 5, 8, 3, 6, and 9 math?

Ms. Thurgood Sagal: — Not to write the curricula but certainly to field test it.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay. Okay, and so for the last several years,

have we had mathematic textbooks in the lower grades? So is this new, the notion of a textbook?

Ms. Thurgood Sagal: — There have always been mathematics textbooks, but what is new is really aligning it with the curriculum. That's what's new.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay. I got the sense that many teachers used various resources. They didn't operate out of one particular textbook. So will we see in the future that teachers will have a textbook that they have as their resource for grade 2, 3, I guess, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9?

Ms. Thurgood Sagal: — What we find is that in Saskatchewan with our B.Ed. [Bachelor of Education], that means we can teach any subject area, any grade level. So for a teacher teaching grade 3 who has a strong mathematics background, they might refer to the textbook, but just as you said, they would probably have a number of resources. But for a teacher like me, who doesn't have a strong math background, I would probably work pretty faithfully through that textbook the first year, get a sense of what is sound mathematical practice, and slowly build my own collection and my own ideas over the following years.

Ms. Atkinson: — But in the future we won't see that. We'll have a textbook for each grade. Is that what we're going to see in the province?

Ms. Thurgood Sagal: — No, we're still encouraging resource-based learning, but for particular areas of study where we're finding that teachers are asking for more guidance, those are the areas where we've looked at developing — what we call — customized resources. It matches the curriculum really closely.

Ms. Atkinson: — So then Alberta's developing a textbook for each of these grades, some of these grades . . . how is this working, this agreement that we've entered into with Alberta?

Ms. Thurgood Sagal: — On behalf of the WNCP jurisdictions, Alberta is working with publishers with our collaboration to develop a customized mathematics textbook for each grade level.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay. Are we planning on doing something similar in the science area?

Ms. Thurgood Sagal: — We have done something quite wonderful in the science area. We've developed a customized resource for grades 6, 7, and 8 science, and we're looking at doing one for grade 9. And what is unusual about these resources is how the publishers learned to work with our First Nations and Métis communities.

So it's strongly supported and there are sections within the material where you get to ask a Saskatchewan elder about this particular scientific concept. And these particular resources are being looked at now by other jurisdictions and because it's quite unusual for a resource, certainly for us, to have so much Saskatchewan content and pictures of Saskatchewan landscapes and Saskatchewan elders and traditional knowledge keepers speaking to not just the scientific knowledge but also the

indigenous knowledge.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you, and can you tell me when this resource was developed and who developed it?

Ms. Thurgood Sagal: — It was Pearson, and it was just last year where we introduced the grade 6 and the grade 7, and the grade 8 is being introduced this year.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you. And in terms of . . . I want to get back to something that the deputy minister said earlier, that because we have a smaller number of school divisions in the province, their capacity has changed. They've increased their capacity. They're doing a lot of their own curricula work. Can you describe some examples of that?

Ms. Thurgood Sagal: — Sure. Certainly one of the areas that a number of school divisions have been actively involved in is looking at the outcomes in the new curricula and determining what kinds of assessment would show that students had achieved these outcomes. So you might see school divisions working on rubrics, for example, for grade 5 writing or grade 3 reading or developing assessment items for grade 6 mathematics.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you. Now there has been some work done, as I understand it, in terms of national testing, international testing. And I understand that there was a report done in 2007 that indicated that while Saskatchewan was not at the Canadian average relative to the rest of the world — I think it was PCAP [Pan-Canadian Assessment Program] — we did the best job of ensuring that kids were at where they needed to be in order to move out of high school and on to post-secondary education or work. And so I guess it was about an inclusive education. It was about ensuring that as many kids as possible were getting through. And Saskatchewan did a good job, and Manitoba did a good job as well.

And I'm just wondering, there's a lot of discussion these days about learning outcomes, testing, so on and so forth, and there's been some information that's been turned over to school divisions in terms of where their school division sits relative to other school divisions. I understand that Saskatchewan just turned over the data to the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies which looked at school rankings. And I'm just wondering what is the philosophy of our government when it comes to all of this because it's rather controversial in the teaching world.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — One of the first, I think, results that I saw when I became minister was the PISA [programme for international student assessment] results that showed, you know, as a nation Canada ranks well within the rest of the world. But more specifically, I took a look at the results for Western Canada — BC [British Columbia], Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. And our rankings in — I think it was — three key areas, we were fourth out of the four provinces.

And that was one of the reasons why we established the provincial panel on student achievement because they have been meeting already for about a year and a half, just about two years. The draft report of that panel has been prepared, and they've made a number of significant recommendations about

how we can look at the province and see whether or not we can get better at what we do. Whether or not we're going to be the best in the next round of testing, that's maybe a secondary benefit. The first benefit is that we have to ensure that our students are doing as well as they can.

And as a result of that, when we do the indicators report . . . and I know one of my officials that handles this is, of course as you would know, is Darryl Hunter, and he's not here yet. I'm going to ask my deputy minister to comment a bit more on the indicators report and some of the information that you've suggested that is being shared with school divisions to ensure that they can address what they see as strengths or whether they see weaknesses in the result of their own numbers.

Ms. Horsman: — Sure. I think that you're familiar with the Saskatchewan indicators report which we've published for a number of years in the ministry, and there is comprehensive information here about attainment of students across our provinces. As you know, it's broken down into many categories by gender, has been for a number of years.

There's extensive information in here about the achievement of Aboriginal students in comparison to non-Aboriginal students. And the decisions to make or to place the comparative data in here came from the desire for school divisions to have that data so they would have the information to work with and to know what they could do in their school divisions to begin to look at ways that they could increase that achievement level.

I know that my counterpart, Darren McKee, can speak more extensively about that, so Darren, I'll let you talk about the Aboriginal student achievement, First Nations and Métis, and then I can speak further about other indicators as well.

Mr. McKee: — All right. Well specifically to that and the question about national and international testing, because there isn't a significant focus on First Nations and Métis students at a international and national level, it's hard to draw some comparisons. And so specific to that, we only know that, nationally speaking, there is a challenge around the outcomes for First Nations and Métis students across the country. And we know that from provincially driven assessments.

I would also add that in Saskatchewan, specific, we know that the outcomes for those particular students are significantly behind those of other students in the province. But there still is significant work being done at the school division level. When we start to look at international testing, national testing, and provincial testing, all of those only give us a snapshot in time of a particular indicator.

[19:45]

And so it really is much more important to focus on school-based outcomes and what's happening within the schools and school divisions, and so I think that's where our focus is. And certainly working on First Nations and Métis outcomes is quite holistic with school divisions around a number of factors, not simply focused on outcomes or test results, if you will.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay. But I just want to get back to, is the

focus of the ministry now — because this is certainly the belief wherever I go — that the ministry is focused on test scores, that this is about, you know, turning data over to this Atlantic Institute of Market Studies that did school rankings. Saskatchewan just turned it over; other provinces didn't. Are we really into this now as a ministry? That, you know, we want to know school by school what achievement scores are, division by division, and this is how we're going to focus a lot of our ministry effort and attention.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — The changes that have occurred are, as pointed out in our curriculum development, are to look at outcome-based curricula because that is the approach that parents are taking. Students, as they may move from school to school, they want to be able to fit in wherever they go. And the outcome that should be achieved if a student is to complete grade 9 mathematics, the outcome should be the same across the province.

And that's what we're trying to do. We're trying to establish a curriculum first of all so that parents would understand what the outcomes are, teachers would understand what the outcomes are, and then the ranking or the success of a student would be determined by various evaluative techniques as to how those outcomes have been learned and managed by each student.

And I've heard this as well that teachers are saying, well you know, the focus of the ministry is no longer on the student. Well that's absolutely ludicrous. Everything we do in our ministry, whether it be the physical things in infrastructure, is for the students. It's not for anyone else. Similarly, we're designing curricula; we're designing evaluation strategies across the province so that it would assist teachers.

Now teachers themselves want to know whether or not they have achieved the instruction of a curriculum that meets the goals of the provincial criteria. And that's the effort that we're putting in. We have had many workshops with teachers to help them understand the curricula, help them be able to deliver the curricula.

And as a result of that, I don't know if we have more testing now, whether they be provincial or national or international. I don't know. I guess maybe you have been around a little longer than I have. Maybe I can ask Helen as to whether or not she feels that there's more testing today than there was in the past.

Ms. Horsman: — No, there isn't and we haven't added any. We've had opportunities as new testing has come forward, and we have not added any since we added in the PISA results.

And with respect to the AIMS [Atlantic Institute for Market Studies] report and the information that we were required to release through the freedom of information Act in our province, we only released the information that we were required to release. We did that in a systematic, slow way and, you know, in consultation with our school divisions so that they knew what was being released and when it was being released. And we've been in constant dialogue with them about that, including last Friday with all the directors of education in the province, to ensure that they know what is coming when the full report is released in the fall. My understanding is that Manitoba did not release because under their Act they were not required to

release in the same way as we were.

Ms. Atkinson: — So we had to give this information to the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies?

Ms. Horsman: — Yes, according to the freedom of information.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay.

Ms. Horsman: — Right.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay.

Ms. Horsman: — We only gave what we were required to give.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay. I want to return to the minister's comments. You said, Minister, that parents want to know that if you're in school division A and you move to school division B, that you're being taught the same things and that the marks are apples to apples. So are we going to go back to the old system of departmental exams at the end of each school year? And if those of us who were good students, we didn't have to write departmentals in grade 9, 10, and 11, and those that were, you know, bad, had to write them. And, you know, if you got yourself a hold of a bunch of old exams, you could get 90's because oftentimes those exams were repeated 20 years later. Are we going back to those days or what are we doing?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — No, we're not. Absolutely not. What I said — and I'm, you know, I'm interpreting comments made by parents — parents want to know that if they have a child in grade 7 in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan and they move to that beautiful community of Invermay, and they are in the same grade of, you know, grade 7, they want to be assured that the curriculum, the material that is being taught to the grade 7 students in Saskatoon is the same as the grade 7 students in Invermay.

The outcomes and how the teacher will teach that and how they'll evaluate that, teachers are on a continuous evaluation system. And I doubt, I doubt that there are many teachers that issue something called a final exam. I mean the last exam is just that, the exam of the last material that was covered in a particular period of time. That's the continuous evaluation system that we've moved to. There is no desire and no plan to move to anything different than that throughout the entire system.

What we want to do is to ensure that teachers, and especially the leaders, as Ms. Horsman has commented about, we want to make sure that the directors and the superintendents and all of the people throughout the system understand what the curriculum is for each of the grade levels, so that we are ensured that the program is delivered correctly across the province.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay. So then based on that, are you saying that in the past . . . Because there's been a lot of curriculum done in the province of Saskatchewan and we've had the evergreening of curriculums since Margaret Lipp coined the term. So is there, how are you going to get us to the point that

. . . Or are you saying that even though we've had all of this curriculum development, implementation, and whatnot for the last — well I think since 1984 — 26 years, are you saying that teachers across the province haven't been teaching, you know, the common essential learnings and basically concepts in each grade, regardless of what subject they were teaching? Is that what you're saying?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — I'll ask Ms. Sagal to comment on the additional materials, but what I do want to say though is that teachers have been teaching to the best of their abilities throughout. You know, so don't start to indicate that somehow I'm condemning the teachers. What teachers sometimes do, and as indicated, not all teachers are math teachers and yet they're required to teach math. They are not science teachers, and they're required to teach science. Sometimes even at the school level, I've heard from teachers who've said, I couldn't find the curriculum guide; I didn't know that a curriculum guide existed. And I'm talking about a number of years ago.

Now that we've gone on with the green curriculum and we have it on a CD[compact disc], there's the ability to access it. And when we released that now, teachers have indicated to me very, very many times in the last few months that they were very pleased to see that because now they are able to access the changes to a curriculum. They were able to see what new resources have been added to curriculum for whatever grade level, and they're being able to do that.

So I think what we're wanting to provide is we're wanting to provide additional resources to the teachers to ensure that they are in fact teaching the right material. There are many instances — in rural Saskatchewan especially, even in urban because I was just in a school where this has occurred — where there are multi-grades, and a teacher is teaching a grade 6,7 and sometimes even a grade 6, 7, and 8 class.

And the content of a math class, and you're teaching math to grade 6's, 7's, and 8's, the teacher has a big job to be able to understand the outcomes that are required for a grade 6 content, 7 content, and 8 content. So what we're trying to do is to help them to better understand that so that the student, regardless of whether they come out of a multi-grade classroom or whether they come out of a straight grade 7 classroom, so that they are receiving the content that they should be receiving.

Ms. Thurgood Sagal: — The only piece I might add to that is that teachers have told us that they found our huge, thick curricula in the '90s to be really hard to navigate. So what we have been able to do, I think, this time is be really clear about what are the 10 or 15 things that students need to know at the end of this grade, in this area of study, and then to support that with customized resources. Because teachers often change grades or they're entering the profession, so the more support we can give to make it really clear what it is students should know and be able to do, then that's more helpful for teachers than trying to wade through 500 pages of a curriculum.

Ms. Atkinson: — There's no question that teachers complained about all of the documents in the 1990s, but I mean we've come a long way since the 1990s. And you know, in the 1990s teachers didn't have computers. We had to, when we had no money, had to ask the Pioneers at SaskTel to give up their old

computers to put them into schools across the province. So thank goodness technology . . . We've got money for technology and technology has helped.

But I just want to get back to . . . I'm trying to understand, and this certainly is a bit fuzzy I think for me, but I'm trying to understand that we have fewer people doing curricula development in the province than we have had in the past. We are now collaborating across the West in order to have, you know, 15 or 20 items that you need to have taught in each grade, the concepts per subject. We're trying to develop common resource material and we are trying to . . . We've determined what the outcomes are. And the idea is to, I guess, test those outcomes at some stage. And we've got some data from various testing. And we're concerned about our rankings, where we rank relative to the rest of the country or relative to the West.

So now tell me how we expect our rankings to improve. Or do we expect our rankings to improve? Knowing that . . . I think we're going to have the student achievement panel report next week, is it? Or some time in the next while, few weeks, and they've made a number of recommendations. But is this all about improving . . . I mean we want better outcomes for our students, but do we want better rankings for our students?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Well first of all, we want better outcomes. And I know Mr. McKee has talked about the Aboriginal and Métis achievement level. And we hosted a summit in this province back about, I guess it's two years now — no, a year in February; it was a year in February — where ministers of Education across Canada indicated that the gap between the achievement levels of Aboriginal students and the achievement levels of non-Aboriginal students was just too great.

And we've been talking about that gap. You know, you talk about the '90s — and I've stated this publicly and maybe you've even heard it — you know, I can recall my first teachers' convention, the one I went to in 1972. And one of the things that we — now I'm dating myself — one of the things we talked about was the gap between . . . of achievement levels between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.

Then I became a member of the Board of Education in 1985 and I went to, I think, one of my first trustee conventions. And we talked about the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. I became the Minister of Education back in 2007, and one of the first conferences I go to is to talk about the gap.

So we haven't made a lot of progress, especially on the Aboriginal and Métis front. And we need to do that. Is it curricula? Is it the environment that students are taught in? Is it, you know, socio-economic conditions? What are the conditions that have indicated that there is a gap?

And we had a terrific summit where we had I believe every leader across Canada — national leaders — come and share their ideas about how we could change. And as result of that, I think we're going to be making some progress. We've introduced some measures across Canada. And here in Saskatchewan we've done some things already to deal with

that. That's more so to the students of Aboriginal ancestry.

[20:00]

Across the piece though, what we want to ensure is that if a certain set of skill set is developed across Canada, and whatever that student is, whether it's a middle year student or whether it's a senior student, if a certain set of skills is to be the foundation and the outcome that should be achieved by someone in grade 10 or someone in grade 6, we have to ensure that we're doing as well as we can. And as a result of that, I think some of the testing has shown when we compare ourselves, as I said, only in Western Canada, our results don't show that we're leading. Our results show that we're not doing bad in terms of comparison to the rest of the world, but we're not leading.

So we want to ensure that we provide them with better curricula, better resources, better environment, the additional support — professional support — to teachers to ensure that we can expect our students to do as well as each of them can. And that's our goal. So whether or not it's going to be determined by testing, or whether it's going to be determined by the success level of students, the greater amount of students that actually stay in school and graduate, I know that the panel has made a number of recommendations to look at how we can best evaluate everyone. Because, and I've said this many times is, you know, when comments are made about the students of Saskatchewan, they're made about all students. It doesn't . . . They don't differentiate whether they're a rural student, an urban student, you know, whether they're Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal. It's the students of the province of Saskatchewan. And we're going to be treating all the students of the province of Saskatchewan in that way.

Ms. Atkinson: — Now, well, I'm not so sure about this. And when I think about Saskatchewan education and how well we've educated people over the last 50, 60, 70 years, I think that people in education have done a very good job. And that doesn't mean that we can't do better.

And you know the young guy, the hockey player that stopped to fix a tire after a hockey game when I think it was the Washington Capitals beat the Montreal Canadiens, and the press later asked him — this is on the weekend or a couple of days ago — asked him, where do . . . This is a kid from Wawota. And, you know, why did you stop to help this woman on a bridge? And he said, well, Saskatchewan education.

You know, Saskatchewan education, which I think is a tremendous compliment. You know, we can go anywhere in the world and I think we can be pretty proud of our education system and the people who teach in our education system, the people that have been in the department — I'll call it the department — the people who administer our education system, and I think we put out pretty good people. Now it doesn't mean we can't do better.

And I also would say about our education system, we have more and more Aboriginal young people, both Indian and Métis young people, that are graduating from provincial schools. And, you know, I hope that we don't get so into this outcomes in testing that we forget, you know, what we're there to do. Because sometimes I think standardization could be the enemy

of inclusion, including a lot of people that might not make their way through.

But I think, Minister, I will move on to other areas. We've sort of flogged this horse for a while, for an hour, but . . .

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Ms. Atkinson, but I just want to make one comment. I am in no way saying that the education program of the past was somehow deficient. I mean, you're right. We have produced . . . I mean, one of our greatest exports has been our very well-educated students and whether, you know, whether you talk about Mr. Laich and his reference to growing up in Saskatchewan and receiving a great education here, we know that that's true. That's been very common.

My point being is exactly how you stated it. We want to provide additional supports to ensure that we can do better. That's always our goal.

I recall reading an article where we talk about the amount of content that a student learned in the 1930s or 1940s one-room school. It was minute compared to the content of today. So we have to move forward. We have to use technology, as you indicated, and ensure that we provide the best available resources. Those are things that we're going to continue to do and we want to ensure that our teachers receive the best help that they can get.

Ms. Atkinson: — But I think, Minister, when teachers start seeing schools ranked, when teachers start seeing the school divisions ranked — and I guess maybe we'll get to grades at some stage — I think my sense from teachers I've spoken to is they're feeling a bit under siege. And so I think we need to be careful as we're putting pressure on. And I guess that's all I have to say about that. But I will move on, because I know that there are teachers that certainly wanted me to put this on the record, and I did and we've had a good discussion. So I thank you for that.

I have some questions now around capital, so maybe if the capital people want to move in we can have that discussion.

Now I represent Saskatoon Nutana, but Saskatoon Nutana students go to all kinds of schools in the city of Saskatoon. Some of our students go to Walter Murray to the academically talented program. Some of our students go to the fine arts program at Georges Vanier School. And I know that the parents at Georges Vanier School have been trying for several years, including time when we were in government, to have their school expanded and dealt with. And I know that they have written you many, many, many, many letters and there's been a petition and so on and so forth. I'm wondering if . . . And I realize the ministry has its capital list, and I guess Georges Vanier has felt for some time now that they just kind of make their way to the top and all of a sudden they make their way back down the list.

So is there any thought that Georges Vanier might soon see their building expanded to deal with some of their difficulties? I should point out that the Georges Vanier experienced some expansion because of Stonebridge and The Willows which . . .

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Just looking to ensure that I know the

correct ranking for Georges Vanier and other projects in '08 and '09. As you are aware, the Ministry of Education publishes the capital requests as they're evaluated in either priority 1, priority 2, priority 3, or priority 4 areas. And for 2009, I believe we had 105 projects that were listed on the list.

Georges Vanier, in the project list for '09, was listed as project no. 9 and there was another project for the Greater Saskatoon Catholic school division which was St. Matthew School; they were no. 8, 8 and 9. In the year before which was '08, Georges Vanier was listed as no. 6 and St. Matthew was listed as no. 4 in '08. So there has been some changes. And the changes occur when projects are re-evaluated each and every year. Some move up; some move down based on student enrolments. The project itself in terms of the health and safety risks, there are a whole number of factors that come into play to evaluate each and every one of the projects.

For the list that still remains for 2009, as I indicated publicly, we have moved a number of those projects from the list into what is called the detailed design stage right at the end of the last fiscal year. And projects like St. Joseph at the Holy Trinity, Willowgrove in both Saskatoon Public and Saskatoon Catholic, École St. Thomas at Lloydminster, the École St. Andrew here at Regina Separate, the Warman middle years, and of course the Weyburn project that actually had started off even sooner than that because of the need to accommodate the regional college — those first seven projects have been moved forward. They are now into either a detailed design stage or advanced.

So if the list was to be looked at today, which is before we actually produce a 2010 list, the first project on the list would be St. Matthew School and the second project on the list would be Georges Vanier.

Ms. Atkinson: — And how likely will that be according to your, I guess, facilities folks come August?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Are you . . . Your question is, how likely will they remain in those positions?

Ms. Atkinson: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — My officials indicate to me that with the . . . One of the factors that will play a role is the September 30th, 2009 enrolments, because those would be the most current enrolments that would be now put into, as part of the criteria, into a re-evaluation.

It seems like those two projects are pretty high on the list for next year. Whether or not, you know, some . . . I'm not sure that the enrolments have changed dramatically in a downward fashion. I don't think they have. I think they have, in fact, increased. So they should remain pretty high on the list.

Ms. Atkinson: — In Saskatoon I believe that St. Matthew's is going to move part of their school over to the old Sion Academy because of . . . St. Matthew's is on Arlington Avenue. It's a French immersion school. I've been told that they have such crowding issues that they're looking . . .

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — I want to stop that one right now if I could. Sorry for interrupting, but no, our ministry has looked at

the possibility of attaching two relocatables to ensure that the classes that are there right now can continue until an addition and a renovation is in the works. Now whether that happens within the year or not . . . But no, we're going to do relocatables.

You did mention Georges Vanier, and there has been a change in enrolment. In 2007, Georges Vanier enrolment was 309; in '08 it was 313, and in '09 — which would have been last September 30th stat — it's 335. So it has gone up about 26 students in the three years.

Ms. Atkinson: — Right. And they're loaded to the rafters as the parents would say. So, Minister, we will know in August what the new list is? Is that your ministry's intention?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — The list is hoped to be out by the first part of July. The evaluations are taking place now so that by June 30th we should be able to have all the work compiled.

Ms. Atkinson: — The other high school that's been brought to my attention is Holy Cross. Holy Cross has experienced growth as well. A lot of newcomers are on the east side of Saskatoon. Their children are attending that school, and I'm wondering where Holy Cross is on the list.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — I'll make two comments about Holy Cross. First of all on the '09 capital list, Holy Cross is at position no. 11. So if the seven are off the list, then I guess they would be in position no. 4 on a list that would . . .

Ms. Atkinson: — You're talking about the seven that you announced.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — That's correct. Now as far as Holy Cross's enrolment over the last three years, the '07 enrolment was 1,383. The '08 enrolment was 1,217. They dropped significantly in '08. And for '09 they're back up to 1,367. So they're still just a tad lower than the enrolment in '07 but basically back to almost where they were in 2007.

Ms. Atkinson: — But once again that's a high school that wasn't built for that many students, and it's under a lot of stress.

[20:15]

Now, Minister, I've been trying to understand, and I've looked at all of your press release when it comes to capital, and you have indicated certainly that there has been \$303.4 million allocated in terms of capital construction by the Ministry of Education. And I've tried to put it together in terms of this allocation, and I'm wondering if you have a neat little listing somewhere in your minister land that could lay out everything that is comprised of the 303.4 million because I've found various numbers and my numbers thus far — and I was actually not bad at math when I was in high school — I just can't seem to get it to add up to 303. Now maybe it's there, but I can't find it.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Oh, I can assure you it's there.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — But I don't know that we could put it all together in terms of being able to show you the full amounts of capital for majors and the full amount for block.

Ms. Atkinson: — I'd appreciate it if you could do that because . . .

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Well, Mr. Chair, what I'll endeavour to do — and I know we're going to be back in estimates again — for the committee members we'll prepare a full evaluation of all projects and the amount of dollars that were allocated by government, the amount of projects in the past that had a school division component. And we'll produce that with all of the majors that have been announced as well as all of the block that have been announced to ensure that all members would understand where the dollars have been spent. And we'll have that available for next time we get together.

Ms. Atkinson: — So, Minister, when you announced 303.4 million, does that include the school division's portion, or is that just government's portion?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — No, that's just government portion, yes.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay. Okay, that would be perfect. Now I want to ask about, given that school boards no longer have access to the tax base in the province and given that school boards have projects that are being funded, can you tell me how school boards are going to be asked to pay for their portion? Or are they going to be asked? And how is this going to work?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Well we're into discussions with the school divisions. We're working on that very topic right now. Under the old formula, school divisions were required to contribute on average about 35 per cent of a total project cost. Those monies would have come from either additional taxes or from a capital reserve account or whatever sources the school division had.

What we have found out when we made the change a year ago to remove the ability of a school division to change mill rates at each school division level, we found out that the projects that we had advanced, all of those capital projects — I believe we announced the first 22 projects, right, the first 22 projects were announced and then most recently an additional six to move that total to about 28 projects — we found that the school division share, and I don't know my numbers exactly, Ms. Atkinson, so I can't quote you the exact dollar, but the school division share which was to be well over \$130 million, that in fact school divisions had about half of that, in fact not quite half of that in their own reserves.

So many school divisions . . . For instance I'll use one example which is the South East Cornerstone. The South East Cornerstone as a school division had two major projects announced, one being in Oxbow and one being in Weyburn. Well their share was going to be well over \$20 million. And as far as a reserve, the South East Cornerstone did not have any reserve set aside to actually build that school or those schools with their monies.

So we're going to work with the school divisions to determine whether or not the ability should be there for a school division

to borrow its share and be able to have it amortized over a certain length of time whether that be 10 years or 15 or 20 years. And then that cost of amortization would then become an accepted cost within that school division's budget that would be approved. In other words it would be, the government would be required to include that cost in that school division's total budget. That is why it's so important, and I know Clint and others within the finance area have been working with school divisions to ensure that we have the same kind of budget prepared at each school division level. We need to be able to have operating budgets of every school, and then a capital budget of every school.

Because you know, I can use some of our smaller school divisions of the 29, for instance Englefeld. Well Englefeld, because it's just one school, will have next to nothing in terms of a capital budget. Yet its operating has to coincide or match what is needed to run that school division. And it doesn't matter then whether you take it right up to Saskatoon Public School Division, which is our largest school division, its operating has to ensure that there is differentiation between capital and operating.

So that's what we're working on right now with the school trustees, with individual trustees and boards, and also through the SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association]. We have, you know, had many discussions, and we're going to continue to have these discussions as to whether or not it's more advantageous to have the school division remain at developing a 35 per cent component or whether it's wiser to move to a different system. But that hasn't been determined yet.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay. Are there any school boards at the moment that have borrowed money and their amortization is recognized right now in the existing grant, however we want to describe that?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Sorry, I missed that question.

Ms. Atkinson: — Are there any school divisions at the moment that have any, you know, borrowing that's been amortized over a period of years, and it's now recognized in the existing grant?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — My officials indicate that we can't tell you the number, but we know that there are school divisions who have, I'll call it, debt where they have an amount of money that's borrowed — it's not necessarily amortized over any specific period of time — where that debt is being repaid either on annual sums or over a period of time. And for this year's budgets and last year's, we recognized that expense of both principal and interest as a value to have within that particular school division's budget.

So again further to my comments of a few minutes ago, that's why we need to differentiate because there are some school divisions that have proceeded with capital from years back and are required to ensure that they still get the dollars to repay all the principal, others that do have their share based on the 35 per cent share sitting in a reserve account and are moving forward. And then there are others who have no dollars and as well as now no longer have access to the tax base. So we have a . . .

A Member: — Hodgepodge.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Well I don't know if it's a hodgepodge, but it's a collection of different ways of which boards of education have approached capital over the last number of years.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay. So when you say that there are some school divisions that have debt, it is for capital construction. It's not debt in terms of purchasing information technology. It is for capital construction.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — No, it could be. They may have decided to borrow a specific amount and implement a computer replacement program in a school division. They may have in fact built a bus garage or something like that that was not part of the capital formula, which was an expense at the division level, and/or it could be a 35 per cent share of building a particular school. So we've recognized the expense.

And further to some questions that you asked the last time that we were in estimates about when a particular school division had, you know — I can't recall the exact number — but it was over \$600,000 worth of debt that had been repaid, and it was the last payment. And therefore we're not recognizing that this year as an expense because there is no debt any longer.

Ms. Atkinson: — That's right. So, Minister, is it four or five school divisions? Do we have any sense, of the 29, how many have debt?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — My officials indicate that most school divisions carry some kind of capital debt. And that could be debt of vehicles, buses, all the other kinds of debt that I just mentioned.

Ms. Atkinson: — I'm interested in knowing how many school divisions carry debt that is associated with capital construction, you know, whether it's roofs or something to do with schools. I'm not interested in buses or information technology, but capital construction debt. Can you find that out for next time?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Yes. He tells me absolutely he'll be able to put that all together by the next time we meet, and he will differentiate it that way so that we will only provide you with school divisions that have debt as a result of a capital project. And we'll also differentiate so that we're not calling a school division office or a school division bus garage as capital. We'll only refer to the capital as projects of block or major.

Ms. Atkinson: — Right. So then, Minister, the province of Saskatchewan has committed \$303.4 million in capital construction of some kind. Of that \$303.4 million, over 100 is — if I heard you correctly — over \$100 million is supposed to come from school divisions, the school divisions across the province.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — That's on top of the 300.

Ms. Atkinson: — Yes. I understand that. But school divisions no longer have the ability to access the tax base. And some school divisions might have reserves. Some school divisions don't have reserves. Some school divisions have part of it. Some don't, and so on and so forth. So I guess what I'm interested in knowing, of the 100 million plus — I think it's 130

million that you refer to — which would be the school division's share? How much of that 130 million do we have in reserves at the moment that can be paid for by school divisions?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Okay, that one I had for you, ma'am. I thought it was 59 and I've just been given the document that tells me it's \$59,286,954. And I can tell you that the first 20 projects . . . And I'm going to give them to you this way, so that you have a better understanding of what we're looking at. For Nutana and E.D. Feehan — and they're a little different, so I'm going to give them to you this way — the two projects were valued at 22.4 million, and the ministry share was 13.9. And then of course the difference would be the school division share.

Of the projects — and these are Porcupine Plain, Scott Collegiate, Oxbow, St. Anne, Stobart, Churchill High School in La Ronge, Maple Creek, Balcarres, and the Humboldt Collegiate Institute — most of those are either under construction or on their way, except for Scott Collegiate. The amount of dollars that we had assigned to those nine projects is \$149,700,000, and the ministry share was 100,700,000.

Of the next nine projects — which are Humboldt elementary, Douglas Park, Hafford, Arcola elementary, Campbell Collegiate, Elrose Composite, Turnor Lake, St. Mary's Elementary, and Weyburn Comp — the total amount of those projects is 80,100,000, and the ministry share was 71,120,000.

[20:30]

So if I total up those three, you have 20 projects where we estimate that the costs will be \$252,200,000, and the ministry share will be 185,720,000.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Okay? That's just those 20.

Ms. Atkinson: — Right. Okay. So then that means, 52 and 15, \$67 million is supposed to come locally. Okay. Of the \$67 million that is to come locally, how much is coming locally? And how much do we have a problem with in terms of paying for it?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Well I can give them to you this way. Of the 12 major capital projects currently in construction, five have adequate capital reserves: Saskatoon Public for Nutana, North East for Porcupine Plain, Regina Public for Arcola, Sun West for Elrose, and Northern Lights for Turnor Lake.

Of the 12 major, and again we've defined it with these 12 differently, three have a portion of their share: Prince Albert Separate for St. Anne, Chinook for Maple Creek High, and Regina Public for Douglas Park.

Of the 12, three school divisions have no reserves set aside: South East Cornerstone for Oxbow, St. Paul's School Division for E.D. Feehan and their share of Humboldt Collegiate Institute, and Prairie Spirit for the Stobart Community School at Duck Lake. That's the 12.

Now I can give you another five; like, they're all different. Of

the five projects anticipated to be tendered this last go, which they were or we hope they're going to be, these are: Churchill Community School, they have adequate reserves by the way. These three: Northern Lights for Churchill, Living Sky for Hafford, and Prairie Valley for Balcarres. Again two others will not have any. St. Paul's does not have any money set aside for St. Mary and Regina Public does not have any money set aside for Campbell Collegiate.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — On top of that, we've added a number of projects in the last little while, which if of course that school division had no dollars set aside for a project, it's highly unlikely, it's highly unlikely that they'll have money set aside.

Now I'm going to use, sort of an example of, I think an exception which is Horizon School Division. Horizon does have its dollars set aside for Humboldt elementary, even though Humboldt elementary hasn't been kick-started yet because the Humboldt Collegiate Institute construction has to occur first, and then the high school has to be vacated and then we're going to begin that project.

But my understanding, yes — Mr. Richter is indicating the answer is yes — that Horizon has its money set aside for the Humboldt elementary even though they don't have enough for the Humboldt Collegiate.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay. So given that you're going to provide the committee with information the next time . . .

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — The committee's going to be busy after we provide them with a lot.

Ms. Atkinson: — And even if you could provide the committee beforehand, that would be helpful too. We have several hundreds of millions of dollars worth of projects. I think I heard you say that the school divisions have about \$59 million. There's about \$130 million that they have to come up with their share, and it may be higher than that. So is it possible, Minister, for you to describe the major projects? I think it's probably outlined in a document that you released in February of '09 — sort of, it describes several projects. Which school divisions have their money, which school divisions don't, just so we have an idea as taxpayers because this is going to have to be paid some way.

And I'm curious to know, you know, how we're going to do this because we also have some new projects like Willowgrove, the two Willowgroves, Warman, and I suspect there aren't reserves for all of those projects that were announced. And yet we're going to have to figure out as a province how to pay, I guess, the school divisions' share. So I don't know if you can provide that, but that would be helpful.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Chair, I'm going to answer the question maybe in two parts, okay. The first part, of the six projects that we announced — because I'm not going to repeat what I just gave you of the first 12 — but of the six that we announced right at the end of the fiscal year, the only school division that has dollars set aside is Lloydminster Catholic. All of the other school divisions have no dollars set aside for

anything in the future, either the share that we're giving right now for detailed design, and that is why we've 100 per cent funded the detailed design stage until we iron out whether or not there's going to be a portion of sharing.

But, you know, school division . . . I'm just going to tell you right now. There are school divisions that have no dollars. The CEF [Conseil des écoles francsaskoises], of course the francophone school division; Christ the Teacher; Good Spirit School Division; Light of Christ School Division; Prairie South; Prairie Spirit; South East Cornerstone; St. Augustine; and St. Paul's — all of those school divisions do not have any dollars at all. Of projects that we've announced in the last little while, those school divisions, other than Lloydminster Catholic, have no dollars set aside in capital reserves.

So pretty well that 59 million that I talked about is going to get used as either fully funding the share from the school division that is required or partially funding, and then the school divisions will really have no additional dollars in capital.

Ms. Atkinson: — So, minister, I noted last year that when school divisions had their ability to tax taken away, if I recall the summary financial statement contained in the budget summary indicated that school divisions had I think \$130 million in reserves. I'm going from memory; I don't have my document here. And this year that has dropped, their reserves.

So do we know how much money school divisions have in reserves, period? And when all of this is said and done, what do we expect school divisions will have in terms of reserves?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — I think Mr. Repski could answer this since he's been working with every one of the school divisions. First of all, I do want to correct one other thing, Ms. Atkinson and the members of the committee. Of the six that we just put forward, projects into detailed design, one of them was here in Regina on St. Andrew. Regina Separate does have its funds sitting for their share for that school. So they do have it.

Now the question is whether or not there's liquid cash in a reserve account at the school division level, and how much is it. The answer is probably that the liquid cash is 59 million. The school divisions will sometimes do an unfunded reserve account where they intended to levy mill rates, and they intended to get their monies in a different way. And that's what they listed as a reserve account, getting the number up to 130 or whatever number you've indicated. So those are really not liquid in terms of cash. The analysis by my officials of school division budgets and school divisions' financial statements is that there is about \$59 million in actual dollars.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay. So, minister, in the summary statement of surplus contained in the budget summary '10-11, on page 82 — and maybe you can help me here — the forecast for '09-10 is at . . . this is under Treasury Board organizations, that boards of education will have about \$107.8 million, and then the estimate for this year is that boards of education will have \$31.9 million.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — What page are you on?

Ms. Atkinson: — I'm on page 82. No. I'm sorry. It's called the

Budget Summary, so it's not the, you know, the . . .

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — It's not the Estimates book.

Ms. Atkinson: — It's not the Estimates book. No. It's in the Budget Summary.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Chair, Mr. Chair, we don't have that document, and I know an official has gone for it. Might I suggest . . .

Ms. Atkinson: — Sure. Absolutely.

The Chair: — Yes, Minister Krawetz, that's a good idea. We'll take a short five-minute break for comfort reasons, and we'll be back in about five minutes.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Just to get the document. Thank you.

[The committee recessed for a period of time.]

The Chair: — Welcome back, everybody, for the second portion of our committee meeting tonight, estimates for Education. I'll ask the minister to respond, I guess.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we've had an opportunity to look at the book and to look at the page that the member has identified. And I'm just going to put the context around the answer that Mr. Repski, I think, is going to give — is that last year was the significant change in terms of funding for school divisions. And we had to deal with a combination of years where we also had to do with the taxation year for January, February, and March because those dollars were allocated in a different way because the government fiscal year didn't begin until April 1st of 2009. And of course there's a number of things around debt and accounting principles. And I'll ask Mr. Repski to make the comment on your question.

Mr. Repski: — So I understand the question is around the 107.8. You'll have to forgive me but we have a more detailed schedule back, but I will give you the high-level answer as to what this is.

I guess the first thing I want to point out is this is not cash money. I'm trying to keep this simple in non-too-specific accounting terms. There's a bunch of factors that the minister alluded to regarding how the 107 came about. There's a timing issue. This is based on school division financial statements and, as has been identified in previous meetings, the school division fiscal and government fiscal years don't line up. They're not coterminous, and so you'll always have those adjustments to make.

The main contributing factor to this 107 million is an accrual adjustment. Accounting of school division financials is going through a change right now. We're moving to what's called PSA [public sector accounting], public sector accounting board standards, so it's a different way of school divisions reporting their financial activities. In the past, school divisions used to use different accounting standards, and now we're getting them to the publicly acceptable ones. The big difference is now they are going to be capitalizing their assets. So what that means is, if a school division had a purchase of say a \$10 million school,

in the past they would have expensed it. Now to conform to the government fiscal year, they can't.

They book that as an asset so they don't have that expense any more — that's what's called an accrual. So this 107 is mostly due to that simple adjustment of, instead of expensing the full shot of those assets, we now set them up . . . or expensing all the assets, we actually set them up as an asset and then amortize them over the life of that asset now. So that's why the surplus looks so high; it's simply an accrual adjustment, so it really hasn't changed any of the funding. It's a change in the reporting, a change in the financial reporting.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay. So then on page 25 of the same document, the Budget Summary, first paragraph, it says:

There has been a change in how the Province funds capital acquisitions by Treasury Board Crown organizations [which includes school boards]. Rather than provide the TB Crown an upfront capital grant, the Province will fund (and expense) the capital as it is amortized by the TB Crown. This change effectively amortizes and expenses TB Crown capital acquisitions in the same manner that it amortizes its own capital assets.

That's at the top of page 25, first paragraph of the Budget Summary.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — The simple answer is that my officials believe that the school divisions and the school costs are not falling into this paragraph as you've identified as Treasury Board Crown organizations, that the school divisions aren't. So therefore we're not following this process in terms of ensuring that the capital grant is amortized.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay. Are we sure or do we know?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — As sure as we can be and we think we know.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay. Because school boards no longer have the ability to tax, they are now included in the province's summary financial statements.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Yes.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay. School boards in this budget and last year's budget were considered to be Treasury Board organizations, the same as health regions and now school divisions. And we learned from the province that they're changing the way they expense capital. So that the way it has been in the past, if you were building a school and you got the money in 2010-11, you expensed it in that year, and if you got some more money in the . . . So basically we upfronted the cost of capital. I mean we paid for the cost of capital out of the numbers of years that the capital . . . it took to pay or to build these schools.

So what I want to know . . . Because this is significant, given that we have a significant amount of money — 303.4 million — that we have committed to school capital in the province. It hasn't all been spent. It's somewhere else. I mean I don't know where. I think it's in some fund some place. But we'll get to

that in a minute, but it hasn't all been spent. Given that we know that some school divisions can pay for their share, others can't, I was interested in this paragraph. And is it the intention of the government to change the way we expense school capital?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — There's a two-part answer here, I guess. The first one is, your question is, is the government changing the way we pay for these, government's portion of school? The answer is no. That's why we allocated funds for the projects we just announced at the end of the year. We have allocated only the costs for the detailed design stage and those dollars are set aside dollars. Now school divisions know and the public knows that for the projects to move forward, additional dollars will have to be allocated.

Now your comment about the school division share, school divisions in the past used to do a variety of things. Some of them had their dollars ready for their share. Others would borrow. Years ago in fact there was an amortization process where school divisions could amortize their share over a period of time and the government ended up picking up that cost, not only the school division share, but also the government's share. So those are things that we're looking at. Now I'd ask Clint make an additional comment regarding the accounting side.

Ms. Atkinson: — I want to clarify what you just said. Years ago, okay — but we're not talking about the last several years. If, you know, if you were building Tommy Douglas Collegiate or Centennial Collegiate, it was basically, you announced it. As soon as they started to build it, you know, you sent the money out the door and it might take three years, and you sent the money out the door over a three-year period. See, the government didn't amortize it. It's not like government buildings that can be amortized over a period of years.

If you announced it . . . I think the auditor told us we had to expense it and we had to pay for it, and this is how you stop adding, you know, on to the provincial debt. So what I want to know, I know that there's been announcements in excess of \$303 million in school capital. Not all of that money has gone out the door. Some of it has but a lot of it hasn't. So what I'm trying to understand, is it the intention of the government to change this so that you don't have to put the money out the door as it's being built, but you expense it or amortize it over a period of years?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — I guess the answer to that is that's not being changed, you know, because the process that we're following is exactly the same process that has been followed for years, is that the allocation of dollars for the particular value of work that is to be done . . . And you'll know then that the first two projects that our ministry had to provide additional dollars was the \$13 million more that was needed to complete the projects that had been started back, I believe, in 2003. So the monies that were allocated in budget for a project of a certain value, those were the dollars that the school division could use. Once it reached that limit, it had to wait for the next allocation of dollars which would have come from another budget. And that's the process that we're following.

So your question about whether or not projects that we have granted dollars to them, those dollars are either being used by

the school divisions that are well under way and the tenders have been let, or the dollars are sitting in what is I guess we're calling an accrual account. And I could ask Dawn Court to comment, I think, on that because she's been the person that has become responsible for this in the last couple of months and I think can tell you exactly where the dollars are. So I'd ask Ms. Court to . . .

[21:00]

Ms. Court: — Hi. So the process is that once a capital expenditure or a grant is paid out, we do expense the whole amount at year-end. But it's cash flowed over the life or the four-stage process that the capital facilities team uses.

Ms. Atkinson: — So the way it has worked in the past, say a project was \$20 million and the province's share was \$15 million, and it might take three years to build the project. As the project was being built, money would go out the door in year 1, year 2, year 3. So we basically cash financed it . . . or not cash financed. We paid for this project with cash, with money. We didn't amortize it over a period of years. We didn't look back on our summary financial statement and say, oh there is \$15 million worth of capital that's being amortized over 25 years and so . . . So you understand what I'm saying.

Now the issue that I'm trying to get at, we've now changed the way schools are funded in the province of Saskatchewan. They're now considered, for the purposes of the summary financial statement, they're now considered Treasury Board organizations. In the document this year, the government announced it is changing how the province funds capital acquisitions by Treasury Board Crown organizations. And what I'm trying to understand, is it the intention of I guess Finance maybe or someone, is it the intention to change the way we deal with capital for school divisions, the ministry's share of capital, and by virtue of the fact that many school divisions don't have their portion, I guess, school capital, period. Is it the intention to change it?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — I'll give you the first answer, and then Ms. Court can answer with whatever I've left out. I'm going to use one example. And I think that might help everyone understand the allocation of dollars. We are not changing the position or the policy of what has been followed in the past.

And I'm going to use Humboldt elementary as the example in the first projects that we announced. And we set aside many, many millions of dollars, which included \$5 million as the ministry's share for Humboldt elementary school construction. It was set aside not even in this last fiscal year. It was set aside in the first fiscal year which ended last March of 2009. The \$5 million is in an accrual account. It's sitting there for use. We believe that Humboldt elementary, through the Horizon School Division, is probably going to get started on that in 2011. And it's probably going to take them two years before they get through detailed design and tender. So that \$5 million will be allocated to them in 2011, 2012, and maybe into 2013.

Now the question that I've been giving you some answers and some comments about is the school division share. Currently the school division, probably in this case, I don't think Horizon has enough money, you know, for their project. So that will

require further discussion. But as far as the government portion, it's cash that's been set aside, and then it's going to deal with it as it materializes. Have I missed anything?

Ms. Court: — I would just say that once government makes the commitment to the capital project, it becomes an obligation of government. So according to accounting rules, we're able to expense that or accrue it. So basically we're taking that government share of funds and putting it kind of in a holding account, if you want to call it that. And then we allocate that funds out to the schools based on the progress or the percentage of completion that they're at for the school division.

Ms. Atkinson: — Right. And that's what I understood. And that has been the practice. I understood that. But on page 25, the government indicates that they're changing that for Treasury Board Crown organizations, that rather than provide the Treasury Board Crown an upfront capital grant, the province will fund and expense the capital as it is amortized.

Ms. Court: — I guess the best way to explain that is that it's still a capital grant from government's perspective. But the school divisions, once they receive that money, they're going to capitalize that asset. So that will include government's share as well as the school division's share, and then that will be amortized over the life of the asset. And when they become fully PSAB [Public Sector Accounting Board] compliant, that will be reflected in the summary financial statements.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay. And I don't mean to be difficult here but it says, rather than provide the Treasury Board Crown — so I guess school division because it's considered a Treasury Board Crown organization — an upfront capital grant, the province will fund and expense the capital as it is amortized.

So for instance, \$200 million, we haven't yet moved that, let's say we haven't moved that money out the door. There's 103 million we've moved out the door to school divisions, but 200 million hasn't been moved out the door. One could say, okay we're going to amortize this \$200 million over a 25-year period and instead of moving "the upfront capital grant" out the door, what we're going to do is provide the school division X number of dollars each year over a 25-year period in order to "pay for this project." That's what I'm trying to understand. Maybe that will happen with . . . I think I'm hearing the minister say this might happen with the school division's portion. But in terms of government, government is going to continue to upfront the cost of school projects, school construction.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Yes. That is what we are at, at this moment. We are following the process where the school divisions and the monies that we allocate through the Ministry of Education are cash and are expensed according to the project that we have, the cost that we have allocated to be current.

Ms. Atkinson: — So then six months from now, a year from now, we're not going to have a curve ball thrown at us when . . . I mean, I'm sure not all of this money that you've announced will be out the door by then. But say there's \$150 million to go out the door and a decision is made that no, that's not how we're going to do it. Because this clearly says they're changing it for some Treasury Board Crowns, maybe not school divisions, but we're not ever going to change the way, at the

moment, we fund capital, the province's share of capital for school divisions. It's not going to be amortized over 25 or 30 years. If we announce a project for 30 million and they go through the design stage, start construction, we're going to give them \$30 million if it takes one year, two year, three years. They're going to get the cash, and our share is not going to be amortized.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — What we're going to look at. . . And I mean I don't know what government may do in two or three or five years from now. What we're currently following is the process that we have had in existence up until now for what has been announced. And your question was, well if there's 150 million sitting there for certain projects, is it going to be amortized? The answer to that is no. We have allocated the dollars for the projects, and they're waiting for those projects to go through their various stages of approval and move through the four areas as Ms. Court has indicated.

What we're also looking at is because of infrastructure needs, what is the future going to look like? And I've indicated to you that that is why we need to compare, you know, exact budgets of boards of education. So we're comparing apples to apples, to use an old phrase. Because in the future we may decide through government policy, governments of the future may decide to say, well we want to be able to amortize a particular project over 10 years. Maybe it's 100 per cent funded by government. There is no longer a school division share. It doesn't matter whether it's a 65/35 or whether it's 100 per cent. If the project cost is \$10 million, government may decide to say, well we're going to borrow that money, not have cash available for it, and we're going to create more debt. And we're going to be able to borrow \$10 million over the next 10 years and in that way amortize it over 10 years and repay it \$1 million per year. And I'm just using an example. That may be a decision of the future. That's not the decision of today. Today our is a cash project and we have allocated the dollars accordingly.

Ms. Atkinson: — So, Minister, of the \$303.4 million, and I think it's now higher than that . . .

A Member: — It is.

Ms. Atkinson: — It is, with the other seven projects that were announced. But of the \$303.4 million, that's cash either that's gone out the door or it's sitting in an account some place.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Absolutely. And I've given you one example of Humboldt. I can give you the other example of Scott Collegiate here in Regina which is a Regina Public — right? — Regina Public project. We haven't allocated any dollars to that project. It's still in an accrual account.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay. So of the money that you've announced thus far, how much is still sitting in the account?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — My officials indicate that as of March 31st, about \$255 million is in various accrual accounts.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay. So basically a little over 50 million. Well I think there was 5 million announced for design work for the seven projects. Did I hear you say that correctly?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — About 6 million.

Ms. Atkinson: — Six million.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Yes.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay. So we've got about, oh, let's say 60 million has gone out for construction. Okay. So of the \$255 million that's sitting in various accrual accounts, it's real cash, correct? It's real money.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Yes.

Ms. Atkinson: — And it's not part of the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. It's elsewhere.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — [Inaudible interjection] . . . That's the word I'm looking for. All of the monies have been appropriated to the Ministry of Education and is being held by the Ministry of Education.

Ms. Atkinson: — Well that's good news. So it's not being held by the Ministry of Finance. Okay. And I just want to ask this question, Minister. It is possible, given that you said that, you know, down the road the government may change the way it feels about this and it may decide to amortize projects over a period of years, but it's your position that of the \$255 million that is remaining in the Ministry of Education, that the \$255 million, that is money that is going to go out the door for education, and none of these projects will be — that you've announced, that this money is earmarked for — will be amortized in terms of the ministry's share.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Correct. Okay. You've narrowed it down to that. The answer is yes. We have allocated the 255 million to the different projects that I've talked about, the 28 majors. Those are at various stages. Some have started drawing on that account and we're paying money out. Projects like Oxbow, St. Anne in Prince Albert, Nutana — those are well under way — Duck Lake. They're well under way, and we continuously have payments that are being made out of this account.

So the dollars that are set aside . . . And that's what we'll provide for you for the next time because you've indicated what the amount would be is. We're going to ensure that you and everyone, all committee members understand which project received first of all an approval, at what amount, and what dollars have either been allocated through the accrual account or in fact what remains left in the accrual account, if it's well under construction.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay. So of the \$255 million that's still in the accrual account, all of this money is going to go to projects that have been announced on a cash basis. And these projects that have been announced, there's no way that there will be an announcement at some stage, in terms of the government share, that we've decided to amortize these projects over a period of years.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — That is not my intention, no.

Ms. Atkinson: — Perfect. Thank you. But school board share

could . . . we might look at amortization. And it looks as though there's about 130 — if I've got this correct — there's about \$130 million worth of school board share of which they have about \$60 million in reserves that they can pay for.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — I want to clarify a couple of things because Ms. Court has just indicated to me what the number 255 million meant. This is the ministry capital obligation as of March 31st, which includes all block as well as capital. So for instance, I'll give you a number here. Horizon has 26 projects that the ministry has committed to. So it's just one major, you know, in that respect at Horizon. And yet we have \$3,129,927 set aside for Horizon. So that's the sum of money. For Regina for instance, we have 33 projects allocated for this year for block. And we have \$87.309 million set aside.

[21:15]

So that's, you know, I think you were taking the numbers and subtracting them just from the block dollars, but there's additional, sorry, major dollars. There is block dollars as well.

I do want to indicate, you know, I recall my days as a school board member back in the '80s and '90s. We amortized, at that point, the school division amortized the complete cost of the entire project. So it was both government and school division share, you know. And that was followed for a number of years, and I guess then governments made the decision to change it and move away.

Ms. Atkinson: — Do you know why?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Yes, I'll get you to tell me why . . .

Ms. Atkinson: — There's a reason why.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Because, you know, there were school divisions maybe that were caught and various reasons. But that was the policy of the past. Now whether it comes back five years from now or 10 years from now and to create a debt because that's what it would do — the amortization was a borrowing done by the school division on behalf of government and behalf of the school division.

Ms. Atkinson: — It was called the . . . You know when we came to government in 1991, we looked at the real debt of the province, and there was a lot of, you know, a lot of stuff that had gone on that hadn't been paid for, that added to the debt of the province. And we decided that we were going to try and remedy that. And then I think Mr. Cline attempted to do something at one stage and all, everything broke loose . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, the Finance minister. And that, we put a stop to that pretty fast because of the fact that people wanted to see debt declining, not increasing. So there was a reason for that. But I think, Minister, we can move on. I think you've given me the assurances that I was asked to get and so that's helpful.

Now I just want to zero in on the francophone school division. And they have a court case, and I thought that — and I realize that this is before the court and so we need to be a bit careful here — but I just want to ask this question. The francophone school division asked to have access to, I believe it was Usher.

And it seems to me that that was an opportunity to deal with their overcrowding problem as well.

And I know that we have the Mahe decision. I recall that that came in the late '80s I believe, that stated that minority language representatives have exclusive authority to make decisions relating to the minority language instruction and facilities including expenditures of funds provided for instruction and facilities, appointment and direction of the administration, establishment of programs, recruitment and assignment of teachers, and making agreements for education. So I guess I'm trying to understand why Usher was denied.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — I'm going to preface my remarks by saying that the information that I'll provide today to the committee, I provided last week when I was being interviewed. So I don't think I'm providing anything that would in any way jeopardize the proceedings at the Court.

The CEF has been the only board in the province of Saskatchewan where they have not had access to the tax base. So the funding of the CEF for both operating and capital has been the responsibility of government ever since the CEF was created. There is no clear policy. And we've had many discussions, my deputy minister and myself have had discussions with the Chair of the board of education and the chief executive officer about determining the operating side first of all. And I'm getting to the capital by just talking about the operating because we need to clearly define policy as to what Ministry of Education is responsible for paying for through the CEF, as far as the costs of operating the CEF. And it's a province-wide school division. It's unique. It's different than any of the other school divisions, and that's what we need to do.

And we've had officials meeting already for a number of months because, of course, their ask of the ministry when we came to setting budgets for this September . . . or I should say, last September because they were September 1st of last year to August 31st of 2010, the current fiscal year of school divisions. There was quite a bit of disagreement between the ministry and the CEF about what the operating grant should be. And that's being worked on. It's being worked on through both stages, both officials that are talking as well as a mediation process that is being worked on.

Now as far as the capital side, the CEF, Monseigneur de Laval, has about 180 to 190 high school students, I believe . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The officials tell me not quite that many, but anyway it's less than 200 students, is probably the best way that I know for sure that I'm probably quoting fact here. Their request, was of course, they wanted to ensure that they had a school for expansion to ensure that their needs would be met.

The Robert Usher Collegiate when it closed, it was closed by the Regina Public Board of Education and that's who owns the school. Robert Usher is a school built for between 800 and 1,000 students. Now the Ministry of Education is responsible now for all 29 school divisions — not just CEF but the other 28 as well — and we fully fund education. So we're picking up the entire cost. So the decision was looked at by officials that said, Robert Usher in its current state is not suitable for the CEF.

If the project can be rightsized, and I've indicated that word last week, if the project can be rightsized to meet enrolment, that would be both the enrolment for school attendance as well as what it is called the core enrolment, if we can reach agreement and rightsize Robert Usher — and rightsizing would mean of course Regina Public would be looking at removing some relocatables that they currently have there; there's some space that is not suitable space anymore and it would have to be removed — there is the possibility that Robert Usher could be a facility that could be considered for the CEF. And that's what we've been working on for the last number of weeks. So when I was asked by a reporter, you know, was I surprised of the lawsuit last . . . or the statement of claim being filed last week, to a degree I was because we've been working hard at trying to achieve a location and a school for CEF.

But on the other hand, as you would know, the CEF has filed statements of claim I think in 2004 and 2005, and they've done it again this year. So that's three statements of claim in six years. So we are before the courts. I've instructed my officials to continue discussion, and discussion does include the question of location, and location does include Robert Usher as far as a possibility.

Ms. Atkinson: — When there have been statement of claims filed in 2004 and 2005, I believe, what were the outcomes of those statement of claims?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Concessions were made by government and both were dropped.

Ms. Atkinson: — Right. And I suspect concessions were made because the Fransaskois in the province of Saskatchewan have been fairly successful before the courts when they've had to, when they've gone to court to have their rights enforced. And so I'm wondering, given that they seem to be successful when they go to court and given that the two claims were negotiated, I guess I'm wondering whether the ministry had considered trying to negotiate this with some flexibility in order to meet the needs of the Fransaskois in the province, given that they have a constitutional right.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Two things. First of all, the statements of claim of 2004 and '05, they never did go to court, okay. They . . .

Ms. Atkinson: — I know, because concessions were made.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — No, but I think you made the statement that the court decision.

Ms. Atkinson: — No, I mean the francophone people in the province have gone to court in the past in order to enforce the rights. And we had the Mahe decision in the late 1980s, and as a result of that we brought in francophone school governance in the province. It was because we were essentially ordered to do so and we did.

And so I guess what I'm trying say is that there was a Supreme Court of Canada decision that forced the province to bring in francophone school governance. The decision is pretty explicit in terms of our obligations towards the francophone people in the province. And I know that it appears as though in order to

get, to move this along there have been moments when they've had to go to court with a statement of claim. Then concessions were made.

And I guess . . . And I'm being critical of my own administration as well. And I'm wondering whether or not concessions will be made this time in order to deal with the reality that we have a school in Regina that is overflowing with students. They don't have access to the same types of programs that students in Regina have in the public or Catholic system, and I'm wondering whether or not this can be negotiated in terms of the ability for these folks to have access to you know practical and applied arts, industrial arts, those kinds of things.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Well there is no disagreement about whether or not the Charter and section 23 applies. We agree. That's not, that's not the matter of dispute. The questions that arise and you indicate that, you know, there's always been some resolution because government conceded some things.

And of course in the past, in the settlement in '04 and '05, the weakness of policy, the fact that policy didn't exist, created the situation where the funding on a per-student basis was enhanced by a factor of point three three. And that was realized by government, said we need to fund the CEF in a different way than we fund all of the other school divisions. And that was done and it is the practice that has been followed since then.

The difference, I think — you know, and I said this as well last week — is that the CEF has been asking for a school, I believe the lawyer indicated 10 years, and said we've been asking and asking and nothing has happened. Well I indicated, and you've asked the questions about the allocation of dollars, we set aside \$4.6 million into an account and it's accrued in a CEF account to proceed with a construction of a school.

And the points that were being negotiated, and still are, is for that matter first of all, is what size of school should be built or renovated. What size is the core? Is the core to be built for 200 students as currently exists, or even less than 200, or should we be looking to growth? And seeing in fact that there is growth at CEF, and that is why we've been talking about a number of 300, 350 as a core enrolment. The attendance enrolment is going to change, no question, and we're doing that.

You already are aware that, you know, we're adding relocatables to Bethlehem which has just been constructed in Saskatoon. It has the right sized core, but there is additional classroom space that is required.

And we're going to look at that at Monseigneur de Laval. That's what we did last year when we recognized the pressures that that school was under. And we know that to actually do a \$17 million I think is about, is the projection that 17 million is the projection of a right sized school for that kind of enrolment. We set aside the 4.6 to ensure that we would move through detailed design.

[21:30]

We have not moved on any of that. And if you ask what dollars are sitting aside, all 4.6 are sitting aside because we have not reached agreement on the enrolment numbers. We have not

reached agreement on the size of school. We have not reached agreement even on location because there's been three or four different locations that have been thrown out over the last three or four months.

So when you say, when my answer was to the media, was I surprised? The answer is, yes to a degree because our government set aside \$4.6 million to move this project forward. And the criticism from CEF was, well they've been asking for this for 10 years and nothing has happened. I believe something has happened. We've set aside some dollars, and we want to move this forward. Now whether or not that, you know, the continued discussions and negotiations resolve this before it does end up in a court of law — which is how it was resolved in '04 and '05; it never ended up in a court — I'm hopeful.

Ms. Atkinson: — So is there a possibility of Usher?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Yes.

Ms. Atkinson: — There is. And I know that the Huda School has also been looking at Usher, and I'm just wondering where that's at.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Yes, they have been looking at it as well. They're an independent school, an associate school with Regina Public. And you know, that's a decision that we'll follow in the future. Health was also looking at Robert Usher in terms of an expansion for meeting health needs in the city of Regina. So there have been a number of interests expressed. The Ministry of Education is clearly assessing that and seeing whether or not it has the greatest potential to meet the Ministry of Education's requirement first.

Ms. Atkinson: — I assumed that. So that would be the ministry's position that, given that it's a school that's been paid for by, I guess, taxpayers that . . . you know, the first round in terms of what should happen to the school usually is determined by what kind of educational organizations are looking for new facilities. But I understand your ministry has said no to the Francophones, but it's now back on the table, and you said no to the Huda School. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — A couple of comments. The Robert Usher as a facility is within the hands of Regina Public. So if Regina Public was wanting to do something — and I guess, remodel it, renovate it into something — they would have their first dibs. The second choice would be, is that the Ministry of Education in consultation with the Regina Public would look at another alternative.

And your question about whether or not it's now under consideration, the answer is yes, because Regina Public has indicated that they would like to use some of the space, the six relocatables that are talked about, and we're negotiating with them on that right now. And if we can get an evaluation of that facility that would show how we could rightsize it, and what the costs would be, we're prepared to take a good, hard look at that and see whether or not that would meet the needs of a Francophone high school in the city.

Ms. Atkinson: — But if the six relocatables are relocated, then how big is the school? What's the size of the school?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — The facility is well over 9000 square metres in size right now, and there are six relocatables that would reduce that down to, you know, just over 8000. There's some additional space that, as I said, is maybe unsuitable, and we may be able to convert the facility, rightsize the facility. It would still be too big for the requirement. But that also may mean — and this is where we have some continued discussions, and I want to choose my words carefully — there is still the need by the French community for additional space for cultural organizations, parental organizations, and all of those other things that would be great to have within that facility. But my role and our ministry's role is to plan for education first. And that's what we're going to try to do.

Ms. Atkinson: — So if you rightsize the facility, how many students could it accommodate?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — I'm sure you'll appreciate that we haven't really determined what the number is going to be. And I've indicated last week and I'll indicate again for the committee, the core enrolment is, we're looking at a 300 or a 350 core enrolment. It would be more than adequate for that. In fact it might even be a little larger than that. The opening enrolment, we're looking at an opening enrolment of 190. So you know it would be more than adequate, I believe, for many, many years.

But the negotiation that has to take place is to ensure that the core is adequate because it's very difficult to change the core. If you remodel and renovate and knock down and create a core that's, you know, built for 250 students, and that's not the right number within three years, well then that would have been the inappropriate thing to do. So that's why we're going to continue our negotiations to try to reach agreement on the kind of facility that would best meet the needs of the students first.

Ms. Atkinson: — I'll move on. This is a short snapper, so get ready.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Are you awarding prizes?

Ms. Atkinson: — No, this is just a quick, this is a quick situation. I have been advised that there are teachers at the Chief Little Pine School in the northwest part of the province that are part of the Northwest Nations Education Council, and they have been negotiating with the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation] to become STF members. And I've been advised that the STF has said they're ready to go ahead with this, and they're waiting on the province, which is part of the agreement. Can anyone update me on this because there are teachers at Little Pine that want to be members of the STF and there's a holdup apparently with the province. Or has that been remedied?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Well I'll indicate very, very truthfully, my assistant deputy minister knows much more about this file because again these are schools that are on-reserve and are not the Ministry of Education's concern.

But as I said before, students are students in this province, and we're looking at ways of doing things differently. That's why we contributed dollars to Turnor Lake school to build a school on-reserve, and that's why we're interested in the very question

that you've asked about professional conduct of teachers and whether or not they should be STF members. So I'll ask Darren McKee to answer some of the comments that you've asked.

Mr. McKee: — Yes, we are working on an agreement amongst both the federal government, the STF, Northwest Nations Education Council on behalf of First Nations, and the Ministry of Education towards examining the potential of First Nations teachers on-reserve becoming members of the STF. The ministry's role is really to look at enabling legislation within the ministry context.

The difficulty and complexity in this is that there is a significant federal government role with respect to management of on-reserve education and specifically to the funding of teacher benefits, salaries, etc. And so while we are perhaps . . . I think there are some folks who would say that we're not moving as quickly as they'd like. We are moving, and we are continuing to meet and bring forward options and opportunities for not just Northwest Nations Education Council but other First Nations who may be interested in pursuing this. But given the complexity of having the federal government at the table and articulating and clarifying their role in this, hasn't been as quick as we would like it to be.

Ms. Atkinson: — Are there not teachers presently on First Nations that belong to the STF?

Mr. McKee: — There are some at Gordon First Nation through a management agreement they have. That is a unique circumstance, but in that circumstance they do have.

Ms. Atkinson: — Right. And do not the teachers at the co-managed school in Meadow Lake, there are First Nations teachers there that, you know, belong to the STF.

Mr. McKee: — Again, as individual First Nations, yes, they can and they do belong potentially if they have an agreement with the STF. I'm not exactly sure on the benefits and wages and how they're managing to do those portions of it. They may be associate members, but I'm not sure if they're full members of the STF with all the rights and benefits that go along with those.

Ms. Atkinson: — I believe they are. So the holdup . . . okay, the STF has agreed to this. The teachers at Chief Little Pine, the STF's agreed to it, and the province is now negotiating with the federal government?

Mr. McKee: — The province, currently what we're doing is we're looking at our legislation. So we've reviewed the legislation to see what changes may need to happen to allow them to be part of the teachers' benefit plans. So we have some regulations around their being part of it because under the legislation currently, only teachers who are members of the STF in a provincial system can be members, and so we have to enable legislation to allow First Nations in. So that's what we're working on.

Ms. Atkinson: — But Gordon is in.

Mr. McKee: — Gordon is in again. I don't know the history behind Gordon and how they're in, whether they're actually

considered to be on-reserve or whether that management agreement has allowed them to be part of that school division as opposed to be on-reserve teachers. I'm not clear about sort of what the reasoning behind them being there. But I know that in the case of what we're working on with Northwest Nations, it is about enabling legislation that we're currently reviewing.

Ms. Atkinson: — And when do you expect this legislation? Will we see it in the fall?

Mr. McKee: — Well with any legislation, as you're aware, there is a time process, and so likely it wouldn't be in the fall.

Ms. Atkinson: — It wouldn't?

Mr. McKee: — It likely wouldn't be in the fall.

Ms. Atkinson: — Oh would be. Perfect. Okay. I think this is a good idea. Okay, I think this is a good idea for all kinds of reasons. So I'll just leave it there because you have the support of the STF in terms of teacher professional development, subject councils, all of that kind of thing. I just think it's a good idea. So I would encourage you to expedite this if it's possible. But that was the short snapper, so we'll move on.

Now I want to talk about the funding guide. Have we sent out the funding guide for 2010-11 yet to school divisions?

Mr. McKee: — I wonder if I can go back just to clarify that the legislation won't be introduced this fall. It won't be.

Ms. Atkinson: — It won't. Okay.

Mr. McKee: — No.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay. Thanks.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — The information to school divisions was provided on budget day in their packages that was delivered to each school division. Basically it's about a two-pager that indicates to the school division how we arrived at their budget. And I think I shared a lot that information with you the last time we were together. So it's not a funding manual any more. It's just the provision of information on each school division in each package.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay, so last year there was a funding guide that was sent out to each school division. This year we didn't, or you didn't send this out. Okay. So I know that it was reported in various parts of the province that school divisions were going to have difficulty managing their budget, given what they were given by the province.

And I'm wondering if you can update the committee in terms of what we think is going to happen in various parts of Saskatchewan with the budget numbers that various school boards were presented with and given that they said this would be difficult to manage. Are we going to see program reductions, teacher reductions, staff reductions? What do we think is going to happen?

[21:45]

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Chair, as I indicated last time, we have provided over \$18 million additional to all boards of education. Some, as we provided the information last year, due to circumstances of either a declining enrolment or loss of a particular expense had less dollars this year. And I think there were three of them. All of the others received more. The allocation of dollars has been made to the board of education, so now it knows what its revenue is.

The board of education now is faced with preparing a budget, like they have always had in the past. And they're going to determine what that budget is going to look like by the month of June. And they're going through those processes right now. For school divisions that do their planning literally in advance, those boards are moving through that process right now. We have provided actual dollars, as I indicated last time.

One of the concerns of boards of education was around the grid system and teachers, recognition of costs of teachers. Without looking at a wage increase, there's usually a teacher cost increase probably even in the smallest of school divisions because I think even in the school of Englefeld or at St. Augustine, there was even some incremental costs because of teachers in years 1 to 10 are moving up the grid. So we tried to recognize that and we took the numbers from January of the teachers.

Now does that mean that those teachers are going to appear on the payroll next September 1st? We don't know that. Some teachers may choose to retire and some boards may hire teachers that are going to come out of university or, you know, in the early years of their careers. And as a result, the board then will have less of an expenditure for that position.

We're not going to . . . We as a ministry have not looked at, you know, adjusting that. That's the economy of boards of education. They're the ones that are going to plan the delivery of education services. They're going to look at expenditures. They're going to look at whether or not they have to make reductions or changes and they're going to move from there.

Ms. Atkinson: — So are your officials speaking to school divisions in terms of how they're managing with their budgets? And can you provide the committee with any intelligence on what you believe school divisions are going to have to do in June?

Ms. Roadhouse: — There's a few things that happen right after budget. One is, a lot of calls actually do come in to ed finance for clarification around the numbers, and we try to respond to those as quickly as possible. Something else that happens is our regional directors call every school division to just get their sense of their reaction to the budget. That gives us, days following budget, a sense of what the reaction is out there.

And then starting in about a week, Helen and Darren and I will meet with every school division and that will be another opportunity to hear if they have any concerns. And then following, you know, about that same time, the budgets start coming in to the ministry and for the minister to approve.

Ms. Atkinson: — So I know last year a number of school boards have advised me that they dipped into the reserves in

order to deal with their funding numbers last year. And for some of those school boards, their reserves are either allocated in terms of their commitments for new capital or they're gone.

And I'm just wondering what you're hearing on the ground from various school divisions in terms of what they're, how they're addressing their budget numbers. Because I'm advised that there are some pretty . . . There's some very serious considerations that are being made at the moment because of the budget and trying to live within the budget.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Well your comment about the, you know, the approval of reserves, in all cases wherever a school division was budgeting for operational purposes to use some money out of a reserve account, it had to first be shown that it was sustainable to be able to use that. Maybe it's a one-off expenditure for that year and that would have been approved for that reason. The boards of education have indicated to my officials that they wanted to ensure that the program that they had put in place already was going to take place and that the adjustments would occur in this year. So that's what we've done.

Now further to what Ms. Roadhouse had indicated about responses, you know, we literally have, I think, every school division has responded to or some . . . No, I see one that's not, but most school divisions have responded to the regional directors by indicating what they see as positives, what they see as pressures, what they see as negatives, the kinds of concerns that have been expressed. And as Audrey indicated, there will be continued discussion on a regular basis with all school divisions to determine, you know, what other pressures they're going to face that we haven't, that we haven't even talked about yet.

Ms. Atkinson: — So, Minister, given that you've got a report from your various regional directors, can you give us the positives that have been described to your officials in terms of the budget?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Well we have this from one school division, said that it's not a bad news budget for us. Number one, we appreciate that 2009-10 was used as the base. This brought calculation closer to actual. So again our discussion about recognized expenditures to actual. Appreciate the capital announcement of schools, and number three, appreciate the recognition of enrolment impacts. So this was the first year that we've done that. So those are some positives.

Another school division is saying we'll have to make some expenditure reduction but not sure where yet, not sure about the CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees] negotiations, and appreciate enrolment increase recognition. Others have, you know, I can maybe . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes. These are northern boards. This is Ile-a-la-Crosse, Creighton, and Northern Lights. Ile-a-la-Crosse says, seen as a hold the course budget. No major surprises. Reserve further comments until opportunity for more detailed analysis.

So I think you can see that boards of education are saying, you know, doesn't look bad, but we need to look at our own fiscal situation. I know Helen and others have met with all the chief financial officers with SASBO [Saskatchewan Association of

School Business Officials], have had the opportunity to meet with them to ensure that there isn't, you know, something that we've missed. And that was also a very good meeting that has occurred with the chief financial officers.

Ms. Atkinson: — So I know that on the day after the budget, it was reported in the Saskatoon *StarPhoenix* that both the Saskatoon Catholic and Saskatoon Public were facing some significant pressures and that they were going to have to get out their fine-tune pencil and start dealing with some significant issues. Can you give us a sense of what you believe the significant issues those two school boards are dealing with, given you know they have some enrolment pressures, ESL, and so on and so forth?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — I'll deal with Saskatoon Public first. And one of the answers I gave you last time we met was that Saskatoon Public was given well over \$2 million. And one of the pressures that they were seeing, of course, is additional students, some enrolment decrease . . . increase, sorry, not decrease, enrolment increase year over year. But the other one was to ensure that they were able to provide English as an additional language, and they were requiring additional teachers. So you know, the number's probably, you know, 30, 35 additional teachers will be able to be added into the Saskatoon Public system. I think it's going to alleviate those pressures significantly. Yes of course, there still will be decisions about delivery of program.

No different than here in Regina Public where Regina Public's made a decision about Ken Jenkins School. Those are things that those school divisions are still going to face. Saskatoon Catholic, St. Paul's I know had expressed their concern. Their big concern was about capital and whether or not the 35 per cent share . . . Because as I've indicated to you in your first questions, Saskatoon St. Paul's has not set aside any dollars for their capital projects, yet they have many capital projects under way. And there was grave concern that if we were going to force them to find their 35 per cent out of their budget, that would be almost impossible. And we assured them that that wasn't the case.

Ms. Atkinson: — So when do you think school boards will have their decisions made by in terms of their budgets?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — The Act now indicates, or the regs, that they have to have it done by June 30th and the budget has to be submitted by the 29 boards of education to the Ministry of Education by June 30th.

Ms. Atkinson: — Is there any commitment in this budget for new funding for school lunch or anti-hunger programs?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — There are no new dollars that have been provided in this budget.

Ms. Atkinson: — Were there dollars provided last year for anti-hunger and school lunch programs?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — We had introduced a four-year program that was going to provide an additional \$5,000 to each community school. So basically there's just under 100. There's 98 community schools. But if you said 100 community schools

at 5,000, so that's why it was a \$500,000 project for each of four years. So that is still continuing. I think we'll be in year 3.

Ms. Atkinson: — I was just curious about that. And you also indicated in your budget that there were going to be some additional pre-Ks [pre-kindergarten] that were going to be funded this year. Can you indicate which schools are going to get pre-Ks.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — While Ms. Zelmer's getting her material together and getting into the chair, as committee members will know, we allocated \$2 million into this year's budget or designated \$2 million of this year's budget to be split pretty well half-and-half — \$1 million for the additional child care spaces and \$1 million for pre-K programs. I would ask Lois to answer the question on pre-Ks and where the programs might be allocated.

Ms. Zelmer: — And we are still in conversation with the school divisions. We've asked them to let us know by June 30th as well. We're looking at Saskatoon Public and Catholic; the North, one there; and then several other sites across the province. So we're, as I say, it's a bit premature to give you the list but we are in conversation with them.

Ms. Atkinson: — How many pre-Ks do you think will be developed in this budget year?

Ms. Zelmer: — 18.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Eighteen programs at 16 students per program.

Ms. Atkinson: — Do we think that there will be some schools that have huge pressures in terms of pre-K that will see additional pre-K spaces allocated to those schools?

Ms. Zelmer: — There have been occasions in the past where school divisions have initiated pre-Ks on their own and in fact, in last year's budget, though we didn't allocate new pre-Ks, the ministry picked up funding for 19 programs that schools had initiated.

Ms. Atkinson: — Yes, pre-Ks are awfully popular. I know that there is a school in Saskatoon that the parents are asking for an additional pre-K program — I think it's St. Mark's; I'm going from memory — because there simply aren't enough spaces for the demand. And I'm wondering if St. Mark's is one of the schools that you're looking at.

[22:00]

Ms. Zelmer: — At this point we haven't finalized that decision. We also know that in a number of locations where there's demand there are also facility and capital issues. So we have some access to relocatables but there's always a growing demand.

Ms. Atkinson: — So there were no pre-Ks allocated last year. Is that what I heard you say?

Ms. Zelmer: — Not through the budget process, as a result of the change in the funding formula.

Ms. Atkinson: — So we now have how many pre-Ks that are funded in the province?

Ms. Zelmer: — That would be 230.

Ms. Atkinson: — And this is 230 in how many schools?

Ms. Zelmer: — In 64 different communities. I don't have the actual number of schools in front of me but we can certainly get that for you.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay, that would be helpful. And in terms of the pre-Ks, of the 230 pre-Ks, the average size of the pre-K is . . .

Ms. Zelmer: — Sixteen students, 16 three- and four-year-olds.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay, that's 16 three- and four-year-olds, three half days a week?

Ms. Zelmer: — Generally four half days a week, and often that fifth day is family engagement or sometimes that's done in the evening.

Ms. Atkinson: — Now I know that there was some research that was being done on the success of the pre-Ks and I haven't heard the outcome of that research. And I'm wondering if that's something that can be shared with the committee.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Would you be able to indicate to us which research you're referencing?

Ms. Atkinson: — I think there was an evaluation done. Was there not an evaluation done of the program recently?

Ms. Roadhouse: — Yes, I think I know what you're talking about. I don't think that was . . . Well I don't know. It wasn't a pre-K. I believe Saskatoon Public is doing an evaluation of full-day kindergarten.

Ms. Atkinson: — Well I know that.

Ms. Roadhouse: — Oh, okay.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay. You know, pre-Ks were introduced in the province I think in 1995. So we've got just about a 15-year experience because I don't think they were up and running in 1990 . . . I'm going from memory here.

So we've had some experience with pre-Ks in the province of Saskatchewan and I'm just wondering, in terms of evaluation . . . I think there's been some evaluation work done, and I'm not sure that it's ever been shared with the committee. And so I'm wondering if someone could describe what we've determined, what we found out about pre-Ks. Are they working? Are they providing the results that we set out to have them provide and so on and so forth?

Ms. Roadhouse: — This is a little while ago now, and I only know this because I was involved in it. But I believe the ministry, when I was still with Regina Public, contributed some funding for the evaluation of pre-kindergarten. And Caroline Krentz and others did that review, and that report is out there

and has been reported on. It's a . . . [inaudible] . . . document, one of the . . . University of Regina document. So we could get that, but it's a little bit older now I think.

Ms. Atkinson: — So there's been nothing recent?

Ms. Roadhouse: — Well there's a few. As you know, there's a huge body of research around early childhood in general and around the benefits of these types of programs. But as far as I know, the only very sort of specific study was led by that university group.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay. How many provinces have pre-Ks? What other provinces have pre-Ks?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — We're unable to provide that answer for you as far as whether or not the other nine . . . As Ms. Zelmer said, and we have been talking about this one, is Ontario of course is looking at providing, you know, universal pre-K full day. So there's that example. We cannot tell you for sure whether all other nine provinces have pre-K.

Ms. Atkinson: — I don't believe they do, but I think we're one of the few provinces in the country. So now that gets me to early learning and care. And there was a lot of work that was done in the ministry, the department in 2006-07 where the idea was to take the \$148 million of federal money and move towards early learning and care centres in schools throughout the province. And early learning and care centres would include, you know, infants, toddlers, pre-K, and kindergarten.

And I'm wondering if there is any work that is being done on that at the moment. I understand that Brevoort Park in Saskatoon is being refitted to have an early learning and care centre. I think they accessed some federal money. And I'm wondering if there are other examples in the province where we're moving to early learning and care centres or programs in our elementary schools.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — We have funded a number of schools to add child care to their facilities, and I think Brevoort Park is one of them. The capital for that has come from the ministry, so it's not a federal concept. We have many examples of schools that are looking at child care spaces . . . We just opened one in Prince Albert where, I believe it's St. Michael's, is it? St. Michael's in Prince Albert?

A Member: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Yes, St. Michael's has added four or made use of four relocatables that were attached to their school that were no longer needed for that school facility and they're now utilized as a child care. We've got projects that are being looked at in schools like Imperial School in Regina, Ruth Pawson in Regina, Wilfrid Walker, Gladys McDonald. So there, you know, I'm just giving you a few examples of . . . examples where we already have done some renovation. We're looking at trying to, in most instances, to add on to an elementary is probably the best thing, but there is a capital problem, a space problem.

And that is why we're looking at adding or looking at being able to add to a school in the way of what is going to be called a

relocatable classroom for daycare. And we have one that is being built right now as a prototype where we want to look at it because they're putting in a kitchen facility. They're putting in all the requirements of a room that will be needed, will be able to provide daycare. And we think that that's going to be a good concept to be able to deliver to those school divisions who are willing to work with our ministry and establish an agreement that allows for a daycare to be added to a school. In some instances it's elementary but in other instances it is high school.

And you're familiar with Nutana and that kind of project, and we're seeing that in many instances. The new construction at Duck Lake, the new construction at Duck Lake is going to have a daycare centre in it. And I think it's going to be pretty significant. Thirty-two spaces will be allocated to that daycare right within a K to 12 school. So I think that this is going to be a growing way of meeting the challenges of communities that are looking at daycare, whether they be at that elementary school level or whether they be in the high school. So it doesn't have to be a stand-alone facility, as we see in many instances in the larger cities.

Ms. Atkinson: — So from a public policy perspective then, Minister, is the public policy of the ministry that when we're constructing a new school that there will be an early learning and care area of the school which will include child daycare, pre-Ks, and kindergartens?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — The answer to that would be, it's not understood that it would be for all. If there is a need and the negotiations occur between the school division and the ministry officials about adding that into the school, then there is the potential to do that. And in most instances that's what's happening.

Ms. Atkinson: — So for instance the two new, the Catholic and public school in Willowgrove, I think, elementary school, that would be a primary area where there will be lots of young people with children under the age of five. Saskatchewan has the highest labour market attachment of women with children under the age of five and . . . I think it's at 70 per cent, so it's going up.

And I was just curious to know whether . . . I agree with you that it won't make sense in every case, but it will make sense in many cases where a new school is being constructed that there will be provisions for early learning and care. And it's sort of seamless for parents to drop their kids off at the school and they can make their way from infants to toddlers to I guess pre-K and kindergarten.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — My officials indicate that both the Saskatoon public — which is one of the halves of the Willowgrove project — and of course St. Paul's have both indicated they want to see a child care centre built, incorporated into that. I'm just looking at my listing.

Ms. Atkinson: — St. Mary's?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Yes, St. Mary's as well. I look at E.D. Feehan that is currently under renovation. You know they've already . . . Not only to the first allocation. There's also a second change because there is a demand there. And we're

going to be adding more students into that renovation as well.

Ms. Atkinson: — And in terms of some of the schools in rural Saskatchewan, have there been school divisions that have said, you know, this is something we need to think about given that there seems to be a lot of child daycare that's being developed in certain parts of the province?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — There are a number that are occurring in rural Saskatchewan. We've looked at the requests at Stewart Valley and at Pangman, and those are going to actually be appearing on the school sites. Porcupine Plain, which is a new school addition, is also having a daycare added to it.

I can tell you that we allocated in 2009-10 . . . This is just a statistic that would show you how schools are being involved. In 2009-10, we allocated 1,610 new child care spaces. Over 40 per cent were allocated to schools. So that's a pretty significant number. That's just about 650 spaces were . . . that we allocated of that 1,600 were allocated to schools.

Ms. Atkinson: — Do you think that's going to grow in terms of your allocations to schools? You know, given that it seems to me as though people want this early learning and care in the school or attached to the school. If we look at . . . and child daycare was moved out of Social Services over to Education in terms of child development.

And if we want to change the way, at some stage, we do pre-K, and if pre-K is to become universal — which is certainly my hope, someday, that we'll have universal pre-K in the province — and given that it appears as though parents are going to continue to have both parents or one parent working because they have to work, and given that there's a shortage of licensed child daycare and this has been a problem for a very long time, do you think that, as we develop more schools and add to schools and renovate schools, that we will see more child daycare located at schools? Because I think school boards have now . . . They're now used to this idea. It's taken them a while, but . . .

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — They've got over that hump.

Ms. Atkinson: — They've got over the hump, yes, exactly. And given that school boards no longer have access to the tax base, they don't have to worry about, I guess, paying for capital because it's going to be sorted out one way or the other.

[22:15]

So I'm just curious to know whether or not, from a public policy point of view, if your officials and yourself have thought about, does it make sense to start really moving child daycare into schools which are supposed to be the hub of the community and that's where kids are located? Does that make practical sense?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — We've had a lot of discussion and I can assure you we're . . . My ministry officials are very supportive of this concept. We have had many discussions with school division officials and I think the research, as Ms. Roadhouse has pointed out, research in North America is showing clearly that the earlier the intervention, the more chance of success.

And to have the vulnerable three-year-olds in a pre-kindergarten, and four-year-olds, I think that's the way to go.

The nearest location in many communities of course, or not necessarily the nearest, but the location that best suits parents is the school. And that's why — and I think you can see our commitment to this — I made the comment about a prototype that is being built, a prototype relocatable that is being built right now. We need to examine this very carefully because, I think, we probably have about 18 or 20 requests for relocatables, like, not tomorrow but yesterday. And we need to be able to assure the school division and then the taxpayers of Saskatchewan because your comment about, you know, who's paying the bill here. It's us. It's on behalf of taxpayers. We need to be assured that that is the correct expenditure to be done because you can add on, you know, huge amount of space, but then who's paying for that?

So we're looking at establishing daycares as part of the school where we have agreements that work with them. As I've already made mention of this, the group in Prince Albert in the separate system that is working in those four relocatables, they're ecstatic about that. The principal and his staff are extremely pleased because again, those three- and four-year-olds are going to fit into the kindergarten program, and they're just going to be a nice flow into their school.

I think it's going to grow. The answer to your first question is whether I see this growing. Absolutely I see it's growing. The province is increasing in terms of numbers, but the most important number as you've seen is that the year 2009, we had for the first time since 1992, I think, we had over 14,000 births in the province of Saskatchewan. Now I hope that, you know, starts a trend and that we're going to see the same amount in 2010. But no question, that's going to translate into in three years time to many, many more three-year-olds and four-year-olds than we had before. And I think that the parents of those students are going to be interested in ensuring that their children receive, you know, the latest kind of interventions or the latest kind of supports that we can offer, and I think schools are the place to do it.

Ms. Atkinson: — Well given that we have the highest labour force attachment of women with five-year-olds and younger in the country and given that we had a preponderance of births last year, those parents are soon going to start — after mat leave's over, paternity leave's over — are soon going to start looking for child daycare if they haven't already. And given that I know that there are significant numbers of people waiting, trying to get their child into a licensed child care space, and, you know, these aren't necessarily people who will be subsidized by the state, but are people who are prepared to or will pay for this, pay the monthly fee.

And it's becoming more and more difficult to find child daycare that's not licensed because a lot of people are in the workforce, or if you're a boomer and you've retired, you're not necessarily interested in looking after your grandchildren, or you may not have parents that are close by. So I just think there's going to be more and more pressure for this kind of support of families, and the school does make some sense. And we know that young families tend to be, lots of them in the suburbs where we are

building new schools or whatever. So do you think in terms of . . . I know there's 250 spaces that are allocated this year, I think, new spaces that are going to be built this year.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — 235.

Ms. Atkinson: — 235. I'm sorry, 235. In terms of those spaces, Minister, what portion of those spaces will be in schools? Or do we know that yet?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — No, we wouldn't know that yet because we have a number of projects that are under way. They're all being assessed. We have a request. I'm sure that the factor of 40 per cent is going to at least be met of that amount if not more.

One of the comments that you made . . . and I think it's important for everyone to understand. One of the concerns . . . and facilities need to have very specific construction if they are to have infant and toddler spaces. I think you're right in saying, you know, the mothers that want to return to work or go to school or to enhance their careers, whatever the case, they're looking for earlier, earlier child care than a four-year-old, let's say.

Our numbers are indicating that by 2011 we're probably going to have — and again this is an estimate — we're probably going to have 3,395 infant and toddler spaces. Of the over nearly 12,000 child care spaces we'll have, we'll have 3,395 infant and toddler care. That's an increase of 58 per cent in the last 30 months. So I think you can see that we've recognized, my ministry officials have recognized that we need to develop a good cross-section of child care spaces, not just necessarily for those kindergarten or grade 1 or students that are coming in after school. We need to be assured that we have infant and toddler spaces available for those mothers who want to return to the workforce faster.

Ms. Atkinson: — Yes, and that's what I'm talking about in terms of school. Of the early learning and care, I'm talking about toddlers and infants being in early learning and care in schools. And is that where we're moving? Because I'm not talking about three- and four-year-olds. I'm talking about early learning and care so that parents, when they return to work, the school is the hub. They go to the school . . . and you know, Johnny starts as an infant. Then he becomes a toddler. Then he becomes a three- and four-year-old. He does his pre-K four or five days a week or whatever it is, and then he goes back to the three- and four-year-old child daycare. So is that where we're going? Because that's what I'm thinking of.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — I'm going to ask Lois to comment on this because she's more knowledgeable about the specific projects that have been applied for, but I think the direction that we're going to be heading into is to ensure that we have a good cross-section of all, but schools . . .

Ms. Zelmer: — Most centres, and that would include school-based centres, have a range of ages. As I'm sure you know, it's very expensive to provide infant care, so it's helpful to have some pre-school and school-age fees coming in to help offset so that the fees aren't too high for parents of infants. But the majority of centres do try for a range. We do have in the high schools the teen, infant, and toddler centres that provide

support both to the infant and the toddler but to of course the young parent to complete their high school. So those are continuing in the high schools as well.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay. So we have, let's just use the example of Brevoort Park. Brevoort Park is going to be, "is being renovated" as we speak. And it's going to become an early learning and care centre in Brevoort Park, my old elementary school.

A Member: — Oh my goodness, it's not that old.

Ms. Atkinson: — Oh, it is. So my question is . . . It is. I was one of the first students. But anyway — in grade 7 — what I'm interested in knowing, is that going to have infant care, toddler care? Or I mean, is this basically a full-service early learning and care centre?

Ms. Zelmer: — We can get you that.

Ms. Atkinson: — At the end of this fiscal year, 2010-11, we will. . . And I know that spaces are announced, and they don't necessarily get developed in this fiscal year. But at the end of this fiscal year, how many spaces do we think we will have in the province of Saskatchewan? And what I mean by that is they're developed and there are young people or children in those spaces.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — For the end of fiscal year of 2011, March 31st of 2011, we expect that we will have 12,240 spaces. Now the target of course is 11,635 because we have some that are in transition. So the number, when you say what will we have in terms of a person in a space, the numbers should be between 11,635 and 12,240.

Ms. Atkinson: — This would be a full-time space? Or are we talking about children that may be part-time care, before-school, after-school care? Are we talking about a full day space?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — You are talking about a combination because you're also going to have children who are of school age. They could be six-year-olds that are coming to school. Well and some are even coming to school at 7, coming to the daycare at 7 a.m. And they're there from 7 till, you know, 8:30 and then they're there after school for a period of time.

Ms. Atkinson: — So at the end of March 2010, so last year, so we're just talking about this last fiscal year, March 31st. How many child daycare spaces did we have that were occupied and actually developed in the province of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — 10,848.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay. So there's going to be a lot of development work that's going to be done this year.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Absolutely.

Ms. Atkinson: — We're looking at well over 15, well 1,400 actual spaces that will be developed this year including the 235?

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — You have to remember that a lot of the spaces — your question was whether they were operational — a

lot of them were allocated in the previous year and they're being built or developed or we're looking at relocatable classrooms and moving things. So you know, many of them have been allocated. There's always, as you prefaced your remarks by saying that there's always, you know, some changes because a smaller space may have closed, so there will always be some fluctuation in the numbers.

But we have projected actual licensing dates, the date that will go into May and into June and July and August. And then we have some that we're calling the fall, and then we have some that we're even calling winter of 2010, this next winter coming about because they're looking at expansions and development and all of those are going to, you know, put in place the numbers that we see, taking the totals to the numbers I gave you.

Ms. Atkinson: — And of the 10,848 that were actually developed and I guess, occupied as of March 31st, 2010, I don't think we can say 40 per cent were in schools. It's 40 per cent of the new spaces that have been developed in the last few years that are in schools.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — You are correct. Definitely the initial child care spaces, that number is far below 40 per cent.

Ms. Atkinson: — Okay and . . .

The Chair: — Ms. Atkinson.

Ms. Atkinson: — Yes.

The Chair: — I'll just ask you to ask your final question for the night, and then we'll wrap up.

Ms. Atkinson: — Now, Minister, there have been some organizations — and I guess this is for next time — that have received funding reductions. I'm talking about the community-based organizations have received some funding reductions. And if you can provide the listing of that the next time we meet.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — The 10 of them?

Ms. Atkinson: — Yes. That would be . . . You don't have to do it tonight because we're at the end, but if you can provide that the next time we meet, that would be really useful. Or if you want to send it over before we meet, that would be great.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — We will do that.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thanks.

The Chair: — Thank you, Ms. Atkinson. And seeing as it's 10:30, the agreed upon time of adjournment, I'd like to thank the minister, officials, committee members, and the people watching at home tonight. I'd ask the minister and Ms. Atkinson if they want to make any closing comments.

Ms. Atkinson: — I just want to thank the minister and his officials for the information. And I look forward to the information that the minister promised to provide the committee. And I look forward to the next time we meet

because I have a stack of questions that I haven't gotten to yet, so thank you.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Absolutely. Thank you to the Chairman and the committee members and to Ms. Atkinson for her questions. And we'll continue our discussions next time. Thank you again to my officials for being with me tonight.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. And for Mr. Glen Hart, to his mother, he says goodnight. And I'll take that as his motion to adjourn for this evening. Motion adjourned by Mr. Hart. Good night, and this committee stands adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 22:30.]