



STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Hansard Verbatim Report

No. 40 – December 1, 2014



Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

Twenty-Seventh Legislature

STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Mr. Greg Lawrence, Chair
Moose Jaw Wakamow

Mr. David Forbes, Deputy Chair
Saskatoon Centre

Mr. Russ Marchuk
Regina Douglas Park

Mr. Roger Parent
Saskatoon Meewasin

Mr. Corey Tochor
Saskatoon Eastview

Ms. Nadine Wilson
Saskatchewan Rivers

Ms. Colleen Young
Lloydminster

[The committee met at 19:00.]

The Chair: — Good evening. Tonight we're here as the Standing Committee on Human Services. I'll start with introducing our members. We have Mr. Marchuk, Mr. Parent, Mr. Tochor, Ms. Wilson, and Ms. Young. And we have, substituting for David Forbes, Mr. Wotherspoon.

We have one item to table. HUS 16/27, Ministry of Health: responses to questions raised at the April 17th and May 1st, 2014 meetings of the committee, dated August 18th, 2014, distributed on August 19, 2014.

I would like to advise the committee that pursuant to rule 148(1), the following supplementary estimates were deemed referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services on November 27th, 2014: vote 5, Education; vote 36, Social Services. This evening we will be considering the supplementary estimates for Social Services and Education.

**General Revenue Fund
Supplementary Estimates — November
Education
Vote 5**

Subvotes (ED01), (ED03), and (ED08)

The Chair: — We now begin our consideration of vote 5, Education, central management and services, subvote (ED01); K-12 education, subvote (ED03); and early years, subvote (ED08). Minister Morgan is here with his officials. Minister, if you would please introduce your officials and make your opening comments.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you. Good evening, Mr. Chair, and committee members. With leave, Mr. Chair, I would like to introduce a guest in the gallery. Seated in the Speaker's gallery is Muhammad Fiaz and some of his family members. He is going to be a Saskatchewan Party candidate in the next election, and I look forward to sitting with him on that side of the House following the next election. Thank you for that, Mr. Chair.

I appreciate the opportunity to be here tonight to address the additional funding required by the Ministry of Education in order to provide important services in support of students, families, and the education sector in Saskatchewan, and of course to answer any questions that you might have.

I have a number of officials here from the ministry. I have with me Deputy Minister Dan Florizone. As most of you will likely be aware, Mr. Florizone is going to be leaving the ministry and going to work at the Saskatoon Health Region, so this will likely be his last round of estimates. So I want to take this opportunity to thank him for the work that he's done over my term as minister and to wish him every success in the future. And I want him to know that I have his phone number, his cell number, and his home number. I will not be afraid to use it or pass it out as required.

I'm also joined by Assistant Deputy Minister Donna Johnson; Assistant Deputy Minister Greg Miller; Assistant Deputy Minister Clint Repski; Angela Chobanik, executive director,

education funding; Sheldon Ramstead, executive director, infrastructure; Rob Spelliscy, executive director, corporate services; Kathy Deck, director of finance; Lynn Allan, executive director, early years and slide development; Brett Waytuck, executive director of student achievement and supports; Kevin Gabel, executive director of programs; and Drew Dwernychuk, chief of staff in the minister's office.

Mr. Chair, Saskatchewan is a growing and vibrant province. And this is a good thing; it means more people are choosing to call Saskatchewan home and there are more opportunities for our young people than ever before. But with an increase in population comes increased infrastructure demands. This means the demand for new schools as we also maintain the ones that we have.

Schools are facing increased enrolment, and additional supports are needed in order to provide a high quality education for all Saskatchewan students. These and other additional pressures have resulted in a total request for supplementary funding of \$33 million. I will outline the main ones for you now.

First, funding was required to secure land for the joint-use school project. The ministry has been working with the Ministry of Government Relations to negotiate the acquisition of school sites with the cities of Regina, Saskatoon, Martensville, and Warman. Funding to secure the land at this time is essential to meeting the school procurement timeline and to have the schools open by September 2017 to meet the enrolment pressures that I have just noted.

Government has also taken responsibility for the design and construction of the nine joint-use school sites in order to reduce costs and to ensure school-built timelines are met. We will benefit from the technical expertise of the private sector to complete the design of the schools and site work at the school sites. Additional funding of point eight million dollars was required for these services and expert advice through the procurement and site-preparation process.

The next item I want to address is the annual reconciliation of education property taxes received by school divisions. In keeping with established government practice, the ministry has completed its annual reconciliation between the estimated and actual education property tax received by school divisions. The difference owed to school divisions for the 2013 school year is \$9.7 million. Reconciliation adjustments ensure that government fully funds the operating commitment made to school divisions.

As mentioned earlier, enrolment in our schools is increasing as our province continues to grow. Kindergarten to grade 12 enrolments this year are 173,548, which means a total of 2,966 or 1.7 per cent more students than last year. Our funding model includes a current enrolment component. This provides school divisions with operating funding responsive to how many students are in the classroom. As this year's actual enrolment are 1,010 students higher than the number projected in January 2014, school divisions will now receive \$3.5 million in additional funding.

Meeting the needs of children and their families is another

primary focus of our work. One way we do this is by offering supports for vulnerable children through early childhood intervention programs which increases children's readiness for school. The four goals of ECIPs, the early childhood intervention programs, are: the children will experience an enhanced quality of life, families will parent with increased effectiveness, families' confidence to advocate for their children who experience or are at risk for developmental delay will be enhanced, communities will become more inclusive. A new ECIP organization in Weyburn resulted in the need for an additional point one million dollars.

Literacy is another priority of our government. At the heart of this is ensuring the residents of Saskatchewan an easy, affordable access to books and resources. The single integrated library system or SILS is used by 535,000 registered public library users, about 395 of whom are active users across our province, who borrow over 9 million items each year.

The ministry is currently using government-contracted couriers to ship books and other materials within the province when borrowers require a specific item not located within their area. This speaks to the importance of the program and has resulted in a point two million dollar expense.

Lastly, in 2014-15 the ministry was working toward a plan to bring all the Regina branches of the ministry together under one roof as a way to reduce spending. The plans have been postponed; therefore anticipated savings have not yet been realized.

In addition the corporate projects group was transferred to the ministry from Central Services. This group occupies space at another building which we are now paying rent for. These combined accommodation expenses totalled point six million dollars.

As we move ahead in 2015-2016, our efforts will continue to focus on the student. The Ministry of Education is committed to ensuring that school divisions have the funds they require to improve the learning success and well-being of all Saskatchewan children and youth, and giving them the best educational experience possible. I would welcome any questions that you have.

The Chair: — I recognize Mr. Wotherspoon.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you to the minister. And all the officials that have joined us here tonight, thank you as well. It's nice to have Mr. Fiaz and his children here with us this evening.

I'll get into I guess some of the questions. Can you just go back to what the changes are as it relates to the ECIP programs? Of course these early childhood intervention programs, they're really important programs across the province. So maybe speak to what pertains to ECIP directly out of these supplementary estimates.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — It's an additional program. The program is for an additional organization in Weyburn, Saskatchewan. So that's increased the funding, and it's largely for providing services in Weyburn.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Okay. So certainly the additional program, the additional region on top of the 14 that are in place is important. Is the minister aware of concerns over ECIP funding for all the other sites?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — In other locations, or are you referring specifically to the North?

Mr. Wotherspoon: — No, right across the province.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I'm going to let Mr. Miller answer the question, but I can tell you that we regard . . . This is one of the most effective programs that we have. We're highly supportive of it. We know that in the North the federal government had announced that they were suspending funding for it, and we understand that they're now going forward and are going to continue to fund it. But I'll let Mr. Miller speak.

Mr. Miller: — Certainly. So government recognizes the services that ECIP provides to the family and children of Saskatchewan and is working with these organizations to ensure funding. This funding is dedicated toward the Weyburn ECIP to provide services in the community of Weyburn. We've been in conversations about the overall funding of ECIPs across the province and the impact on families.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you. Is the minister aware of the letter that was written to him from the board for the ECIP programs on November 28th, laying out their urgent concerns and request for a meeting and action?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I'm told that the letter has gone to the ministry but has not yet come to my office yet. So I'm not familiar with it at this time.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Okay.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I understand from the officials that it is a letter expressing concern about funding and it was signed by all of the programs. So it's something we'll obviously want to have a look at very carefully.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Okay. Well I guess we'll flag it for your attention here as well. We received it as well at the end of last week. And it just, it stood out because certainly I know we hear how effective these programs are, how important they are in the lives of students and allowing students to achieve some really meaningful outcomes.

And they've just highlighted some of the concerns here is that they say that they've gone back . . . that since February of 2013 that they've written the Minister of Education and they've also had, written letters it says, to yourself and your predecessors. And their concern is that they say that none of these letters have had any result. Then they go into stating of course all the important work of the ECIPs, but just that to do that important work that basically they're stating that since 2007 they've had the equivalent increase of 1.82 per cent per year.

And I'm sure you can understand with some of the pressures within communities and population changes that that's really — and then inflation itself — that that's really inadequate. And the result is that they state they have right now currently 5 of the 13

ECIPs have a forecasted deficit in the fiscal year and that they're significantly challenged in being as effective as they can be. And they talk about some of the wages that they're paying which they state are within the range of 12, starting off at \$12, and just how difficult it is to recruit with those dollars.

So the letter finishes here just simply again reiterating the importance of that program. I bring it up here tonight to put it maybe directly onto your desk. I wasn't sure if . . . I was hopeful that the funding in the supplementary estimates would have been in response to those concerns.

They're requesting an urgent meeting with yourself as minister to find some sustainability, some additional funding. And so I guess I don't know if you have a response at this point, but otherwise I would just be an advocate of this important work. And those are very modest budgets, and it's a concern that they're in deficit, concern that they're being hampered from being all they can be.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — We appreciate the very good work that they do. We also appreciate some of the particular stress that they were under when the federal funding was in question. I haven't seen the letter yet, so I'm not able to comment on the dollar value they request or anything, but I can make the commitment tonight that I'll certainly agree to meet with them and see what we can work through with them.

[19:15]

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Sure. Thank you. And if you'd just be able to keep me in the loop as to what, as those meetings occur and what levels of commitment are able to be made.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Certainly.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you very much. Maybe just looking to the portion of the interim funding, the adjustment around population, an important adjustment of course for school divisions that are receiving students throughout the school year. Could you just speak specifically to the total amount and then who are those dollars being allocated to?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — The total amount is \$3.5 million. Of the 28 school divisions, 21 had an increase in student enrolment. We could provide you with a list of the school divisions and what the increased enrolment was for each one of them.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you very much. I know that school divisions value that adjustment. I know they still, in the worlds they're living in, it's still a very strained environment so, you know, these dollars are welcomed. But I know they're still in a really tight spot when it comes to a lot of funding and a lot of the needs that they're wanting to commit to. And so I'd appreciate that breakdown that I believe you said. That would be wonderful if you can supply it. I'm satisfied with . . .

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — We can actually table it when we receive it. It's just a matter of getting the sheet copied so we'll have it for you later this evening.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — And that's just broken out on a true per capita basis, based on a formula, that I recall. I've looked at it

before and met with divisions on it, but if you could just state so everyone has the understanding of it.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — That's correct. The formula is applied. The increase was 2,976 students for 1.74 per cent . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh, 2,966. Sorry.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — I thought that first number sounded a little low there.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you for correcting me.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — No problem. I appreciated some of your comments up at a recent SASBO [Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials] or the joint conference of the SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association], SASBO, and LEADS [League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents]. One of the comments in your remarks was that you were scrapping the efficiency factor or the lean clawback, I think as it was described by school divisions, that was introduced as a surprise in this year's budget, going forward into next year. Has there been any . . . We've been of course calling for that to be scrapped from day one of this year. Has there been any adjustment at mid-year here at this point? Do any of the supplementary numbers reflect a scrapping of that program?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — The reality is we still expect school divisions to look for efficiencies by way of joint procurement, careful management of all of the resources that they use, look towards whatever things they can do that are appropriate. Our intention is that we would work with them, but as a line item coming out of their next year's budget. It's not something that we would want to see in the next year's budget. We provided, as you're aware, some additional funding mid-year this year to address some of the supports for learning. As you're aware, there was money that was not spent on testing that we transferred over and distributed to the divisions.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — So just as far as the lean clawback that was foisted on school divisions at budget time, to their surprise, was there a change here right now in this fiscal year or has the ministry . . . Have you pushed forward with that? And then if you could just describe the total amount of that. I don't know what the right, proper term is . . . I know they call it the lean clawback, but the efficiency factor?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — We set an efficiency target for the divisions, which was part of last year's budget. So that was something that was dealt with as part of last year's budget. In the next year's budget we will not show that as a line item. Having said that, we will work with the divisions to try and find efficiencies wherever appropriate. And it'll vary from division to division what efficiencies can be found. Some have been very aggressive in the past. Some are looking to the ministry officials for some guidance as to what things they can do.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — So no change this year. They're left with the impact, but . . . And I guess while it might not come as a surprise on budget day what I'm hearing, and it might be applied with, you know, sort of some flexibility in the next year, my expectation from what I'm hearing then is that you're engaged with school divisions right now in clear

communication to figure out what those efficiencies are that you're looking at.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Yes. The efficiency target that was there last year that was problematic was that . . . And I'm not sure I agree with the premise of your question, but I don't want to enter the debate. A half of 1 per cent of the operating budget was taken as an efficiency goal, which does not sound like very much but when applied to school divisions and sort of uniformly across, it had varying degrees of impact. And the school divisions, even though there was . . . raised issues with it.

So what we'll want to do is do a better job of communicating with them. We're still strongly supportive of having goals to meet efficiency and to save money and do as effective a job of managing. These are taxpayer dollars and we expect the divisions to work hard with them. What we did not do as well as we wanted to was identify where the savings could be, work with them to try, and we'll do a better job of that next year.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Well we'll track this with interest and certainly engage with the school boards from across the province to track that conversation. But I know many school divisions, you know, certainly the majority have done an exceptional job of being stewards with their resources. And I know that's where the problem with the clawback came in is that it came as a uniform surprise to divisions, and many of whom had gone through many efficiency processes to operate in a very efficient process. And this was really — I know we don't have to get into the debate here tonight — but something that came down rather unfair, a tad ham-handed on school divisions. And the impact's significant when you're talking close to \$1 million apiece for the big urbans, let alone the significant dollars for many of the rural divisions across the province as well.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — We look forward to the support of the opposition going forward on saving money and in particular with the lean initiative because we know that that's somewhere where there's some substantial savings and some increased efficiency. So as we go forward, we'll certainly raise the issue of seeking the support of the opposition in that area.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — And not to let this digress too far, but we'll catch that debate here right now, and let's save the debate for maybe tomorrow in question period again where we highlight some of the cost, where dollars could be saved.

But if we look at I guess one of the places that the ministry is aiming to save dollars, it would seem, is on the backs of property tax payers, and in this case here in Regina where the council has expressed some concern with what it sees as government off-loading some greater educational costs as it relates to the joint-use projects. The concern I know from the council is that it has an impact on their site plans, also on costs. As I say, it'll have to be picked up by property tax payers who are already seeing pretty big increases across Saskatchewan.

Maybe to the minister: is there something in the supplementary estimate here that responds to that or addresses this? Or are you pushing forward with what was laid out to Regina in this case?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Well I can say that the numbers that were used were the numbers that came from the city of Regina. We went through this during question period. Municipal reserve is something that's been in our legislation for a number of decades, and the purpose of having a municipal reserve is so that when a development subdivision is filed that there is roughly 10 per cent of the land that is made available for parks, public use, and schools — specifically in the legislation, schools. So based on a simple reading of the legislation, the land should be provided by the municipalities who receive the land from the developer at no cost at all.

Now we realize that there has been a practice where the land has been acquired by the municipality and resold by the school divisions. When we started to look at it, there was a large amount of inconsistency, and that's why we chose to enter into negotiations with the city of Regina. We can't find a situation in Regina where they were paid as much as we paid them for this particular land.

And I'll give you some of the last ones that were dealt with. In 2014, Seven Stones School was built on school-division-owned land already, so no money changed hands. Douglas Park in Regina, the school division owned it, and \$1.2 million was paid to service the land. Arcola, once again owned by the school division, 450,000 was paid for servicing costs. In Saskatoon the most expensive one we can find ever was the Willowgrove/Holy Family School: \$3.4 million was paid, including servicing. In Warman no money was paid for servicing, \$1.7 million. Centennial school in Saskatoon, \$1.3 million, including servicing. Tommy Douglas in Saskatoon, \$2.9 million. So in Regina we can't find one that's in that range at all. And I can say they were sort of all over the map. In Swift Current the total cost, including servicing, was \$2 million. So the most recent one for a joint school was exactly what this . . . [inaudible].

When we met originally with Mayor Fougere, we started with the premise that this was, by statute, land that should be provided at no cost to the division for purposes of providing . . . So that was what the legislative scheme had originally contemplated. Mayor Fougere said, well at a bare minimum you should pay for the servicing costs. And we realized that that would be out-of-pocket costs to the municipality, and I think we agreed, based on past estimates, that the cost for that should be \$1 million. He then said that he wanted to recover what he regarded as the raw cost of land, and I'm not sure how he did it, of \$1.015 million per property.

So we went back to treasury board, and the commitment that we made was that all municipalities at all nine sites would be treated in identical manner. So we used Mayor Fougere's figure of \$1.015 million. So we went back after that and we went to the other municipalities and said, this is Mayor Fougere's numbers. This is what we're using for everyone; we want to treat you all exactly the same. The other municipalities all agreed and accepted that.

Now I understand that in Regina they realized that they were going to have additional issues with some servicing that was back a distance away and the developer was not as ready as they wanted so they were going to have to put some money out which they may not get back until after the lots were there. We

appreciate that that's a difficult thing but we do want all of the nine schools to go ahead at the same time. I don't know. That's a rather long answer but . . .

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Okay. I appreciate the, I appreciate some of the responses but certainly note the concern and the concerns of council as we have, and the concerns that the municipal sector or the municipal property tax payer seems to be asked to be doing an awful lot. I know this . . . It flows from a discussion we had in Public Accounts on June 17th, 2014. The deputy minister of Education shared that there was sort of a focus or a desire or direction to potentially have municipalities participate in the funding of schools or participate greater in education. I noted some concerns at that meeting. I'm just wondering where that's at.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — The opportunity was there in each of the properties for the municipalities to put some additional funding in to have additional space or additional resources supposing they wanted a health facility or a library or something else. Most of the divisions have chosen to go just directly with the school as it stands. I think we'll all agree that we want the school to be the centre of the community, sort of the centre of focus that's there.

So we have got a significant amount of public space in each of the schools, and we haven't asked for money back from the municipalities for that. So each of the schools will have some outside direct access so people could use washrooms and storage space on the weekend. There would be multi-purpose and meeting rooms that would be available as well as lockable storage facilities for whatever things would take place, equipment that people would have or would want to leave there. So there is a significant amount of space between sort of the two halves of the joint-use.

None of the municipalities came forward and said they wanted to add anything in addition to that. In Saskatoon they had an issue that because they were using money to buy the land that had come from a municipal levy, they felt they needed to have some additional space inside to satisfy the needs of that. So once again we went to all of the municipalities and increased the common space in between by, I forget, by several hundred square metres.

[19:30]

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Okay. So thanks for touching on some of these pieces. And certainly schools need to be designed and then be utilized in a way that they serve as the hub of a community. That's quite critical, and it's good utilization of the space.

But it's very important that the provincial government doesn't abdicate its responsibility when it comes to funding education. And just going back to the plans then or the statements of the deputy minister at the time, and he was talking about the potential for municipalities to participate in a larger way on building schools or into education, which we noted as a concern, so we would see as an off-loading. And also some discussion he brought up around maybe that there's a role for foundations or something to do this. And we noted concerns at that point that really hikes to people's property tax bills and

charity weren't the best way to go forward for meeting the needs of students.

And so I'm just wondering if from those comments that he provided there that day if there's any further expansion of potential plans or things that are being considered, or has that kind of been shelved.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — We left it open to the municipalities for as long as we could to try and work with them. There was a lot of collaboration, a lot of discussion with the municipalities. I think the sense from the municipalities was that the way the joint-use schools were being configured, they received a lot of valuable space.

The quote that I would . . . would be from Randy Grauer, general manager of community services at Saskatoon. At a council meeting on Oct 27th, he said this: "Partnerships can be a wonderful thing. By partnering with the ministry and the school board, we are able to achieve probably twice the community space."

So I think there was a high degree of satisfaction. I went to a number of the different meetings that they held for the public and went and toured the space they had rented where they were working with models and mock-ups. And I was really impressed, and my sense was that there was a great sense of excitement that was there. So I want to commend the ministry officials for working with the community and trying to maximize what they could have. And I think they have something that will, when it's completed, serve the communities very well.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Is it a done deal that you'll be moving forward with these as P3s [public-private partnership] from your government's perspective?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — That's a question better put to Minister Wyant. They have an ongoing analysis, a value-for-money analysis. And when we increased the centre space, they redid the calculations at that point in time, so my understanding at this point is that everything is still meeting what their expectations are. That's not to say there wouldn't be an off-ramp if something was unexpected or if the proponents came back with something that was not acceptable, but right now nothing has arisen that would indicate that it would not be a P3.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — And are you able to share what sort of an interest rate you're going to be . . . the private partners are dealing with?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Not at this time.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Okay. So of course the schools are important, and time is ticking away here as well. And it's important to get shovels into the ground. But you know, the concerns that we've stated, as in many people across the province, and then conveyed through the official opposition around the importance around transparency and accountability in an upfront fashion just simply, from our perspective, shouldn't be dismissed.

So I think that some of those answers around total cost and interest rates . . . I know recently we chatted about it last week in this Assembly here. But in British Columbia, they ended up having significantly higher borrowing costs on those P3 projects. And if you look at this project here, and I'm not sure the exact total amount, but if it's about \$400 million, if you took that same higher average interest rate that was found in British Columbia on the P3 projects, that would needlessly cause an extra \$300 million of interest payment to be made. And you know, those are big dollars. So just really important of course (a) that we get shovels in the ground to get these schools open, but that we get it right for the long haul from a fiscal perspective, but also of course to make sure the spaces are going to work for communities. And I would continue to urge your government to consider engaging in and supporting or amending, in a way that works for your government, the transparency and accountability legislation that we've put forward as it relates to the P3s.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I can tell you the commitment we've made is that the schools are to open in fall of 2017. So we expect to have shovels in the ground by June of 2015. We're working to assemble the lots and get all the procurement process under way. As the process unfolds, we want to make sure that we provide information when it's appropriate, that doesn't affect the tendering or the competitive process and respects the proprietary information of the proponents.

We very much want to do something that gives the taxpayers, the ratepayers, and the students of our province not only a good product, but also something that's fiscally prudent.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — The dollars that have been reallocated from the standardized testing, something that we've been calling for and I'm pleased to see those dollars finally start to move in that direction, have those dollars now been released to school divisions? And maybe if you could just speak to how those are being utilized directly. And I know there was some comments that these were going to be, that it was going to be determined directly with teachers how these dollars would be used. And I know then some teachers were asking, well what's that? When's that going to happen? What's that going to look like? And same with some school divisions that weren't so sure about how that was going to work out. So maybe just if you could put some meat on the bones of that.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Of the \$4.6 million, 3.5 has been distributed already; 1.1 will go out once . . . and I suspect in the near future because the enrolment numbers are in now. We're using the 1.1, not as part of the enrolment increase, but in addition to it, and would go where the enrolment was the highest to provide better supports for learning for those students. So we expect that that will go out in the near future.

The issue of . . . We wanted to make sure that the money was targeted for supports for learning and we urge . . . And we've got a great deal of confidence in both the school divisions and in the teachers that they will have consultations to determine where best to use those resources.

We've had discussions with the school divisions and urged them to consult and have discussions with the teachers, and my guess is that they will come to a good agreement as to where it

is. We certainly encourage more discussion, more dialogue at all levels.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Sure. So I mean, as I say, time's ticking on this one as well because the strains are now in the classrooms, the complexity that teachers are dealing with, the size that teachers are dealing with, the limited supports they're dealing with, and divisions are certainly managing all those pressures and wanting to respond.

I just noted that in part of the . . . It's a good thing to listen to the front-line educators of this province. That needs to happen more. But it was described just in the press release that there was going to be, or in I think in some of your comments that this was going to be decided directly through consultation with teachers. So are you just leaving it now to the boards to figure out how they're going to do that? Are you aware of certain boards and maybe what processes they've engaged in on this front? And did you have the support of the boards and the sector to roll the dollars out in this fashion?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — We urged the boards. It's something new to urge the boards directly to consult with the teachers, but we think that's the right thing to do and I understand the boards are supportive of doing that. The money was sent out October 31st and we think the school divisions are having the discussions and spending it as we speak.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — The needs are big in supports for learning, and it's important to see those dollars there. Could the minister speak to just what his understanding of needs and then funding for some of the school divisions in Saskatchewan when it relates to supports for learning?

So what they assess as their requirement, based on supports for learning needs and then what they're receiving and then what that shortfall is, just to put in context the dollars that are being received.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I can give you some of them. I will let Ms. Johnson give a more specific thing, but it will be some for additional teachers, should that be something that's appropriate, EA [educational assistant] salaries, speech pathologists, technology classroom resources, and that. I mean we have a breakdown which we can provide to you of which divisions received how much. The highest areas of growth were Saskatoon and that's where they appeared to have the most high needs. I don't know if you want additional information from Ms. Johnson or not.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — The information that you offered and that you're referencing certainly would be helpful. I'd be interested, so I'd appreciate that being supplied. But the question more specifically is from a . . . To quantify the needs of supports for learning for individual divisions, do you have a tracking? Have you been in communication with school divisions? I know it's something, when I'm relating with school divisions, I connect with them and ask specifically about this issue. So how they assess what the supports for learning needs are in their division and what they're receiving from the ministry, and then of course the rest would be the shortfall.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I'm not sure. We have a formula that's

available online, and it's a lengthy formula that deals with size of the . . . how diverse the, how far students have to go. And I think it's some 50 or 60 pages long that outlines the formula of how the supports for learning funding, among other things, is distributed.

So you could certainly look at that or I could certainly make an official available to you to provide some background as to where the supports for learning money was spent or when it went to over the last year. And then this additional funds was based on the formula in conjunction with conversations that the officials have had with the school divisions.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — So that's all good. My question . . . Maybe I'm not making it clear. A division will assess their needs for supports for learning, and then they are able to quantify what they're receiving. And then what they're short on that front they would see as a shortfall or a gap, and it's a gap in being able to meet student needs.

And I can think of, you know, and I know I've met with many divisions across the province. But even for a medium-size board, I know there to be a discrepancy or a gap where they received just over or around \$13 million, but their needs are in excess of \$18 million. So it's a \$5 million shortfall for some very important programs, which leaves them in a very difficult spot, making very difficult choices, and actually cutting programs that, you know, certainly they see value in but they only have so many resources that they've received. So I'm just wondering when you're making decisions around from a budgetary perspective — and of course we're getting late on in the treasury board process — I'm just wondering if that's information that you've requested from school divisions if you haven't had it supplied. And I guess my question first, do you have that information on hand?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — We work with the school divisions with the funding formula. The funding formula is not prescriptive; we don't say, you must hire X number of education, X number of speech pathologists. And we've increased the funding in each and every category since we've formed government in 2007. The funding increase in the area of supports for learning has increased by about 70 per cent since we have formed government. So I'm not saying that there isn't more work to do or more money that could be there. But if the starting point is 2007, the increase that has taken place on a per student basis, on a total basis, or in real dollars is huge. I'm not saying that we wouldn't like to do more, but since 2007 we have come a great distance, and we'll continue to work with the school divisions.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Okay. But do you collect that information or do you request that from divisions to understand what they quantify as their needs for supports for learning and then cross-reference that with what they're receiving so you're aware of the . . .

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Yes. The school divisions have access to the formula. They work through the formula. The school divisions worked together just over a year ago to try and work to develop the formula. So the formula was developed by and for the divisions. So the information that was provided at that time would've gone into it. So that is the information we're working with. I'm not saying that school divisions don't

periodically ask for more money, but that's the process that's being followed.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Okay. It's just an area that really concerns me, and it's something that's a common discussion in the sector and with those divisions that are managing those resources, understanding the important programs to meet the needs of kids and the tremendous opportunity we have as a province. And you know, frankly I don't think a child that's entered into kindergarten here this year needs to be caught up in the debate as to, you know, the statistical analysis of what was done pre-2007, what's been done afterwards. What they need is for their needs to be met.

[19:45]

And I continue to hear from school divisions who are really feeling strained on this front and feeling that this part of the funding is really inadequate and misses the mark. And then I certainly hear from teachers and from parents all across our province who are seeing really strained classrooms, larger class size, fewer supports in place. And certainly there's lacking some of the one-on-one attention that students deserve.

But I'll leave that, flagging it on your . . . as a noted concern. And I think that in the budgetary process, it would be really worthwhile to ask some of these divisions what they quantify as supports for learning needs, what they would be wanting to do with that or what they could do with that and then, you know, sort of cross-reference that with what you're planning.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — We will continue to use the formula. I know that when we formed government the pupil/teacher ratio in the province was 20 students per class on average. It's now 19. So they may want to have a look back and see what it was under the previous administration. And in addition to having smaller classroom sizes, people should also note the increase in other supports that are there. We will continue to enhance and increase those supports as we go forward.

The point you make about wanting to do the very best for our children is something that's important to all of us.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — I guess I would just flag, I get worried when it sort of gets into this brash sort of language around suggesting that somehow there's a small and acceptable class size in Saskatchewan when I know if you chat with the educators in this province, if you chat with parents, they know a different reality. And so somewhere in those numbers that the minister's receiving, I think there's something not being captured in the reality of today's classrooms and the complexity they're facing and the realities that are going on. But I'll leave that there for tonight.

I think we've covered the waterfront for what's there for supplementary estimates. The ed property tax adjustment is simply, that's a straightforward . . . That's just simply a reconciliation. Is that correct? Maybe just explain that process.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — There's a number of factors that come into it, but it's a straight mathematical calculation based on how the statutory process is for collecting the taxes. And it'll vary, based on the number of property owners that default on their

taxes. The changes in assessed value for assessments this year was one of the larger ones, and we asked the officials, was there any reason for it? And they said, no it was just a number of circumstances coming together that made it a variety of property growth and a variety of things. So it was certainly money that I'm sure that will be welcomed by the divisions.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — That satisfies the questions that I have here this evening. We've noted some of the concerns on the record, and I appreciate being kept in the loop as you move forward with the ECIP programs that are stating quite an urgent concern here that will require a response.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you. Mr. Chair, I think we're ready to vote on the matter now, if you are. And while we're still on the record, I'd like to thank all of the officials who've come out tonight. I mentioned earlier Mr. Florizone is moving on, and we wish him every success in his career. And I want to thank all of the committee members on both sides of the House that are here tonight. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: — Mr. Minister, I just have a question. The confirmed provincial student enrolment summary comparison, is that a document you wish to have tabled?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Which one? I'm sorry, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: — The confirmed provincial student enrolment summary.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Yes, we'll see that it gets tabled.

The Chair: — So HUS 17/27, Ministry of Education: confirmed provincial student enrolment summary comparison of school division enrolments as of September 30th, 2014 is now tabled.

Vote 5, Education, central management and services (ED01) in the amount of 1,600,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. K-12 education (ED03) in the amount of 31,335,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Early years (ED08) in the amount of 91,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Education, vote 5, 33,026,000. I will now ask a member to move the following resolution:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31st, 2015, the following sums for Education in the amount of 33,026,000.

Ms. Young: — I so move.

The Chair: — Ms. Young. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. I'd like to thank the officials and the minister for coming tonight. And as of now, we're recessed until 8 o'clock.

[The committee recessed for a period of time.]

**General Revenue Fund
Supplementary Estimates — November
Social Services
Vote 36**

Subvotes (SS01), (SS04), and (SS03)

The Chair: — Vote 36, Social Services, central management and services, subvote (SS01); child and family services, (SS04); and income and assistance disability services, subvote (SS03).

Minister Harpauer is here with her officials. Madam Minister, please, if you would introduce your officials. And if you have any opening comments, we'd appreciate those.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. And good evening to all the committee members. I have a number of officials here with me this evening. They are Ken Acton, the deputy minister; Don Allen, assistant deputy minister for housing; Constance Hourie, the assistant deputy minister, income assistance programs and corporate planning; Tammy Kirkland, the assistant deputy minister for child and family programs; Natalie Huber, executive director, program and service design, child and family programs; Bob Martinook, the executive director, community living services delivery; Miriam Myers, the executive director for finance; Gord Tweed, the executive director for program and service design, disability programs; and Stacey Ferguson, my chief of staff.

As you know, the ministry has reported a forecast overspend of an appropriation of 29.65 million. As I will explain, these costs reflect our government's commitment to support people with disabilities, individuals and families in need of income assistance, and vulnerable children and families.

With the Saskatchewan assured income for disability, or the SAID program, increases in the SAID program account for 10.45 million of the 29.65 million overspend. This is related to two factors: a higher than expected number of new cases, and a slightly higher than expected cost per case.

We're forecasting the SAID caseload to be about 5 per cent higher — or about 662 cases — than we anticipated when the 2014-15 budget was developed. And we believe this is a good thing. When we implemented SAID, we knew that there were people with significant and enduring disabilities, mostly young adults, who were relying on family and friends for help to avoid the stigma of being on welfare.

We didn't know exactly how many there were or when they might come forward to access SAID, but we knew there were many. With the new separate and distinct SAID program, they are willing to come forward and apply for income support. About 2,100 of these new cases have enrolled in SAID thus far.

We expected people with disabilities who were on Saskatchewan assistance program, or SAP [Saskatchewan assistance plan], to transfer to SAID, but we couldn't predict precisely which cases would transfer or when. As of August 2014, 10,660 cases have transferred from SAP to SAID. As well the average cost per case is forecast to be about 1 per cent higher — or about \$8.83 per month — than anticipated.

We're predicting that an average of 12,912 clients will receive SAID benefits this year, an example of our government's commitment to making life better and more affordable for Saskatchewan people with disabilities.

An additional 6 million is required for the Saskatchewan assistance program, or SAP, which is the ministry's basic social assistance program. This expenditure is due mostly to an underestimation of the cost of cases remaining on SAP after transfers to SAID.

The ministry's cost-per-case estimates for SAP going into the development of the 2014-15 budget was too low, based on data available at that time. The transfer of cases from SAP to SAID also contributed to the underestimate.

For decades we had a certain understanding of what was happening in the SAP caseload, but that changed in 2012 when the SAID program was made available to people who live in independent living arrangements such as their own home or a rented suite. Prior to that, from 2009 to 2012, SAID was only offered to people in residential care settings.

As I mentioned previously, we could not predict how quickly people enrolled in SAP who chose to apply for SAID. Furthermore clients transferring to SAID had a much different cost profile than we had anticipated. They were lower cost cases. Unfortunately that caused us to underestimate our cost per case for this budget. The good news is that even more individuals and families who made the transition to SAID are benefiting from this program.

The average cost per case for SAP is forecast at \$966 for 2014-15, which is \$28 more than the previous year and \$56 more than the budgeted amount.

A further 11.8 million is needed for increased costs in our child and family programs area. This is mainly due to increased costs for providing supports to families and caregivers, particularly for children with complex medical and behavioural needs. Funding for high-cost placements has increased to \$4 million for children with complex needs, such as those who are medically fragile or who have cognitive or psychiatric disabilities. This does not indicate an increase in children in care, rather it reflects the development of services to better identify and meet the needs of these children.

Six homes have been developed in partnership with four agencies to provide these specialized services. Although they are expensive, the ministry is seeing benefits to these homes. Previously, these children would be moved from one foster home to another or to a hospital, as caregivers struggled to meet their significant needs. Now these specialized homes are able to provide appropriate care, stability, and better outcomes for these children.

Out-of-home care costs have increased by \$4 million. This includes increased provision of special need payments, primarily for children living with extended family caregivers. These special needs include items beyond basic maintenance such as travel, medical costs, educational costs, and special diet, etc.

As well the increased prevalence of autism and the identification of complex needs is resulting in a greater need for counselling for children in care. Supports to families have increased by 2.4 million. These supports are provided to families with an open child protection file and help to keep children safely at home with their families rather than bringing them into care. There has also been an increase in assisted adoption of 1 million and in private treatment costs of 400,000.

Turning now to the Valley View Centre, the ministry was not able to purchase property as scheduled in 2013-14, which caused us to expend additional capital funds of \$500,000 this year. These funds were used to purchase, construct, and/or renovate homes for the expanded safety net of crisis and outreach services for people with intellectual disabilities. As recommended by the Valley View Centre transition steering committee, it is important that we have this safety net in place as we proceed to transition more people from the Valley View Centre.

Finally we estimated a cost of 565,000 to provide emergency social services in 2014-15. This included evacuation of 240 people from Stanley Mission due to smoke from nearby fires and support to 565 individuals affected by the flooding in the Southeast.

So, Mr. Chair, that concludes my remarks, and I would be pleased to answer any questions at this time.

The Chair: — Mr. Forbes.

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much. I appreciate the overview. There are some gaps where I didn't quite get the numbers, so I may ask the minister just for clarification or if I don't have the numbers quite right. I'm putting that out front that I may have missed them as I was making some notes. But I appreciate the presentation. It was very helpful.

And so we'll go through some of the questions that I have and compare them. You know, also I brought the budget book, so I'm comparing to what we thought we were thinking about in the spring and where we are now. So I'll start with, right off the top, I understand the accommodation services. I think that I'll start with the 900,000 for central services. What was the 900,000 for central services about?

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — So that number of 900,000 would include the 565,000 that I mentioned in my opening remarks for the emergency services and also 335,000 which is a lease cost.

Mr. Forbes: — A lease cost. And what was the lease cost for?

Mr. Acton: — Ken Acton, deputy minister. Primarily changes to or renewal of a lease at 2045 Broad. We had a long-term lease there, and the lease came up for renewal and was renewed and pushed our costs up.

Mr. Forbes: — When does the lease come up then?

Mr. Acton: — I don't actually have that. If you just give me a minute, I might be able to give you more details on exactly how it shakes out.

Mr. Forbes: — Sure.

Mr. Acton: — August 31st of this year.

Mr. Forbes: — But you would have known that this was going to be coming up, or was this an unknown in the spring or last year when you were making your budget presentation?

Mr. Acton: — Not necessarily, no. Our facilities or our leases are handled through Government Services, so we wouldn't necessarily know that in fact there's going to be an increase until after there's some negotiation that happens with the landlord in terms of what that's going to be and how that's going to impact our budget.

Mr. Forbes: — So what kind of percentage was that an increase on of the rent or the lease that you were paying?

Mr. Acton: — I don't have the actual number. I'm sorry. So the increase . . . The lease is handled through Central Services. We also pay them operating costs as well, and that's folded into the lease. I just, I don't know, and I don't have that information with me in terms of exactly what the lease went up.

This number's reflective of what our overall leasing costs for our entire portfolio has increased by: \$335,000 in total. But I know one of the biggest increases was in relation to that one building. So if you need more detail, I can get that detail for you, but I don't have that specifics with me.

[20:15]

Mr. Forbes: — What I'm looking at, and if you can help me understand this, you know, I'm looking at, on page 11 under central management services, central services, 900,000 there. But then I go back and I look at page 7, and I look under goods and services. That's 900 there, so I don't know if it's the same 900 that we're talking about, or has it been changed maybe? Because I'm not sure why 565,000 for emergency social services would be included under central management services. To me that would seem to be logical in another part of your budget. But why is it under central management and not under another heading?

Ms. Myers: — Miriam Myers, executive director, finance. That's just where it shows up in our accounts as part of central management services.

Mr. Forbes: — Even though it's . . .

Ms. Myers: — We don't budget for emergency social services because we don't know what's going to happen every year.

Mr. Forbes: — Okay. But under . . . So is it the same 900,000 then? I look under page 7. Are we talking about the same 900,000 or is something different?

Ms. Myers: — Yes.

Mr. Forbes: — It's the same. So that's goods and services and it's under central services. Fair enough. I think there's some oddity that leasing would be in the same line item as emergency social services. That would make . . . But I'll say that now so it's on the record, Mr. Chair. It's got to be on the record somewhere. Maybe not this issue but . . . So then the accommodation services is 500,000 and it's a capital asset acquisition. And what is that for?

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — That is the Valley View funding that I had mentioned earlier in the opening remarks. So those funds were used to purchase or renovate homes and they're in Moose Jaw for the expanded safety net of crisis and outreach service for people with intellectual disabilities.

Mr. Forbes: — So they're actually owned and operated by the Government of Saskatchewan then or will they be . . . Are they third party, was it a third party involvement?

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Yes, they're owned and operated by the ministry.

Mr. Forbes: — So can you tell me a little bit more about . . . I think you had said this, so forgive me, but I think you had talked about it, a certain number of homes that had to be . . . Can you . . .

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — I'm going to fill in what I know and then the ministry can correct me, I'm sure. The goal is to have three homes, two in Moose Jaw and one in Saskatoon. They're working on the two homes in Moose Jaw. I don't think they've started yet with the one in Saskatoon. But we'll get the details on that from the officials, because he's already correcting me.

Mr. Martinook: — Bob Martinook, executive director of CLSD [community living service delivery]. The home in Saskatoon, renovations have begun and we are moving our first resident in. So we're doing it in top floor and bottom floor. Top floor first, bottom floor second. So those renovations have started.

Mr. Forbes: — Now will these homes . . . They're owned by the province now. Is it the intention to then sell them or lease them to a third party? So they'd be owned and will they be operated by . . .

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — They'll be owned and operated by the government.

Mr. Forbes: — The government. Now will they be, people coming . . . I know this is a big issue in Moose Jaw. Will they be operated . . . Who will be staffing these facilities?

Mr. Martinook: — I'll give you a little description of what they are. So the two homes, the Brigham Road and McCallum Lane, will be stabilization and transition housing. So the homes will be separated into two units. And so we'll be staffing in both parts of the home, the transition home and the crisis residential component, with staff. So it's our outreach and prevention services unit of CLSD, community living service delivery, that does the hiring and supervision, training and all of that for

those staff.

Mr. Forbes: — How many staff will be involved when the three homes are operating?

Mr. Martinook: — We have 20 staff, direct support staff at the McCallum Lane in Saskatoon and 20 in our home in Moose Jaw, in Brigham Road when it's fully operational.

Mr. Forbes: — Okay.

Mr. Martinook: — And then we have another 11 staff at our Athabasca home, which is a . . . started out as a transitional home but it's become a long-term residential setting.

Mr. Forbes: — Now and will these, will the staff be former staff from Valley View right now?

Mr. Martinook: — All the positions are posted internally within CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees] 603, the local, which represents the Valley View staff, and every staff person who qualifies has an opportunity to apply for those positions.

Mr. Forbes: — Very good. So now is this . . . Can you tell me some of the range of some of the work? Because I think, you know, one of the things that when we had talked through the many years of this discussion about how Valley View is going to be wound down, some of the good work that it does do like palliative care, that kind of thing, how do you have that happen within the community? Can you tell me some of the work that will be done? You talk about respite, some of the other things that will be happening in those three homes.

Mr. Martinook: — These safety net homes, these resources are being developed to support not only the individuals who currently live at Valley View, but to support the close to 4,500 other individuals who CLSD supports in the community. And so these homes help to form an array of supports. We currently already have just over 200 group homes in the province operated by CBOs [community-based organization] who provide very like services as Valley View would. So individuals who are being supported through palliative situations and, you know, crisis situations are being supported in their current homes already. So our CBOs are already filling those roles that Valley View has done for the 179 folks who live there today.

Mr. Forbes: — Okay. Now so this change in the plan happened in the summer where you realized that you were going to have to do more work. Or can you describe what happened over the course of since last spring when the budget was released, and what causes us to be here tonight?

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Just to clarify, this wasn't a change. This was a recommendation from the committee. The Valley View folks really wanted to see these houses put in place. But why this specific budget request? I'll ask the officials.

Mr. Martinook: — The reason that this has been moved into this fiscal year is because of the late purchase in the previous fiscal year and then the required renovations that had to be done. So we weren't able to get the purchase and the renovations completed in the last fiscal year. They carried on

into this fiscal year. So therefore that expense occurred this year.

Mr. Forbes: — Two questions. One, the minister referred to the Valley View folks and then the committee. Is that two different . . . Were you implying, talking about the union folks who are very interested in seeing these homes go forward? Because I don't think they were on the committee, were they?

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Valley View Centre transitions steering committee is . . .

Mr. Forbes: — Is that who you are talking about?

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Correct.

Mr. Forbes: — And you were only talking about one group?

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Yes.

Mr. Forbes: — Okay. Okay. And the other question I had for the official though is, if this wasn't done late last year, why did you not have a sense of that happening about a year ago from now? And then you're going to say, hey, maybe we should put this all in the budget if it's only 500,000. It would better to have the budget correct. Or at what point did you realize in this budget cycle that it would be better to . . . I mean I'm just wondering. I'm trying to get my head wrapped around why it wasn't known before. And I know budgets have cycles, and we're well into this one now, but I mean they're not fixed until February.

Mr. Acton: — We had funding in last year's budget. We actually thought we'd get the renovations completed, and so it was very late in the year before we realized that that simply wasn't going to happen. There's a number of issues when you do the renos on a home in terms of making sure that you've got everything in place. And we simply just were not able to get it done in a timely manner or at least what we had initially thought. So we were under budget last year in this particular area and it pushed some dollars over into the '14-15.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — To further that explanation, like this next budget, we're working on that now without completing the expenditures from the previous budget. We're already working on next year's budget, so there's kind of those few months where you haven't completed one, but you're working on the numbers for the next, that you can kind of have that issue that you mentioned that you should know. But they did think that they could get it completed and then it didn't get put in the next budget, and it should have.

Mr. Forbes: — So how much are these three homes going to cost in the end? What's the value of each one?

Mr. Martinook: — The Athabasca Street home, which included a purchase price and renovations in the last fiscal year was 767 plus another 220, so 987,000 including renovations. That was the Athabasca. The McCallum home was 900,000 last year and another 350 estimated for the renovations because they're still under way. We haven't got all the bills there. And so Brigham Road in Moose Jaw, we expended 261,000 last year, and we're anticipating spending another 1.7 million

this year.

Mr. Forbes: — And now the middle one, what was the second one you had referenced?

Mr. Martinook: — McCallum Road in Saskatoon.

Mr. Forbes: — In Saskatoon. That's the Saskatoon one.

Mr. Martinook: — It's 1.25 million estimated.

Mr. Forbes: — So now the Athabasca has a staff component of about 20.

Mr. Martinook: — Athabasca has about 12 staff.

Mr. Forbes: — 12.

Mr. Martinook: — Yes.

Mr. Forbes: — And the other two have 20.

Mr. Martinook: — Twenty each, yes.

Mr. Forbes: — Right. And what is the capacity of each of those?

Mr. Martinook: — Athabasca in Moose Jaw is set up for three individuals.

Mr. Forbes: — Three people. Okay.

Mr. Martinook: — Yes. McCallum Lane in Saskatoon will be set up for five.

Mr. Forbes: — Five.

Mr. Martinook: — And then the Brigham Road will also be for five persons.

Mr. Forbes: — Five. Okay, I appreciate that. That's good to know. So this would all be under the community living and support services, and I'm looking to see . . . That is under, when I'm looking at my old budget, is that child and family services or client services? It's not on the old budget. I'm looking at the old budget. I'm trying to find community living and services, where that's . . . Client services?

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Page 117.

Mr. Forbes: — 117. I see income assistance and disability. So it's under . . .

Mr. Acton: — Disabilities community-based . . .

Mr. Forbes: — Disability services? Or I see client support?

[20:30]

Mr. Acton: — So it would be under income assistance and disability services program delivery is where the operating . . . Yes, 48.9.

Mr. Forbes: — 48.9 million. And so is that total then gone up to 50.4 million? Is that what we're going to be looking at next year?

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Not necessarily.

Mr. Acton: — So the 500 is capital so it won't go there. The operating of those homes will go there in next year.

Mr. Forbes: — We're talking about the 500 that's capital.

Mr. Acton: — We're talking about the 500 which is capital.

Mr. Forbes: — What I'm trying to figure out on . . . I'm looking at the old budget and not the old, old budget because this is the budget we're working on right now. But where does that 500 then show up under I guess it would be under central management and services? Right and that's right where . . .

Mr. Acton: — Yes, central management and services.

Mr. Forbes: — [Inaudible] . . . acquisitions.

Mr. Acton: — Yes.

Mr. Forbes: — Which is 3.8 million, will bump up to 4.3

Mr. Acton: — The central management subvote budget was 50.088 million and we've just talked about two items in that subvote for \$1.4 million, so the new number will be 51.488 million.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Okay, so if you turn to page 116 . . .

Mr. Forbes: — Yes.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Okay. And then, yes, classification by type, capital asset acquisitions, that will see an increase.

Mr. Forbes: — And then central services, which was at 26 million, will go up by the amount that was for emergency social services.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — That will go up by the 900,000, both the emergency as well as the lease.

Mr. Forbes: — And so . . . Okay, good. That helps me understand that, and I appreciate that. And so we'll go to child and family program maintenance and support. And from this, this is what you were talking about, 11.8 million. This is the special, the complex needs that weren't there.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — So there was funding for high-cost placements. There's 4 million and that's for the children with the complex needs. As well, for out-of-home care costs have increased by 4 million. And supports for families have increased by 2.4 million. Increase to assisted adoption is 1 million. And private treatment costs is 400,000.

Mr. Forbes: — So when you mentioned with the complex needs, how many children are we talking about that would benefit from this 4 million? Or I guess from the whole, this is a \$4 million increase.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Correct. This is a \$4 million increase. So I'm not sure we'd have that detailed number on complex, but we have Natalie Huber here.

Ms. Huber: — Hello. Natalie Huber, executive director, child and family programs. So for the \$4 million we actually have 25 children placed in those programs.

Mr. Forbes: — What is the total cost of the services the 25 children get? You talk about a \$4 million increase now, but what would have been the total cost overall?

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — This is new programming that we've introduced, so that the total cost is 4 million.

Mr. Forbes: — And so these children, these 25 children have been just recently identified and brought into this programming. This is a new thing.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Within this year, yes.

Mr. Forbes: — Within this year.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Yes.

Mr. Forbes: — Okay. And so what happened in the past with them?

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — What happened in the past is they would move from foster home to foster home, and foster parents would have difficulty caring for these children. So as they became exhausted, we would have to move them to another home. In some of the cases they would be moved into a hospital.

Mr. Forbes: — Okay, so if this is new and this is mid-year, so this obviously had been a decision, something that you'd been thinking about, the ministry's been thinking about for awhile, but didn't act on it until after the budget had been passed. What caused this to happen as a new program?

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — The overall priorities of the government is to try to serve children better. We've been making a number of changes to what was at one time just the fostering system, and we're trying to find more and more supports. Also through the child and family agenda committee there's more discussion amongst all of the ministries and ministers on how we can come together and support children. So maybe some of these children — not all, because some is behavioural issues — but some of the medically fragile, maybe they were in the health system and we decided that wasn't what was best for the children. So I think it's the ministries working together identifying these fragile children and trying to come up with ways of serving them better than what has been.

Mr. Forbes: — Has this program been announced earlier or has there been media about this, any press releases about this?

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — The only thing that's been talked about is Hope's Home. I'm not sure if you're familiar with that. No?

Mr. Forbes: — You may ring a bell just as soon as you start

talking, but I don't know now. If you can explain a little bit about that.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Yes, Natalie will give you some details on what's done there.

Ms. Huber: — So Hope's Home is a home that is providing primarily services for children that have medically fragile needs. And so it's a staff-run program to support those children and to look after children who have those professional requirements, so more of the nursing. You would have nursing, some feeding tubes — more of the medical needs.

Mr. Forbes: — How long has it been in operation then?

Mr. Acton: — At least some of these started in the last quarter of '13-14. And some of that we were able to handle, but then we've annualized these costs going into the current year.

Mr. Forbes: — I'm curious though, and I appreciate the comments about the multi-ministerial approach. And that was a good news announcement made by the . . . It was a recommendation a few years ago by Bob Pringle at the time and the government took that up and that's good. So will there be or do they produce a report about some of the things that they're deciding? I'm just wondering if . . . They can't be operating outside the budget cycle. And I think this seems like a good thing, but why wasn't it part of the budget cycle because they would be talking about this I'm sure and raising this as a potential idea for including in a budget.

This is kind of an unusual thing to be after or a mid-year supplementary estimate because usually those things are things like emergency social services because we don't plan for those things — the unexpected stuff. This seems like a good plan. So is there a report or is there some reporting out in a public way of the multi-ministerial team that the minister referenced?

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — The answer is, probably not. Like we wouldn't do a specific report on these six homes, nor do we on our children and youth or group homes or different homes with Egadz and other organizations. We don't do separate reports for all of them.

Mr. Forbes: — And I appreciate that. That's helpful. What I was thinking more about the multi-ministerial team that's working, and how do we . . . It's been a few years since Pringle's report. And we know it's been set up. And yet they are quietly working in the background, but in the public we don't get a sense of what they're doing. And we did actually . . . I did read about it in the mental health report today. It was cited in that, which is a good thing.

But other than just every once in a while popping up with somebody hearing about it, is there a way . . . Do they do annual reports out to even the Ministry of Finance? Does the Ministry of Finance ask, what's that group doing over there?

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — The Ministry of Finance?

Mr. Forbes: — Well the reason I'm saying Ministry of Finance because, from what I remember, is that they would do, well they're the ones who do the call for budgets every year. And

they coordinate treasury board and all of that, and they do every once in a while ask for . . . Well I think that's who coordinates the annual reports or the financial strategic plans of each ministry. That's why I'm thinking Ministry of Finance, but if there's another group that does, another ministry that coordinates what happens inside government, who is coordinating that ministerial group?

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Ultimately, Finance does. When we do our budget, we do roll the different initiatives that are affecting initiatives from that into our budgets. And you've seen that in our budgets, so yes indeed, Finance does roll that together.

We could do better probably in our own annual report, the ministry's annual report, to highlight these changes that we're making in child and family. You probably have a great suggestion: that things are happening and people don't even know it's happening. So we probably need to do a better job of highlighting how we are trying to serve children better than what we are. And no, Finance wouldn't . . . They'd just roll it out for the budget document, but they wouldn't be profiling it in the way that I think you're suggesting.

So we do, in response to the different things for the Children's Advocate, we let him know about initiatives that have been part of his recommendations, but again the public wouldn't know necessarily our responses to the Children's Advocate recommendations. So probably your suggestion of finding ways to highlight how we can do business better is a great suggestion.

Mr. Forbes: — I appreciate that. I'm curious, so who is the lead minister in that group?

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Presently we have Co-Chairs. So myself and the past minister, June Draude, the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Kelvington-Wadena, we're co-chairing that committee.

[20:45]

Mr. Forbes: — Okay. Well that's good to know. We didn't know who was co-chairing it, and it's happening. And you know, too often ministries work in silos, and if they can work together, it's the children that really benefit for that. So that's great.

So there's six homes and four CBOs [community-based organization] operate them. Can you tell me who the four CBOs are and where the six homes are?

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Yes, we have that list.

Ms. Huber: — So we have Hope's Home, and they are operating two separate homes. We have Thomas' Circle of Care with one home and YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association] operates two homes and JCL operates one home.

Mr. Forbes: — And so can you tell me which cities they are in?

Mr. Acton: — I should have that.

Ms. Huber: — Okay. Sorry about that. So we have . . . All of

the homes are actually operating in Regina with the exception of JCL, which is operating in Saskatoon.

Mr. Forbes: — Great. And they look after 25 children. Are there plans to expand this? And how much of a need is there out there for this kind of service?

Ms. Huber: — We don't have current plans to expand at this point in time. We're trying to manage within the spaces that we have currently and working with the families to reunify the children home, if we're able to do that, to find longer term care arrangements for those children. But it is very difficult to predict the complex needs or children that might be requiring this type of care because these children, they come to us because they're children in need of protection and very vulnerable and with some complex medical needs. So it is difficult to predict, but we're trying to manage of course within the spaces that we have and working with the families. So hopefully we'll have some opportunity through that movement.

Mr. Forbes: — And so also within this 11.8 million, there's an out-of-home care costs of some 4 million. Can you describe what that is, and is this a new program or is this an additional funding?

Mr. Acton: — It's not a new program. It's funding for children that are placed and need additional supports. So part of this is really . . . We're never sure, I mean, the types of children that we're going to or the number of children we're going to take into care, but we have seen an increase in the complexity of the types of cases, the needs that these children have, whether it's FASD [fetal alcohol spectrum disorder] or whether it's autism or other behavioral issues. And we're trying to provide services designed for each one of those children to make sure that they have the greatest chance of success possible, and in many cases that means we need to increase the support level that we provide to the foster family so that they can care for that child and be successful.

Mr. Forbes: — So are you seeing a trend? Is this something that Social Services has actually documented the change?

Mr. Acton: — I don't believe that we've got that far yet in terms of being able to say, well this is a particular trend. But we have seen a group of children in care that need some special supports, and we've tried to build those supports in so that . . . Again, part of this is to make sure that there's some consistency in the lives of the child. We don't want to have to move the child from one foster home to another. We want to make sure that they're stable, that they're doing well, and wherever possible we can reunite them back with their family. So that's kind of the objective around all of this.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — If I may, just to give you some idea, like in the special needs increased costs, there's things like travel costs are up a little bit, day care, child aid or counselling for the child, some legal aid for the child. There's health-related costs, and there's also various items such as education, recreation, parent aid. There's a lot of expenses that are rolled into that category.

Mr. Forbes: — Fair enough, but I'm just curious that this is not a new program. This is an increase, so how much of an increase

are we talking about? What was the original? And when I look, this would be under child and family services.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — The increase is 4 million for the other home care increases, which is probably the bulk of what I was listing to you.

Mr. Forbes: — I guess I didn't ask this question very well. What was the original budget that we had when we talked in April for this item? So what does 4 million represent? Is it a 10 per cent or is it 20 per cent increase? That's what I meant to say.

Mr. Acton: — So the budget line here is around child and family program maintenance and support, in subvote (04). And the budget was 89.631, and we are now forecasting 99.031. So that's an increase of \$9.4 million in that, which is 10 per cent.

Mr. Forbes: — That's the whole 11.4 million that you're adding in to that I think. Are you?

Mr. Acton: — Just about. There's some additional in the child and family program delivery as well to get it to a total of 11.8.

Mr. Forbes: — But I guess what I'm trying to get at is, how much were you planning to spend on children with complex needs in that one area? Maybe it was 89 million. I don't know. But I imagine it was part of the 89, not the whole 89 because there are other parts of the 89. So was it 10 million; now it's 14? Was it 16; now it's 20? Do you have that?

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — I know you're looking for a direct line-to-line correlation. And as youth services evolved, because of unpredictability of the needs of these children and how they're trying to tailor the services, there is no line-to-line correlation.

They have a budget too that we agreed to, giving an estimate of how many children and an estimate of the average cost per child. And that's how you build the budget that you request, and then you try to provide the services within that. But rather than deny some children maybe some specialized services is why we're here tonight, is we decided not to, that we would go back for additional because that budget was allocated or will be allocated. So it's an estimate of children and average cost, not specific. We think we will spend X number of dollars on this item and X number of dollars on this item. They do an average cost to care for a child.

Mr. Forbes: — And so you're increasing that about 10 per cent. Okay. So then what was . . . So it's gone up about 10 per cent, and now we know you've told me about 25 children. Is that 25 more children? I guess I want to know how many children were we talking about in the spring with that 89 million, and what was the average then?

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — The 25 children is just the one \$4 million allocation in these special six homes. So they're not new children. Like these are children that we would be giving services to that were identified but perhaps they weren't served as well as they should be.

Mr. Forbes: — So now is this child and family services? What

would be the total number of children that would be involved in that that you would be basing this on on April 1st? Or is there some point where we'd say, this is what your budget is based on, so many kids. You're saying an average cost?

Ms. Huber: — So under the out-of-home care increase of \$4 million, and that's not the special care homes that we were talking about originally like the Hope's Home, we have increased special needs costs. And that's the cost related to travel and counselling, child aid costs, things of that nature, and that's to help care for children who have complex needs, behavioural needs. And that may be anywhere up to a number of our children in care, and we have approximately 4,628 children. And a great number of those children require special needs.

So there is a cost of raising a child in care, and that's included in our basic maintenance amount, and so every child receives that. So that's a cost for clothing, food that goes to a foster parent for example, and then there's also some special needs costs that a child might incur when they're in care.

And so a good portion of the 4,600 children that we have in care also have some special needs of some kind because of the abuse or trauma, the situation they've come from, and also because these children have some medical needs perhaps and some other cognitive or behavioural needs. So special needs are based on the case plan for the child and the care needs of the child, and so we may be applying special needs costs. And we have seen an increase in the cost of these children in care in this past year, and that accounts for some of the 4 million that we're talking about.

Mr. Forbes: — So I'm trying to make sure I understand the idea of, you know, and I was trying to get a handle on maybe a program-by-program way of building the child and family services. And the minister said, no, it's an average cost per . . . So if I were to take 4,600 and use that and divide the 89 million, that would give me the average cost. Is that how you built that?

[21:00]

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Well that would be a very blunt way of doing it. Like there's certain costs you're going to know. Like we're going to know for our special care homes. That's going to be a factor. And then we're going to say, okay, on average our foster children from the ages of zero to this age, on average. Then you're going to estimate, I would think, the different costs of the different age groups in foster care. Then you're going to do an average and an estimate of how many children you're going to have in youth group homes. Like you just keep building it that way.

Mr. Forbes: — It's not just one big global . . . [inaudible].

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Like you can, but that's pretty blunt.

Mr. Forbes: — Okay. I'm just trying to get a sense of how you built that budget line because what I want to do is understand. Four million seems like a lot of money. And how do we then say that's reasonable? And it's not new programming. It's because of the change in the kind of children that are coming forward.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Correct. Now you know, the officials could correct me but for the sake of this conversation that we're having, actually I would guess that this is still cheaper than hospitalizing them. And I could be wrong, but it is quite costly when we have . . . with the medically fragile children. If they're hospitalized, (a) it's not where children should be, and (b) I do think it's cheaper than that. And yes, it is costly. We're not talking about cheap programming here.

Mr. Forbes: — And fair enough. I mean I think . . . But I just want to make sure I understand this because it's important. And we do get questions about it, and both sides of the House get questions about how . . . And I can think of a couple of cases right now off the top of my head where people have come forward, and we try to understand what their issues are and that type of thing.

So two other parts of this is the idea of adoption, \$1 million. What is that? Can you elaborate a bit on that?

Ms. Huber: — This is actually a good news story for us and for the children, obviously, that are in care. So assisted adoption primarily is made up of foster children that have become adopted primarily by the foster parent of course, and assisted adoption rates are applied. And so this is around creating permanency for children that were previously in care, that were wards in the ministry's care. And we would provide assisted adoption rates to continue to provide the support. And so the foster parent in this case would have adopted the child, and we would continue to provide some funding for these children. And the reason for this increase is because we've actually seen more children adopted into this program.

Mr. Forbes: — What are the rates, and to what age does the support go to? Is it to 18, or is it beyond 18? And how many kids are you talking about when it talks about \$1 million increase?

Ms. Huber: — So we provide 90 per cent of what we would provide to our foster families. It's called a basic maintenance portion, so that's the cost of raising a child, as I mentioned before. So that's for food and clothing, and we also might provide some special needs benefits as well. And so that's the other costs that we've been talking about. If the child requires some counselling services, for example, we might provide that cost as well. And so it is 90 per cent of what we provide to foster parents. And also we provide those services up to the age of 18 and may extend up to 21 years of age as well.

Mr. Forbes: — And how many children have been assisted or assisted adopted this year?

Ms. Huber: — We've seen an increase by approximately 330 cases. Oh sorry, that is over a period of time here. I'll have to find that number.

For the '13-14 fiscal year, we were forecasting 515 cases. I would need to get the actual number for you. I'm sorry. I'm just not 100 per cent confident of my numbers here.

Mr. Forbes: — I'd be okay with that. That's fine. Yes, for sure. And then there is 2.4 million for family. And that's just all I have in my notes as I was scribbling down. So if you can tell

me more about that.

Ms. Huber: — So the supports to families is another very good news story for us, and this is around keeping children together with families when it's safe to do so. So this is around providing increased prevention supports. It might be by the way of counselling, mediation services for children and families, and might be also providing transportation, child care costs to support the family. So it's all around preserving the family and keeping children safely at home when we can do so. And so it's about that prevention upfront support to families.

And so we did require some additional funding in this area and it's around again the support and the necessary support. And this investment of course is obviously the better investment for children and families as opposed to bringing children into care.

Mr. Forbes: — So were any of these driven . . . You know, we've had I think two reports from the Children's Advocate since the budget. Any of this driven because of that work or any of the insights that the Children's Advocate cited?

Ms. Huber: — I wouldn't say that these programs are specifically targeted towards a recommendation or a response of that nature. I think that as a ministry we've been continually focusing on the need to provide prevention support. Certainly the advocate, we would agree with the advocate in his recommendations. And I'm feeling too, I don't want to speak for Mr. Pringle, but I'm sure that he'd be also supporting us in terms of the prevention supports and ensuring that we keep families together where possible. So, for example, in this particular case it's certainly keeping in line with his recommendations around supporting families and making sure that we have the right supports in place.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Since I was minister past, even though I haven't been minister long this particular time but I have been in the past, yes, the Children's Advocate is a contributor to the conversation as are community-based organizations, as are different case studies that come through the ministry and we become aware of those situations. So everything is an important contributor to that conversation of how can we do things differently. We look at other provinces as well and look for best practices. Because we were on a trend, as is most — and not unique to Saskatchewan by any means — in North America, of more and more and more children coming into care.

And I know myself and my colleagues, the Children's Advocate has met with the child and family agenda committee, community-based organizations, etc., just to have the conversation of what can we do differently. And ministry officials are absolutely having those conversations as well. So I think it's a large effort and it's not just a person or a minister or a CBO. I think it's a combination of everything.

Mr. Forbes: — In his report and I think it was . . . I can't remember the title of it. The *Two Tragedies*. But talked about how kids, and it sounded very much like these kind of children you're talking about, very high needs, and whether they were getting services and that. And it just seems that it's appropriate to be having, looking back and saying he did that kind of work. And really we would hope that we learn from that. And so that's why I'm wondering because it would seem logical that

his reports would add a lot of impetus to what you're talking about here. You know, the six homes for the 25 children and making sure that we provide that kind of services and more support generally.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Again specific to that report, which is a tale of *Two Tragedies* if I'm not mistaken, will be part of, you know, recommendations there and Mr. Pringle, I think, should be part of the discussion. But we just introduced our addictions and mental illness strategy, and all of the work and the consultation that was done there I think are going to be more relevant to tying them in with the recommendations in that particular situation.

Mr. Forbes: — Okay.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — I believe that the commissioner called for more services on the mental health side for youth and that is I think something that does stick out with that particular report. So it's a combination of a lot of things when new initiatives are introduced, and it takes for the ministry officials to actually do the good work of coming up with ideas and getting organizations that will actually put new initiatives in place. And I think they've done a really great job of doing things differently.

Mr. Forbes: — And I don't know where you are in the budget cycle, but I hope that the mental health report wasn't too late because I know how these things do go. But I do hope . . . And this is a very encouraging sign in terms of supporting kids and complex needs because it's very important. And as they can be real challenges for foster parents, foster families who weren't expecting, maybe didn't think that that's what they were signing up for, and whatever we can do to help them, whatever we can do to families to help.

So I think the combination of this report and the mental health report today, I would really encourage the government. And it looks like you're interested in that report, and that's a good thing. I really hope that we can go a long way and help kids because they find themselves in tragic circumstances for sure. So thank you for that.

I do have a couple more questions and this is around the increase in the Saskatchewan assistance program and as well as the assured income disability, which is 16.4 million. And I'm wondering if that means . . . When we were here in the spring we'd actually seen a decrease in the SAP allotment from 181 million to 152.4 million. And so now we're seeing an increase back up to 6 million? Up to 158 million. Is that right?

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — It'll be increased 6 million and it's entirely attributable to underestimating the cost of the case, the average cost per case of the remaining SAP clients. So there was an . . . They underestimated the average cost.

[21:15]

Mr. Forbes: — So what was the average cost and what is now the average cost?

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — They're forecasting that the cost per case will be \$966, which is \$28 more than the previous year. So

the previous year the average cost was 966 minus 28 which would be 938, and we budgeted for 910.

Mr. Forbes: — What would make the cost increase? What would be the \$28 increase that was unexpected?

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — I mean we have things happening that there is no past to sort of measure it by because there was no SAID program. So the difficulty becomes, at one time it was just SAP and TEA [transitional employment allowance] and so for years and years they just measured and they could forecast fairly closely. But now they're trying to forecast the SAP cases and how many from SAP will move into SAID, and the ones that moved from SAP to SAID, are they going to be the high-cost ones or not the high-cost cases?

And so the underestimation in the cost came from the assumption that the individuals who would transfer from SAP to SAID would be the higher cost individuals, so therefore the remaining SAP would be the low-cost individuals, and that wasn't the case as low as they had thought.

Mr. Forbes: — Now correct me if I'm wrong, but so the difference between the costs of SAP cases would be whether they're single or couples or with children. Some would be with diet maybe because they have different requirements, nutrition requirements. What would be the cost differences?

Mr. Tweed: — Gord Tweed from the income assistance area. So, Mr. Forbes, if I understand your question, it's around what cost drivers affect different types of cases.

Mr. Forbes: — Yes. Well what is the difference? And when I was looking back in the notes from April 9th, it seemed you were pretty sure about your forecasting. Now I know the minister wasn't the minister of this portfolio at the time, but we were really assured that we'd come a long way in predicting the future, and here we are.

Mr. Tweed: — I've lots of information on cost per case. Hopefully some of it is what you're after. So cost per case is driven, very generally it's influenced by a number of different factors. Inflation is one of them, which will cause . . . if there's an increase in inflation. We pay for the actual cost of some of our individuals' needs, so for utilities for example or in many instances special needs. So you'd referred to a special dietary need for example, where we could pay for the actual cost of that.

It's also driven by policy direction in terms of some of the changes that we might make to our schedule of allowances. And the third factor is — and this is what the minister was referring to — the type of cases that you have on the benefit program. So a single person without a disability will have a lower cost per case than a single person with a disability.

So just in terms of some of the approximate costs per case that you were seeking, I have them broken out into sort of four broad client types. And just tell me if you've got enough information to have a sense of this because I have quite a few numbers here. But specifically on the Saskatchewan assistance program, and these are year-to-date cost per cases so if you'll take that into consideration . . . So if a single person without a

disability was on the Saskatchewan assistance program, the average cost per case, and that person was fully employable, would be \$492 per month. You can contrast that with a person with a disability on the Saskatchewan assistance program, the average cost per case, \$817 per month. So you get a sense of, that would be driven, the difference in cost would be driven by higher shelter allowances available to a person with a disability and then in addition to that some of the special needs that are afforded to them, whether it be specific disability allowance, special travel, special diet. Do you want some information on other family types, sir?

Mr. Forbes: — Certainly.

Mr. Tweed: — Okay so if we were again on the Saskatchewan assistance program, if we were looking at single parents, average cost per case regardless of employability would be \$1,115 per month. For a two-parent family, \$1,434 per month. For a childless couple, \$1,221 per month. And again all three of those would be regardless of their employability. That's a composite that blends both fully employable and not fully employable. Cost per case for an employable case is generally a little lower than a cost per case for a not fully employable case.

Mr. Forbes: — So when we had met in April, you had thought that . . . you were planning for 28,054 cases. That was the combination of SAP, SAID and TEA, and an increase of 1,495 cases. But, and I think that when you were saying that actually, the increase would largely be in the SAID. There would be more SAID cases than SAP cases, but that was the combination. Are you still using that number, 28,054?

Mr. Tweed: — We would have a revised caseload estimate. So what you're talking about with that reference point is the cumulative effect of the Saskatchewan assistance program, the transitional employment allowance, and the Saskatchewan assured income for disability program. So the 28,054 was what we had forecast for those three programs at the beginning of the year. And I'm just searching my records here, because I actually have it. We have a new forecast now of around 28,433 cases. So the increase would be attributed to the Saskatchewan assured income for disability program.

Mr. Forbes: — And how many would be in that program?

Mr. Tweed: — So there's variances in two of the programs, Saskatchewan assistance program and the SAID program. So the new forecast for SAID, sorry I just have to take you back to a different tab, would be 12,912 cases for this fiscal year. At the outset when we established the budget the forecast was 12,250 cases, so a variance of 662 cases.

Mr. Forbes: — And then SAP?

Mr. Tweed: — A slight reduction in our SAP caseload forecast.

Mr. Forbes: — And what would that number be?

Mr. Tweed: — We had initially forecast at the outset with our budget, 13,956 cases. You may recall that number from previous session. We're now forecasting just a little . . . almost 13,700 cases.

Mr. Forbes: — 13,700. And TEA?

Mr. Tweed: — TEA we're still forecasting on budget at 1,848 cases.

Mr. Forbes: — 1,848 cases. Okay. Now I would normally have, you know, the answers to my written questions. I wouldn't have to ask you these, but they have been ordered in six months. But I am curious to know how many children are on SAP. And when you talk about that SAP is 13,700 cases that you're planning for, how many of those would have children involved, and what would be the total number of children involved?

Mr. Tweed: — So I have with me a year-to-date average, if that'll suffice.

Mr. Forbes: — Sure, that's fine.

Mr. Tweed: — So the number of children on average, so this is the combined effort of . . . Sorry, Mr. Forbes. Did you ask for a specific program?

Mr. Forbes: — I asked for SAP, but if you wanted to include the SAID, just as long as we're sure that that's what you're doing, that's fine with me.

Mr. Tweed: — So I have year to date for all three programs here, so this would be the average of months to date. So under the Saskatchewan assured income for disability program, a program mostly comprised of adult and single adult households, 1,755 children. Under the Saskatchewan assistance program, 12,752 children. Under the transitional employment allowance, 1,897 children. And if you're adding those, I could do that for you as well. That would be a total of 16,404 children.

Mr. Forbes: — Okay. Thank you very much. So when I look . . . And so when you talked about SAID and the increase in SAID, that is going to be \$10.45 million. And so that will increase the budget line there to somewhat like \$184 million. That's significant. Can you talk a little bit about what the differences that you're seeing and the changes of the new clientele and the new costs in SAID?

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — That's an increase of about 662 cases more than what was budgeted. And again, a slightly higher than average cost per case than what they budgeted — not as far off as the SAP estimate was — these are about \$8.83 on average higher than what was budgeted for.

The difficulty comes with SAID, in order to predict is, because we don't know all of the . . . We don't know what you don't know. And we don't know how many individuals who have never applied for any assistance whatsoever and have been supported by their families are now stepping forward because they're hearing about the SAID. There is a lot of public awareness of the SAID program.

So at some point this will in fact, I would think in the next year or so, this will plateau because those individuals will have stepped forward. And it'll be far easier to predict because they are tracking numbers of individuals with disabilities in the school system now. And as they age up then or age out of the

education system, then of course we'll know those numbers each and every year, and we'll have a better predictability to this particular program. But that is why this increase is being requested.

Mr. Forbes: — Now do all, when we look at that page 117, pretty much all the other pieces are on line or within or going to be close to budget, do you anticipate? . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Is there going to be . . . And I do want to say thank you in terms of the anti-poverty strategy. I think it's a wonderful thing, and I'm really glad to see that work being done.

There is good work happening, and I've said is a good example of the kind of work that I think we can all be very proud of, and it's one we learn from. And so it'll be interesting in terms of the work going forward with the anti-poverty reduction strategy. I think that's one that we look forward to seeing. And there will be maybe some prodding on our side, but that's what we do. But anyways, I want to say that's a good thing.

Is there going to be any resources available, financial support for any kind of work that you will need to do because that wasn't part of the budget and it wasn't part of the budget announcement, and so whether that would be any financial support to make sure that that good work happens? I mean, often we think . . . And whether, maybe it's just because I'm from Saskatoon, everything happens in Saskatoon, but it happens right across the province and in the North. And we want to make sure that it's a good launch.

And very much like, I have to say, DISC [Disability Income Support Coalition] did with SAID, they were very effective. And the leadership within DISC was very, from what I could tell, very helpful and very focused.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — The really positive thing that we have is that we did have such extensive consultation, as you pointed out, with disabilities. Not just the SAID program, but with strategy that will be introduced hopefully, you know, fairly shortly in the new year with the mental health and addiction strategy, all of the consultation because all of these are factors that contribute to poverty. The housing strategy, again extensive consultation was undertaken for that. So we want to sort of recognize all of that consultation.

It doesn't need to be repeated, which helps with the poverty strategy, although you want different eyes looking a little bit differently for the poverty strategy. So yes, there will have to be some monies expended for some consultation, as well as even reviewing all of what's already been consulted on and bringing it all together to identify the gaps.

So I think you were a minister once and you probably heard the word absorb in your budget? And we'll be absorbing the cost in our budget until the next budget.

[21:30]

Mr. Forbes: — That's great, and I think you've got a good group. You picked a lot of good people to work with on this, and within the ministry there's a lot of good people that can really do some good work. So we look forward to that and, yes.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — If you don't have any further, thank you for the questions you had tonight.

Mr. Forbes: — No, I don't have any further questions, so I'll leave it at that. Thank you, and your officials, thank you.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — So I would just like to close by thanking my officials, thanking the committee members for being here with us tonight. And thank you to Mr. Forbes for his thoughtful questions.

The Chair: — Vote 36, Social Services, central management and services, subvote (SS01) in the amount of \$1,400,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Child and family services, subvote (SS04) in the amount of 11,800,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Income assistance and disability services, subvote (SS03) in the amount of \$16,450,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — So just for the record, (SS01) was 1,400,000. Social Services, vote 36, 29,650,000, I will now ask a member to move the following resolution:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31st, 2015, the following sums for Social Services in the amount of 29,650,000.

Mr. Parent: — I so move.

The Chair: — Mr. Parent. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. I'd also like to thank the officials for coming in tonight, and thank you for being here.

Committee members, you have before you the draft of the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Human Services. We require a member to move the following motion:

That the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Human Services be adopted and presented to the Assembly.

Hon. Ms. Wilson: — I so move, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: — Ms. Wilson. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Seeing that there is no further business of the committee, I will ask a member to move for an adjournment motion.

An Hon. Member: — I so move.

The Chair: — All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. This committee stands adjourned to the call of the Chair.

[The committee adjourned at 21:35.]