



STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

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Mr. Hugh Nerlien
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Ms. Alana Ross
Prince Albert Northcote

[The committee met at 15:15.]

The Chair: — Well good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome to the Standing Committee on Human Services. My name is Ken Cheveldayoff. I'm the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Saskatoon Willowgrove, and I'll serve as the Chair of the committee today. I'd like to introduce members that are present. Ms. Meara Conway is a member of this committee. She will be replaced by Mr. Love. Mr. Matt Love, we'll welcome. Mr. Ryan Domotor, Mr. Muhammad Fiaz, Mr. Derek Meyers, Mr. Hugh Nerlien, and Ms. Alana Ross are also members of the committee.

Pursuant to rule 148(1), the following estimates were committed to the Standing Committee on Human Services on March 31st, 2022. The 2022-23 estimates are as follows: votes 37 and 169 in Advanced Education, vote 5 in Education, vote 32 in Health, vote 20 in Labour Relations and Workplace Safety, and vote 36 in Social Services.

Today the committee will be considering the estimates for the Ministry of Education. Then we will take a brief recess and return to consider the estimates for the Ministry of Advanced Education, followed by consideration of Bill 61, *The Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training Act, 2021*.

**General Revenue Fund
Education
Vote 5**

Subvote (ED01)

The Chair: — We will now begin with vote 5, Education, central management and services, subvote (ED01).

Minister Duncan is here with his officials. I would ask that officials please state their names before speaking into the microphone. As a reminder, please don't touch the microphones. The Hansard operator will turn your microphone on when you are speaking to the committee. So, Mr. Minister, please introduce your officials and go ahead and make your opening remarks.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good afternoon, I'm pleased to be here to discuss the Ministry of Education's 2022-23 budget. And to help me with providing information to committee members, to my left is Donna Johnson, deputy minister; to my right is Rory Jensen, assistant deputy minister. And seated behind us, Susan Nedelcov-Anderson, assistant deputy minister; Gerry Craswell, assistant deputy minister; Sara Hawryluk, acting executive director of corporate services; Shaylene Salazar, acting executive director, education funding; Janet Mitchell, special advisor on the Canada-wide project; Cindy Jeanes, acting executive director of early learning and child care renewal. And Mitch Graw, my chief of staff, is here as well.

So thanks to our school divisions, child care facilities, libraries, and literacy programs for all the work that they have done this past year to support children, youth, and families across the province. Thanks to the work of the thousands of teachers, school staff, early childhood educators, library staff around the province, our children, youth, and families have been able to get

back to some normalcy. This is important for both their mental and physical health.

Since being appointed Minister of Education in 2020, I've had the opportunity to meet with and build relationships with many of the leaders in our education and early learning sectors. I've also had the chance to visit schools and other programs that are supporting children and families right across the province, and I'm pleased to see the phenomenal work that's going on in our schools and our programs first-hand.

With that, I'm pleased to present this year's education budget. With Saskatchewan's economy back on track, we are able to invest in strong public services with a record investment in education. The 2022-23 budget provides 2.88 billion in funding to support the kindergarten to grade 12, early learning and child care, library, and literacy sectors. This is an increase of 219.9 million or an 8.3 per cent increase over last year and is the largest education budget in the province's history. With this budget our government is committed to support families of young children in child care, our classrooms, school infrastructure, and long-term planning of our public library system. This ultimately supports a strong Saskatchewan today and into the future.

Saskatchewan's 27 school divisions will receive \$1.99 billion in school operating funding for the 2022-23 school year. This is an increase of 29.4 million or 1.5 per cent over this current school year.

This increase in operating funding provides an additional \$6 million for learning supports for students, bringing the total investment in supports for learning to \$299.9 million in the 2022-23 school year. The additional funding will support positions such as psychologists, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, and other professionals and paraprofessionals that provide support to Saskatchewan students.

The increased operating funding also provides 23.4 million to fully fund the negotiated 2 per cent salary increase for teachers. We know that teachers' salary costs are one of the largest cost factors for schools.

In addition to the increase in operating funding, we've created a new \$7 million fund that will allow school divisions to hire up to 200 additional full-time educational assistants, or EAs, for the 2022-23 school year. We've heard loud and clear from parents and caregivers about the importance of EAs in supporting students to reach their full potential. EAs are also an important support for teachers in managing increasingly diverse classrooms. This new funding follows on our government's commitment that was made in the 2021 Speech from the Throne.

Since 2007 school operating funding has seen an overall increase of \$576 million. This is a 40.8 per cent increase, which is higher than the 30.7 per cent increase in enrolment and costs associated with the teacher collective bargaining agreement. The Ministry of Education will continue to work with school divisions in reviewing their expenses and monitoring the impact of inflationary factors on their operations.

Our government is also continuing to support students attending

qualified independent schools, historical high schools, and associate schools. These schools offer parents and families choice when choosing where to educate their children. We believe this choice is important, and we're continuing to see enrolment growth in many of these schools.

With that in mind, this budget provides 17.5 million in operating grants for qualified independent schools and historical high schools for the 2022-23 school year. This includes an increase of 2.3 million for qualified independent schools to support increased enrolment and the creation of a new funded qualified independent school category. The new funded category, called certified independent schools, was created in response to the growth and expansion of qualified independent schools. It creates an intermediate step between a qualified independent school and associate schools, that will allow these schools to continue to grow and serve the needs of the students of Saskatchewan.

For the 2022-23 school year, historical high schools will receive 5.7 million, an increase of 227,000 for enrolment growth. There's also 20.1 million for associate schools in the 2022-23 school year. This is an increase of just over \$170,000 or 1 per cent.

Through this budget our government is continuing to provide safe and inclusive learning environments for students with an investment of 168.6 million in school infrastructure. This includes 95.2 million to support 20 ongoing capital projects to build 15 new schools and provide major renovations to five existing schools. Construction is currently under way on a new joint-use facility with two elementary schools to replace Argyle and École St. Pius elementary schools here in Regina. These two new schools are expected to be ready to welcome students in the fall of 2023.

Work is also well under way on a renovation and addition to Holy Rosary High School in Lloydminster. Later this spring construction will begin on projects for a new kindergarten to grade 12 school in Blaine Lake and renovations to Yorkton Regional and Lloydminster Comprehensive high schools.

Planning is currently under way on renovations and an addition to John Paul II Collegiate in North Battleford; a new K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] school to replace and consolidate the elementary and high schools in Carrot River; a new K to 12 school to replace and consolidate the elementary and high schools in Lanigan; a new elementary school to replace Ducharme Elementary School in La Loche; a new elementary school to replace St. Frances Cree Bilingual School in Saskatoon; a new elementary school to replace three elementary schools in Saskatoon's city centre; a new joint-use facility with two new elementary schools in Moose Jaw to consolidate four existing schools; a new francophone elementary school in Regina; a new joint-use facility with two elementary schools to replace four elementary schools in north Regina; and a new joint-use facility with two elementary schools in Regina's Harbour Landing neighbourhood. These are significant investments that will serve students and families in these communities for years to come.

In addition to these major capital investments, we've created a new minor capital renewal program this year. This program will allow school divisions to address structural repairs, renovations, and additions to prolong the life of schools around the province.

In '22-23 we are providing 4.5 million for the minor capital renewal program to support renovations at Kyle Composite School and École St. Margaret School. Both schools will undergo structural repairs and downsizing of school infrastructure to lower the operating costs for the school divisions and to prolong the life of the schools.

I'm pleased to say that since 2008 the Government of Saskatchewan has committed approximately \$2.3 billion towards school infrastructure projects. These projects include 57 new or replacement schools as well as 30 renovation projects. Also included with the school capital investment is 55.9 million for preventative and emergency maintenance, 12 million to buy or move relocatable classrooms in the 2023-24 school year, and a million dollars for school facility assessments. These programs allow school divisions to proactively maintain their current facilities and to address the growth needs in some of our fastest growing communities. This ultimately provides students with safe, quality learning environments where they can learn and grow.

The Government of Saskatchewan is also committed to supporting families and young children through quality, affordable, and accessible early learning programs. The 2022-23 budget provides 309.6 million investment for early learning and child care. This includes 284.6 million for regulated child care, including an increase of 212.2 million provided through the two federal-provincial early years agreements. Through these agreements, the province is committed to creating 6,100 more child care spaces around the province as part of an overall goal to create 28,000 new regulated spaces in the next five years.

The province is also committed to further reducing parent fees in regulated child care. Starting in February of 2022, parents with children under the age of six had their child care fees reduced by an average of 50 per cent in regulated care. Retroactive payments going back to July 1st, 2021 are currently being processed, and parents are now paying less. This year's funding will support further reducing these parent fees as early as September 2022 to ensure that families have access to affordable, quality care. This not only supports families; it supports a strong Saskatchewan economy by allowing parents to enter or return to the workforce or to further their own education. Saskatchewan is ahead of schedule in delivering an average of \$10-a-day regulated child care for families in the province.

We also believe that it's important that our child care facilities be inclusive, which is why this year's budget provides 2.3 million for inclusion of children with disabilities in child care facilities.

It's also important that we continue to support our early childhood educators and child care operators. With this in mind, this year's allocation provides 11.4 million for training initiatives and supports for early childhood educators, \$9 million for preventative maintenance and repair for child care facilities, 3.6 million for a one-time change-management grant for child care facilities to assist operators with increased administration costs related to the facilities providing retroactive payments to parents and their staff, and \$2 million to upgrade and replace the data system used for licensing child care facilities. These supports will go a long way to support educators and facilities in serving our youngest learners.

This government has allocated funding for 9,114 new centre-based child care spaces, a 98 per cent increase in spaces since 2007. And we're also actively working to increase the number of available regulated home-based child care spaces across the province.

In addition to the supports for child care provided through the two federal agreements, the province is investing in a number of early childhood development programs. There's \$5.2 million in provincial funding for early childhood intervention programs, an increase of 744,000 over last year. This will allow the 14 ECIPs [early childhood intervention program] across the province to address increased demand and wait-lists for children experiencing developmental delays and disabilities. On average, ECIPs support more than 1,200 families annually.

The budget provides 16.6 million for funding for KidsFirst, an increase of 326,000 over last year. These additional resources will allow KidsFirst regional and targeted programs to better serve our most vulnerable families as they work to support their children's development.

Annually the province reaches over 30,000 children and families in over 340 communities with KidsFirst programming.

[15:30]

This budget includes 3.2 million for family resource centres, an increase of 57,000. Early years family resource centres play an important role in supporting families to nurture positive child development so that more children enter school with the skills that they need to continue to learn. There are currently 12 family resource centres operating in Saskatchewan, with three recently announced in Lloydminster, Swift Current, and Weyburn under development.

Over the past year, thousands of families have benefited from services offered by early years family resource centres. From April 2020 to March 2021, the centres distributed 13,000 learning activity kits and had nearly 900,000 social media and web page views. The operational centres were also able to welcome more than 15,000 children and adults in person. These family resource centres are providing important resources in support to families, and I'm proud to see these centres expand around the province through the support of the federal-provincial agreements.

The 2022-23 budget is keeping Saskatchewan's public libraries on track with a continued investment of 11.3 million. This includes 6.1 million in resource-sharing grants for the seven regional library systems, nearly a million dollars for the northern library system, and 1.4 million for the municipal libraries in Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert.

Additional support for libraries include 2.4 million to support internet connectivity through CommunityNet and 114,000 to support the Saskatchewan information and library services initiative, which brings together the public library systems and the provincial library and literacy office to provide access to Saskatchewan residents, no matter where they live, to materials held at over 300 public libraries across the province. There's also \$100,000 to support out-of-province interlibrary loans and \$100,000 to support services for people with print disabilities.

Our government is continuing to support literacy programs in this year's budget with 559,000 to support the network of nine family literacy hubs. This is a \$9,000 increase over last year. Family literacy hubs work with schools, libraries, and communities to provide family literacy program services and supports for families. We're also continuing to provide \$500,000 to support summer literacy programs provided by eight school divisions. These programs offer important support for students to maintain and improve their reading during July and August.

Mr. Chair, this concludes my opening remarks on the Ministry of Education budget. I'm excited about the investments that our government has made to support students, early learners, and families. It's vitally important to ensure that we have a prosperous future in our province. And we look forward to the discussion this afternoon. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. Mr. Love, the floor is yours.

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. And first I just want to say thank you to the minister, to his deputy ministers, and all the officials that are here. And I mean this absolutely sincerely: I appreciate the work that you do. You know, I'm a big believer that we have in Saskatchewan and throughout Canada, you know, we have world-class education systems. I've been privileged to teach in one, to have children in one, and I'm honoured to serve as critic for this area. So I say that sincerely. I appreciate the work that you do.

My intention, I think all of our intention is that we have the best province in Canada to raise a kid, to teach a kid, and to be a kid. And the questions I'll bring forward to this committee and the discussions that'll take place here will be in pursuit of that common goal. So I thank you for your work and for all the time it takes into preparing a budget and to considering all of the needs that are out there in the world of education and child care in Saskatchewan.

I want to get into some questions off the top just related to the Ministry of Education itself. And my first question is if the minister could update the committee on what, on the number of FTEs [full-time equivalent] for salaried positions that work at the ministry and if there is any change this year, as well as any capital projects or new expenditures taking place at the Ministry of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Okay. Thank you for the question, Mr. Love. And I appreciate your comments at the beginning of this as well, and look forward to the discussion with you.

So we are forecasting 266 and a half FTEs. That's an increase of about 20 FTEs. Most of those are related to supporting the development and implementation of the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement. So that would be the bulk of the 20 FTEs. I believe it's 16 FTEs are based on that.

Mr. Love: — Okay, thank you, Minister. Looking again at the first subvote here in the estimates, I'm wondering if you can comment at all on other increases? So I see a very small increase in salaries, but sizable increases for things like goods and services, accommodation services, central services. If you can just comment on what kind of increased cost is the ministry itself

incurring, or do you project the ministry to incur, in this budget year.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you for the question. So the net increase is approximately \$470,000. The bulk of that, nearly 400,000, is an increase in rent expense. And 73,000 is related to central IT [information technology], enterprise IT expenses increasing.

Mr. Love: — And does the ministry prepare or budget for any other increases in costs related to supplies, contracts, transportation? Does the ministry budget . . . In particular, you know, I see the increase in goods and services. Is there in any consideration for increased cost due to inflation at the ministry?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — No, we don't.

Mr. Love: — Okay. Why not?

Ms. Johnson: — All right, thank you. Donna Johnson, deputy minister. So with respect to your question: why do we not have any increases in the ministry budget? Generally it would be because we, you know, on a regular basis go through our operations, and we're looking for opportunities to do things more efficiently. When we compare this past year to the current year, as with many organizations, there would have been parts of our budget that we didn't spend. In the ministry, we have a small travel budget so that we can attend meetings and do that sort of thing. We're expecting to have sufficient funds to continue to do that in the new year when we do do some more travelling than what we have done the last two years.

And we found other efficiencies. And granted some of them are relatively small in the grand scheme of things, particularly, you know, in the scheme of our \$2.8 billion budget. But things like manage print procurement, which in a . . . To get away from the bureaucratic lingo, what that means is how many printers we have in the ministry. So we've reviewed all of where the printers are in the ministry. We're reducing the number of printers that we have. We don't even use them honestly that much any more because we're going more and more paperless, despite what you might see with the binder in front of me. But we are doing more and more paperless work in the ministry. So some of those operating costs that we had previously have been reduced.

And you know, as the minister mentioned, with respect to the question around FTE utilization, we do have an increase on the early years front. And that is related to the delivery of the Canada-wide agreement. And so he mentioned the 16 FTEs. So there is an increase to the administrative budget I guess for the ministry in the early years world. And that increase also includes some costs associated with some contract work which will be done to meet the terms of our agreement with the early years and with the federal government. And part of that does involve looking at a new reporting system, so an IT system of some sort.

Mr. Love: — Okay, so just to ask a follow-up question for clarity on that. Seems as though there is, you know, some acknowledgement that there will be increase in costs like every sector is experiencing that this year. Then it seems that at the ministry, you're not calculating the amount of increased costs. You're just solving that internally by finding efficiencies.

Is there any kind of dollar or percentage amount that you're thinking, you know, efficiencies that will need to be found to cover for other increases? I noticed that there's a 5.2 per cent increase to goods and services here. So would that be the number that you need to find efficiencies internally? Or what kind of internal calculations has the ministry made to account for the pressures that everyone is experiencing?

Ms. Johnson: — Well and I think when you're looking at that 5 per cent increase that you're calculating, I think you're looking at page 36 in the book, right? And again that increase in goods and services is coming related to the space that we lease for our employees across the province, and we lease that space through SaskBuilds and Procurement.

So I think, you know, part of those questions might need to be directed to SaskBuilds and Procurement. But I wouldn't take that 5 per cent increase on leased space as the proxy for increases generally speaking in the ministry.

Mr. Love: — And is that increase in rent, is that due to the additional full-time equivalent salaried workers coming in to work on the early learning child care front? Or is that an increase due to the, you know, increase in rent for the same space? Was there an expansion of the space in other words, I guess?

Ms. Johnson: — Yeah, sorry. No, no expansion of the space yet.

Mr. Love: — Okay. Okay, thanks for that. And I'll mention there was one year when I went paperless in my classroom, and I loved it. I'd never go back. The amount of cleaning I did at the end of the day went down.

[15:45]

I want to get into a few questions related to capital expenditures, and I'm wondering if we can get an update on the total value of deferred maintenance across all divisions. The last numbers I have would be from 2019. I'm wondering if you could update us with the most recent numbers on the total value of deferred maintenance.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thanks for your question, Mr. Love, and for your patience. There's lots of information with respect to capital.

So it had been identified as a \$1.3 billion deficit several years ago under an old methodology. And so we're now in year three of five of doing facility audits under a updated, a new methodology. We have nine school divisions left over the next two years of this five-year audit cycle that we have to work with, and then after that we'll be on a continued five-year cycle.

I think it's important to note that despite the change in the methodology and the fact that we're in the midst of a five-year facility audit, certainly work has not stopped on maintenance of our school facilities. In fact this budget includes \$54 million in preventative maintenance. That's up from 50 million last year, almost a 10 per cent increase.

As well, as I mentioned in the opening remarks, we've created a new minor capital program of \$4.5 million in this budget. And all told, preventative maintenance and renewal funding since

2013-14 has exceeded \$386 million in that time.

And so as I said, we're working with a number of school divisions as a part of year four and five of the facility audit, and we'll be certainly continuing to fund the important work of capital across the school system.

Mr. Love: — Thanks, Minister. So in year three of five . . . I understand the new system, and I may have future questions about how that is different from how numbers were calculated in the past. It's possible I could have missed it there as I was writing some notes down, but do you have a number for the total deferred cost at this point? Or are you saying that's hard to calculate because you haven't gotten through all divisions yet?

And I guess if you don't have that number, can we expect that after you've been through all divisions or at the end of . . . When would that number be able to be reported to the committee?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Yeah, thanks, Mr. Love, for the question. So 1.3 billion is the most complete picture that we have to date, but I would say that that's using an older methodology, or an old methodology. So as a part of this five-year facility audit cycle, we're working with a new methodology. And we are currently working with SaskBuilds, I guess, in order to be able to get to the point where we're able to show what the maintenance deficit would look like under the new methodology, knowing that it's an incomplete picture because we still have two years left to go and nine school divisions to work with. But we are working with SaskBuilds on what that would look like.

Mr. Love: — So can you tell me what would make the new methodology significantly different that the ministry doesn't have a number that's more recent than three years old to report?

Mr. Jensen: — Rory Jensen, assistant deputy minister. So the change in the methodology is these are really visual inspections, the facility audits. Someone will go in and will walk through a facility to identify possible maintenance that needs to be done.

The real change in methodology is, the old methodology used point-in-time standards, so it would be you would have one picture at year one and then five years later you would update that. The new methodology really takes into account the planned maintenance that's going to happen between those two audit periods to give us a more complete picture. Because school divisions will make plans for their use of their maintenance dollars on a three-year running average or running period, and the new methodology really will factor in that. If a school division has plans to replace a roof section, that is included in the condition index prior to the next five-year period. So it's really trying to give us an accurate picture of what that looks like on an ongoing basis.

Mr. Love: — So final question here. When would the number be ready to be updated?

Mr. Jensen: — So as the minister stated, right now we're working with SaskBuilds to get the partial picture of the condition in the audits that have been completed to date so we can have at least the partial picture of what that facility condition looks like. At the end of the five-year cycle, which would be 2025, we will have that complete picture of all school divisions

using the new methodology.

Mr. Love: — So would it be possible to get an updated picture tabled to this committee the next time that we meet of the audits that have been submitted in the first three years of the program?

Mr. Jensen: — We will follow up with SaskBuilds to identify if we can have that information available. That's the work that we have ongoing with them is to just gather that information from them.

Mr. Love: — Okay, so just to be clear, and it's okay even if you don't know, but will you table an update the next time the committee meets of the information that's already come in in the first three years of the program?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Yeah. Thanks, Mr. Love. So I can't commit that we will have that information from SaskBuilds, working with SaskBuilds, in time for the next committee, but we will undertake what you've asked for and work with them to be able to present it to the committee.

Mr. Love: — Great. Thank you. Continuing to think about facilities, can you tell me, in this school year, 2021-22, how many schools are at or over capacity in the province? And if you need to take time to look into this, I'd be willing to just ask for an update to this number even by the end of our meeting time this afternoon. I'm interested in how many are at or over capacity, including how many are over 120 per cent capacity and how many are over 140 per cent capacity. And again, if this takes time I can move on to other questions and get an answer when it's ready.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — No, I think if you just give us a quick moment, I think we can provide that information.

Mr. Love: — Great.

[16:00]

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Okay, thanks for the question. So 53 out of 625 schools would be over 100 per cent utilization. Of those, 19 are at over 110 per cent utilization. And so I would say that there's a lot of fluctuation that can take place in a given school year in that 100 to 110. So we really focus on over the 110, and it was the metric of where we would look to work with school divisions to provide some relief on those. So it's 19 are currently over 110 per cent utilization.

Mr. Love: — And you don't track any number higher? You don't track 130 or 140?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — No, we don't.

Mr. Love: — Okay, thanks very much, Minister. I want to turn right now, just a few questions on operating funding. First of all, I just want to clarify, Minister Duncan, in your opening remarks . . . I was writing as fast as I could, but I'm not all that fast. So the number for increase in operating funding is 29.4 per cent, an increase of 1.5 per cent. In your opening remarks, you said that that would provide funding for . . . You listed a number of professional designations, including speech-language pathologists, psychologists — I may have heard occupational

therapists — as well as the teacher contract.

Now I can check the *Hansard* record for those comments. But I'm wondering if you can just help me understand here, looking at the \$29.4 million increase, how much of that was designated as . . . How much have you costed the 2 per cent increase to the teacher contract?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — So 23.4 million has been allocated towards the increase in the teachers' contract.

Mr. Love: — So going back to your opening comments — and feel free to, you know, quote yourself here I guess — how much of the remaining, you know, roughly \$6 million would you say will be available for school divisions to add to their complement of the professional designations that you mentioned, whether it's psychologists, therapists, speech-language pathologists? I know that you don't typically prescribe to school divisions, but just looking at your comments, like what do you think of that \$6 million might we see as increases in all of those important folks that support our students?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — So the \$6 million will be earmarked towards the supports for learning portion of the operating grant, so that brings that up to nearly 300 million — 299.9 million.

Mr. Love: — Okay. Were there any other costs calculated in preparing for this year's budget, any other costs that will be hitting school divisions that the ministry has considered in that \$6 million increase?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you for the question, Mr. Love. So there's a number of factors that go into building the budget.

And so speaking specifically to the supports for learning, we look at a number of factors as a ministry working with school divisions, working with other ministries. So looking at enrolment levels, vulnerability, and immigration data. The vulnerability data can include things like low income, transiency, children in foster care, for example.

And so the supports for learning is . . . So it's a \$6 million increase for the learning supports. And so school divisions will decide where they will use those funds in terms of the professionals and paraprofessionals that they choose to hire based on what they're seeing in terms of the needs of the students.

And then as a part of the increase for the teachers' collective bargaining agreement, 1.8 million includes salary increases for those learning professionals that are a part of the supports for learning but that also hold a teacher's certificate. So they are a part of the CBA [collective bargaining agreement] negotiations.

Mr. Love: — Okay, so the \$6 million supports for learning. As you mentioned, I know there's lots of things that we consider — and I want to get into, not right now but maybe shortly today if we have time — around intensive supports, students who require intensive supports. So I do want to ask about that.

But just related to the \$6 million, so again you said in your opening comments that it will provide for hiring of more SLPs [speech-language pathologist], psychologists, and so on. But

that's really up to school divisions if there's any money left as they face increased costs in other areas — other areas like transportation increases, cost of fuel, cost of busing, increased contracts for non-teaching staff, as well as inflationary costs.

Does the ministry calculate any of those numbers when landing on a number for learning supports? Because really any of the learning supports that you suggested will come after all those other costs are met. You know, they've got to pay the bills before they hire new . . . So has the ministry done any calculations on what those costs will be to the divisions?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thanks for the question, Mr. Love. So I think I'll maybe start by saying that we certainly are aware and recognize that there may be some inflationary pressures that school divisions will be facing this year as they formulate their own budgets and present those to the ministry later this summer. But we recognize that two of the largest cost drivers for school divisions and their budgets are teachers' salaries and enrolment.

And so in terms of trying to find . . . When we submit our budget for the provincial education budget and try to factor in those major cost drivers but also the balance between the fact that, for the most part, operating budgets provided by the province to the school divisions are unconditional.

[16:15]

So there's always that kind of balance that we have in terms of trying to identify where we know school divisions will be pressured but not being overly prescriptive in saying that, you know, this is your fuel budget so this is the amount that you're going to get an increase; this is your budget for this area; you're going to get an increase.

We work with treasury board during the finalization process to see some increases in some areas that we know will be a pressure. Obviously the negotiated contract, we want to fund that, as well as supports for learning. We hear that from school divisions. But it's not necessarily a process of deconstructing every single school division budget and then applying inflation or applying other cost drivers to every single line item in a budget. Trying to keep that balance between what we're going to ask treasury board for, for the upcoming year for school operating budgets, and acknowledging that, for the most part, we are not prescriptive and that school divisions have these funds and they are unconditional.

And so you know, I'd be happy to get into more of a discussion and get the DM [deputy minister] and the ADM [assistant deputy minister] involved to kind of dive deeper into kind of what that process looks like. But that's at a pretty high level, I would say, that we understand that there will be some inflationary pressures, but trying to keep that in context in terms of how we build our provincial budget and then what that looks like for the school divisions when they receive their allocation.

Mr. Love: — I guess, Minister, one of the challenges that I have here is to look at this and say that fully funding a teacher contract was hopefully not something that you hoped to do but something that you have agreed to do. That the teacher contract is agreed to at the bargaining table in good faith and doesn't represent an increased investment in classroom learning. What it represents is fulfilling a contract that you promised you would fulfill years

ago.

And that the inflationary costs are, you know . . . And that's out of the control of the 27 school divisions. The inflationary costs are much harder to predict in terms of what divisions are facing now.

And I guess my question is, to come back to the discussion off the top, is the approach the same? Is the expectation the same for our 27 school divisions as the approach at the ministry, which is that they'll find efficiencies internally to deal with the increased costs of inflation?

Ms. Johnson: — All right, so to your question, we don't establish any expectations of school divisions finding particular efficiencies in terms of an efficiency target, if you will. We do know that they do find efficiencies on a regular basis, like every other organization, whether it's in the school sector or in any other sector. We all look at how we conduct our business, and we look for and find efficiencies on an ongoing basis.

So when we're developing the budget, we do understand the cost drivers. We take that information into our process and we come out the other end with a budget increase. And the school divisions then will take their total budget allocation, and they'll determine how best to make use of those dollars knowing that they can do things the same as they did last year or they can do things differently. And doing things differently can be, sometimes, demonstrating certain efficiencies that they've learned of over the last year or two.

Mr. Love: — Okay. So, Mr. Duncan, you talked about two big things driving increasing cost being negotiated contracts and student enrolment. I'm wondering if you can update the committee on projected enrolment numbers. How many of the 27 divisions are projecting increases in enrolment for next school year?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Okay. Thanks for the question. In terms of projected enrolment, we have 13 school divisions that are projecting a decrease in enrolment, 14 that are projecting an increase in enrolment. So in total it's about a 1,300 FTE increase over the entire 27 school divisions.

But I think an important note is that we have been funding since 2019-2020, 177,350 FTEs. And so even with the increase of 1,300 FTEs in this upcoming school year, we'll be still funding at a level that is 1,500 greater than the actual students that are enrolled. So we saw enrolment decrease over the last two years and we chose not to take that out of the base budgets of the school divisions for obvious reasons over the last two years in the pandemic.

And so school divisions are still operating at a funded level for FTEs that . . . We haven't even hit that enrolment number yet. So that's one of the areas that when we talk about pressures . . . And enrolment is typically a pressure for school divisions, but enrolment hasn't recovered from the effects of the pandemic. And yet those dollars that were there for those students in 2019-2020 were not taken out of the base of the school divisions in the last three years now.

Mr. Love: — Yeah, and you know, I think that that was the right

thing to do, not to claw back that funding when enrolment went down from divisions who based their budget, you know, based their budgets earlier. But just to be clear, are you committing, Minister, that that will continue? That until we surpass that previous benchmark, the high mark for number of students, that that's . . . Funding will continue at that level even if the actual student numbers, even with a 1,300 student increase, it won't hit that number? Yeah, there won't be any proposal to bring those funds back from divisions?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Certainly it's part of this budget, and you know, we would have to look to see what next year's enrolment numbers look like as we build out next year's budget. So I can't commit more than a year at a time, but certainly the operating grant for this budget does reflect that we have not pulled those dollars out of school divisions.

Mr. Love: — So as you look back — I know this is maybe going back, you know, a couple of years, and I think we all kind of experience that pandemic time warp where we sometimes forget what year it is — but where did those students go, and why have they been slow to come back? Has the ministry investigated this?

I mean I can make my own predictions but probably not as qualified as yours, so where did those students go, and why have they been slow to come back? Even as we're seeing, you know, I think last year is 1,612 more students, projecting next year roughly 1,300, where are the ones that aren't accounted for?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thanks for the question. So two points I'll touch on in terms of what we believe affected enrolment over the last number of years. I think earlier in the pandemic, obviously grade 12 students were leaving school, and we didn't see the same number as expected students that were entering the school system in pre-K [pre-kindergarten] and kindergarten. Some families just chose not to enrol their kids in kindergarten. And then the other reason would be, which affects . . . So that really affects kind of at the upper end and the lower end. And the area that really affects all grade levels is just reduced immigration over the course of the pandemic.

Mr. Love: — Okay. Has the ministry decided or released operating funding allocations for the next school year, '22-23, to divisions? And if so, can you table that as opposed to reading all 27? Has that been released to divisions, and can you table that answer for the committee?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — We can table it for the committee. We can provide that. We have publicly released that information and have released it to school divisions as well.

Mr. Love: — Maybe just coming back to that question of enrolment, and in particular you talked about decrease in immigration. The last numbers that I have are from the 2019-2020 school year, that there were 17,898 EAL [English as an additional language] students province-wide.

Can you tell the committee how many there are in this school year, in '21-22, and if there's any projections for next year? I'm getting into my next question here too, but if there's any projections for next year, particularly as our province has indicated that our doors will be wide open to Ukrainian refugees arriving in Saskatchewan.

[16:30]

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thanks for the question. So in 2021, which would be the most recent snapshot that we would have in terms of EAL learners, the number would be 15,854. And I think you referenced 2019 would be the last year that you had numbers for, so it would have been . . . So I'll just give you these numbers: 2019 it was 17,421; 2020 it was 17,627; and then in 2021, reduced down to 15,854.

I can't provide at this point in terms of what school divisions are projecting for 2022-23. And certainly I think it's too early to say what, particularly on your question on opening our doors to people fleeing Ukraine, what that might mean for the school system. I think it's too early for us to really be able to advise on that.

Mr. Love: — Yeah, I appreciate that, Minister. Just out of curiosity I guess, outside of any numbers of how many students we might be welcoming from Ukraine, are there any preparations in the ministry as far as, you know, preparing for that? Even though we don't know what it is, are there any, kind of, discussions or preparations going on you could enlighten us to?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you for your question, Mr. Love. So the Ministry of Education is a part of an inter-ministry working group that's being led by ICT [Immigration and Career Training]. So we are in the process of a number of things that I can mention here this afternoon.

One is looking at any regulatory changes that we would have to make under *The Education Act* that would allow for education to be provided to students from Ukraine free of charge, so waiving or cancelling any tuition fees that otherwise would be required for an international student. So that's one of the things that we are working on.

We're also working with sector partners on, in the event that any of the adults that are fleeing Ukraine and landing in Saskatchewan are teachers, we're working with sector partners to assess their certification and with the possibility of employing them within the school system in Saskatchewan.

And as well, because of what the federal government has indicated, that work permits would be issued to people that are landing in Canada from Ukraine, certainly it's my understanding that work permits would be issued quite soon after they arrive. And so we're looking at opportunities, particularly teachers, as we're working through that certification process and that work with different sector partners, if there's maybe an ability for them to utilize those work permits and find employment as EAs or perhaps ECEs [early childhood educator] in our early learning child care centres.

So those are the most immediate priorities that we're working on on this file.

Mr. Love: — Great. Thanks, Minister. Just to come back to a couple questions on operating, I'm wondering if you can also table an answer to the 13 divisions projecting a decrease and the 14 projecting an increase. If you could just divide into those two groups, that would be really helpful.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Yeah, we will provide that.

Mr. Love: — Thank you. And maybe the last question for now. On the operating funding, I'm wondering, is the ministry aware of any increases to contracts for non-teaching staff? So you indicated that I think it's, yeah, \$23.4 million for teaching, 2 per cent teacher contract includes other designations of, for example, ed psychologists who have a teaching degree.

But I'm specifically wondering if the ministry's aware of any non-teaching staff, folks who work in schools without an education degree, who will have contractual increases in the next school year that school divisions will have to account for. Is the ministry aware of any contractual increases that school divisions will need to pay for?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Yeah, thank you for the question, Mr. Love. So I would just say that school divisions don't require our approval as they negotiate or enter in to negotiate with their non-teacher-CBA hired staff in terms of negotiations. And so we typically find out after, I guess after the fact, in terms of what they negotiate.

We do anticipate that there will be obviously either contracts that have been settled, that have wage or benefit increase or wage increases . . . yeah, wage and benefit increases. And there would be likely tables — I don't have that information in front of me — likely tables that would still be open that haven't completed negotiations. So there likely will, as a part of school divisions' budget in this year, be costs related to other contracts outside of the CBA.

Mr. Love: — Yeah, and my question is, which ones are you currently aware of?

Mr. Jensen: — So we don't have a list of all the ongoing negotiations with various unions. We are aware that certain school divisions will be negotiating right now with unions such as CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees]. We are aware that there is an agreement with Health Sciences that could be used as a benchmark. That agreement goes till 2024, I believe.

So as school divisions go about these negotiations with their various unions for caretakers or IT professionals, they use, as the minister stated, the benchmarks that are created throughout the province, as well as an understanding of what their current budget is and how their allocation can accommodate and make the best decisions possible for their school division and their budget.

Mr. Love: — So I guess that my question is really about that additional \$6 million and how much of that would already be negotiated, even at the school board level, to other non-teaching staff — IT professionals, cleaning staff, caretakers, office staff. I mean, anyone who's worked in a school knows if you need anything, if you want to see how the school is run, you've got to go to the head secretary and treat that person well.

And I guess that I'm wondering if there's any knowledge at the ministry level how those additional costs will . . . what kind of chunk that will take out of the \$6 million for learning supports. And I understand that you're not making those decisions, but just I guess the question's about an awareness of how those other

contracted increases would bite into that money for learning supports.

[16:45]

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Okay, thanks. Thanks for the question. So we're estimating, and again, using the Health Sciences agreement as just kind of a proxy because certainly there would be contracts that haven't been concluded. But using that number, we're estimating that school divisions across the province will face, for their non-teaching staff, 1.8 per cent or \$4.9 million in anticipated salary increases.

Mr. Love: — Okay. Thanks for that, Minister. I want to ask a couple questions about the increased funding for the new designation of qualified independent schools, which I understand from your opening comments . . . Minister, you talked about the new category that would be called certified independent schools, as an intermediate step between the several associate schools that we have in this province and, you know, fully independent schools.

Can you just let me know, and this is probably a number I can find, how many schools do you anticipate fitting into this new category, the new category of certified independent schools? You know, I'm guessing this is kind of for next school year, the '22-23 school year. How many do you think would qualify to be in that category?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — So with respect to the new certified independent school category, there would be two schools that would currently meet all the eligibility requirements.

Mr. Love: — So with the increase of \$2.3 million for qualified independent schools up to a total of 17.5 million, is it fair to say that that will be . . . How will that be disbursed between the two schools in the new category?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Okay, thank you for the question. So the 17 million, that's the funding for both the qualified independent school as well as the historical high schools. Those are largely driven by . . . So historical high schools is a \$227,000 increase; that's enrolment related.

The qualified independent schools, that's an increase of 2.335 million, and that is . . . So there are two new schools that now qualify for the funding that follows the qualified independent schools. And there are two schools, so that's two new qualified independent schools. And there are two schools that would meet the eligibility requirements for the new certified independent school. And one of those, I guess, one of those would be . . . They both would have been funded in the past, either as a qualified independent or grandfathered funding from a former associate status.

Mr. Love: — Can you tell me what those, I think it's four schools . . .

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Four.

Mr. Love: — Can you tell me what those four schools are? I would also be open to just tabling the answer, the four names of the schools.

A Member: — Sorry?

Mr. Love: — I just, I'd also be open to tabling the answer to the four names if you don't have the four names right away.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Yeah, thank you for that, Mr. Love. So I would say at this point the four schools that would be eligible for each category have not applied to fall under those new categories. So we build it into our budget in the event that they do apply, but at this point they haven't applied. So I think it's probably . . . In the event that they do apply I would be happy to table that with the committee, but at this point nobody has applied so it's kind of a moot point.

Mr. Love: — Okay. So we're getting close to the end of our time. This might be my last question. Again, just looking at . . . So the operating increase for 625 public schools was \$6 million, of which the ministry calculates that 4.9 million will go to increased contract costs for non-teaching staff. So that leaves 1.1 million for 625 schools. But for two certified independent schools, there's an increase of 2.5 million. Could the minister just comment on the discrepancy between those numbers.

[17:00]

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you for the question, Mr. Love. So just to be clear, the \$2.5 million increase, both for qualified independent schools and historical high schools, that's not just related to two schools. Qualified independent schools, there are 22 in the province. Historical high schools, I believe there are four in the province. And those were largely driven by enrolment growth.

In terms of the increase for operating for school divisions across the province, you know, not to belabour the point but certainly when I request . . . When we go to treasury board for a submission, we do factor in the teachers' contract because that, for most school divisions, makes up 50 per cent of the operating costs. So we can't ignore that. That is a large part of school operating, so I include that in the number in terms of the increase that went to school divisions this year.

And I would just note that the qualified independent enrolment I think is up 15 per cent. And enrolment is up within our school divisions, but I think it's up less than 1 per cent. I think it's 0.7 of a per cent. And again we haven't even caught up to the 2019-2020 enrolment that we're currently funding in school divisions.

Sorry, just if I could just clarify. Sorry, I keep saying '19-20. It was the '20-21 projected enrolment.

Mr. Love: — Okay, thanks for clarifying that. So just so my understanding is clear, your position is that the increase, the additional 2.5 million for the whole category, including the four historical high schools, 22 qualified independent schools, of which two of those will move into the new category . . . Or are those two not already on the list of the 22? Like does that make sense?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Yes.

Mr. Love: — Okay. So your position is that the increase, the

additional 2.5 million, is driven by an increase in enrolment?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Yeah, thank you. So the increase is primarily driven by enrolment.

Mr. Love: — So could you let me know how many actual students that 15 per cent represents? What's the number of actual full-time equivalent students that will be sharing that \$2.5 million increase? And I know that we don't fund per student, but as a ballpark figure, how many students does that 15 per cent represent?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Sorry, we're trying to track down the numbers. The estimated enrolment increase for the qualified independent school was 290, and I'll try to get the historical high schools as well. I only have the one.

Mr. Love: — Sorry, Minister, did you say you're working on the historical high schools still right now? Okay.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Yeah, we'll endeavour to bring those back. I know the numbers we have here look to be '21-22 and not the projections for the upcoming year, so we'll endeavour to bring those back to the committee.

Mr. Love: — Yeah, great. I appreciate that. Again just for my own understanding, you know, I want to make sure I'm clear. When we're talking historical high schools, we're talking Athol Murray, Rosthern Junior College, Luther, LCBI [Lutheran Collegiate Bible Institute].

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Yeah, that's right. So Athol Murray College of Notre Dame, Luther College, LCBI, and Rosthern Junior College, yeah.

Mr. Love: — Okay. And when we're talking qualified independent schools, the 22, that includes Saskatoon Christian School. So let me put this: these would not include any schools in an associate agreement?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — That's correct.

Mr. Love: — And of the 22 schools, is it safe to assume that all of them charge some type of tuition?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — They have the ability to, but not all do.

Mr. Love: — When you say they have the ability to, what kind of parameters does the ministry set on the amount of tuition? How involved is the ministry in terms of working with these schools to allow them to remain financially viable?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — They have the independence through legislation to set their tuition.

Mr. Love: — And I also notice in the capital spending some investment at Athol Murray College at Notre Dame. Are all of these schools eligible to submit proposals? Or would they be included in the deferred maintenance costs and assessments? How does the province treat these schools when it comes to capital investment compared to, you know, a public school in any city or town?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you for the question. So we provide no capital dollars to qualified independent schools. We have the ability, on approved projects, to fund up to 20 per cent of a major capital project at a historical high school. And we provide no maintenance or preventative maintenance for either one.

Mr. Love: — Thanks for clarifying that. Maybe just . . . I probably have time for one more question?

The Chair: — Yes.

Mr. Love: — Thanks, Mr. Chair. Again just looking at the projected numbers. So I know you'll give me the historical numbers. But with an increase in 290 in qualified independent schools and at only four historical high schools, I think we could say that the increase in enrolment won't be that much. A lot of them are struggling, I know, to maintain enrolment levels that keep them viable, you know, so it probably wouldn't be a lot.

Again we're looking at, you know, maybe a ballpark figure of 300-and-some students, and yeah, that's an increase of 2.5 million. And a projected increase of 1,300 students in the 625 public schools, public and Catholic schools in the province, we're looking at an increase that will amount to 1.1 million. Again I'm just wondering if you can shed any light on the discrepancy between those numbers in terms of how enrolment impacts the increases.

[17:15]

The Chair: — Mr. Minister, we're past 5:15. I just talked to the critic, and he's happy to get that answer from you at the beginning of our next session, if that works for you.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Yes.

The Chair: — Okay. Very good. Thank you very much. Having reached our agreed-upon time for consideration of these estimates, we will adjourn, and the committee will now be in recess until 6 p.m.

[The committee recessed from 17:16 until 18:04.]

The Chair: — Well good evening, colleagues and guests. Welcome to the Standing Committee on Human Services. My name is Ken Cheveldayoff, and I will serve as the Chair for the committee this evening. Committee members include Ms. Meara Conway; she will not be here today, but Ms. Jennifer Bowes will be chitting in for her. Mr. Ryan Domotor is a committee member, Mr. Muhammad Fiaz, Mr. Derek Meyers, Mr. Hugh Nerlien, and Ms. Alana Ross.

General Revenue Fund Advanced Education Vote 37

Subvote (AE01)

The Chair: — We will now be considering votes 37 and 169 covering the estimates and lending and investing activities estimated for the Ministry of Advanced Education. We will begin with vote 37, Advanced Education, central management and services, subvote (AE01).

Minister Makowsky is here with his officials. I would ask that the officials please state their names before speaking into the microphone. And as a reminder, please don't touch the microphones. The Hansard operator will turn your microphone on when you are speaking to the committee.

We have a number of officials here. If you wouldn't mind coming forward if you're going to be into a long back-and-forth on several questions, but you know, we'll just keep it very casual here and work the way it sees fit. We're here for four hours this evening, so it's quite a bit of time. If any members would like to take a break, we're open to take a break. We probably will take one halfway through anyway, but if you do need a break, just signal me and let me know.

So, Mr. Minister, please introduce your officials and make your opening remarks. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Thanks so much, Mr. Chair, and it's a pleasure to be here in front of the Human Services Committee and to speak about the Ministry of Advanced Education's '22-23 budget. To my right is Deputy Minister Kimberly Kratzig, and chief of staff behind my right shoulder, Amanda Plummer. Other ministry officials here to provide support this evening include, to my left, David Boehm, assistant deputy minister; over my left shoulder, Corinne Barnett, executive director of corporate finance; Kirk Wosminity is here, executive director of student support services; Lindell Veitch, over my right shoulder, executive director of strategy, planning and sector engagement; and Mike Pestill, also over my right shoulder, executive director of sector management and relations.

The Ministry of Advanced Education is focused on supporting an accessible, responsive, sustainable, and accountable post-secondary sector that delivers the high-quality education Saskatchewan students need to be successful to enter the workforce. This budget provides strong support for post-secondary students and institutions. This year our government's investment of \$740.3 million in post-secondary education is 5.6 million higher than last year.

The government's pleased to continue the '21-22 commitment to provide \$60 million to the post-secondary education sector over two years. This investment will continue to assist the sector to focus on shared priorities, which include recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic and the evolution of programming and operations post-pandemic; generating new sources of revenue and reducing expenses; finding new, innovative ways to work with other post-secondary institutions; and achieving post-secondary priorities set out in Saskatchewan's Growth Plan.

The multi-year funding commitment provides the post-secondary education sector with greater funding certainty. This investment paves the way for the sector to improve long-term financial sustainability, support growth, and most importantly, provide the best possible education to our students.

The signing of last year's memorandum of understanding among all the institutions highlighted our willingness to work together to ensure that our sector continues to be accessible, responsive, sustainable, and accountable, while maximizing outcomes for students.

The '22-23 budget also includes a \$4.9 million operating and capital increase to expand nurse training seats by 150. Our two nursing programs will ... [inaudible] ... 124 new registered nurses, 10 nurse practitioner seats, and Sask Polytech will offer 60 new psychiatric nursing seats. This expansion is critical to meet the growing need for health professionals in Saskatchewan, to support the health system capital projects, and to address the impact from the pandemic.

I'm pleased the post-secondary education sector continues to be a vital partner in addressing the health human resource needs of our province. In collaboration with the ministries of Health and Immigration and Career Training, our government is also working to support the health system through additional recruitment, retention, and training efforts.

The budget also includes the interprovincial agreements with post-secondary institutions in Alberta and British Columbia to create opportunities for Saskatchewan learners to enrol in high-demand health sciences programs that are not available in the province. Advanced Ed is investing 3 million to secure 110 seats for Saskatchewan learners in eight specialized health professions. This collaborative approach with those two provinces helps ensure our province continues to deliver high-quality health care to the people of Saskatchewan.

On the operating capital side, more than 680 million will be provided in operating and capital grants to post-secondary institutions. This includes 445.9 million to the U of S [University of Saskatchewan], U of R [University of Regina], and the federated and affiliated colleges; 168.5 million to Sask Polytech, SIIT, and DTI — Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies and Dumont Technical Institute, for those that may be watching; 35.3 million to Saskatchewan regional colleges; and 31 million for capital projects and preventative maintenance and renewal throughout the post-secondary sector.

This includes providing 4 million in capital design funding for the Saskatoon campus renewal project at Sask Polytechnic; 1.1 million to support the capital needs at the 150-seat nurse expansion at the University of Regina and polytechnic; 1 million for planning and design work at the dental clinic at the University of Saskatchewan; 200,000 to support the initial assessment of the auditorium renewal project at Great Plains College; and 2.2 million, or a 10 per cent increase, for preventative maintenance and renewal funding to benefit post-secondary education institutions.

In terms of supporting students, this budget continues to provide strong support for post-secondary students by investing nearly 38 million in direct financial supports. 27 million is provided through the student loan program, ensuring support for students who need it most. This funding will provide repayable and non-repayable financial assistance to more than 20,000 students.

The budget provides 10.6 million for scholarships, including 7.1 million for the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship, which has increased from 500 to 750 for eligible students, announced in the last budget. In addition, 3.5 million will support the Saskatchewan Innovation and Opportunity Scholarship, French language scholarships, the Queen Elizabeth II Scholarship, and the Scholarship of Honour.

In '22-23 our government will invest 102.6 million in direct support to students through tax credits, grants, and scholarships. Eligible graduates who stay and work in the province can receive a rebate on tuition fees of up to \$20,000 through the graduate retention program. The program is successful in retaining Saskatchewan graduates to help employers build the economy of tomorrow. Since '08 the GRP [graduate retention program] has provided 608 million in benefits to more than 75,500 graduates.

To ensure we're better able to serve students, a series of projects are being initiated to improve technology. This year 4.9 million is allocated to transformational information technology projects that will modernize the student financial aid system to provide important financial services to students in a convenient, simple, and flexible way, as well as an enterprise resource planning and student information system for regional colleges and Dumont Technical Institute.

Another area of support for students, including 600,000 increase to support the Mitacs program and the new Indigenous pathways initiative which will provide students with research and development skills while ensuring Saskatchewan businesses continue to grow. The government is focused on fostering an inclusive post-secondary sector which includes increasing the enrolment and educational attainment of Indigenous students. Engaging the province's Indigenous population is an important component of the growth plan, and to that end we are investing 18.6 million in Indigenous post-secondary institutions and programs.

On the international education side, we anticipate we will continue to be a key driver in the economic recovery of the province while supporting the growth plan. In November 2021 our government announced its new post-secondary international education strategy which lays the foundation for a global approach to enhance the province's profile to attract key international markets and new markets. The new strategy positions the province as a destination of choice for international students and researchers. It will highlight Saskatchewan as a post-secondary sector leader in global markets and destination for trade, immigration, education, and technology.

By working to enhance the already respected international reputation of our province's institutions, we'll continue to extend our post-secondary footprint into global markets. The ministry is engaging across government, the sector, and global stakeholders to identify opportunities in existing international trade relationships to promote the province's post-secondary programming. By developing a provincial approach to international education, we can further build the brand of Saskatchewan, again supporting the growth plan goals.

In '21-22 as part of the international education strategy, our government recently launched the Saskatchewan agent training program and student ambassador program, as well as the international practitioner program which is the first of its kind in Canada. This year an investment of 150,000 will support the ongoing development and delivery of training programs for employees at all designated institutions to become certified international education practitioners.

In addition our government has signed several MOUs [memorandum of understanding] with organizations and higher

education institutes from around the world to work collaboratively and co-operatively to promote and advance academic and global linkages in areas of information exchange, education exchange, promotion, and research.

So in closing, I'd like to thank the sector for their tremendous efforts throughout the last couple years to ensure students receive a quality education. This budget will help keep Saskatchewan strong with the continuation of a unique, multi-year investment to all publicly funded post-secondary institutions and more training opportunities for post-secondary students. The ministry will continue to make key investments to ensure post-secondary education is accessible and affordable through scholarships, loans, and grants.

[18:15]

In another challenging year, institutions have adapted and opportunities have emerged in post-secondary education. Saskatchewan is back on track. Our goal is a strong, sustainable post-secondary sector that delivers high-quality education to respond to the needs of Saskatchewan students, the economy, and communities now and into the future.

Thank you for your indulgence in those opening statements, and I look forward to answering any questions that may come. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Bowes, the floor is yours.

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Nice to see you, Minister, and welcome to your officials. I haven't had the pleasure of meeting most of you yet, and so it's good to see you here. I'm still feeling a bit new to this, so you'll have to pardon me. It's a small opposition, as you know, and we have limited resources, so bear with me.

I think I'll start out just generally looking line by line at vote 37 and the subvotes. So starting with (AE01), I'm wondering if you can let me know a little bit more about the changes indicated under central services. I just note a \$75,000 increase. I'm just curious where that will be allocated.

Mr. Boehm: — My name is David Boehm. I'm an assistant deputy minister with the Ministry of Advanced Education. In terms of the central services, there is a \$2,000 adjustment to the minister's salary for the coming year. The other change is a \$75,000 increase that's associated with enterprise IT, or information technology. So that's a cost that is passed on to us through the SaskBuilds and Procurement.

Ms. Bowes: — Okay, thanks. And can you tell me a bit more about that enterprise IT?

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — So as Mr. Boehm indicated, SaskBuilds and Procurement buys, I guess in this case, a Microsoft computer system or program. There's licensing fees on that. Spread across government, our share is at \$75,000 for that enterprise IT, so computer systems and some of those back-office things that happen. But that's through SaskBuilds and Procurement. They charge us for our share.

Ms. Bowes: — Okay, thanks. And then moving down to allocations under (AE02), certainly for . . . I mean we can see with universities, federated and affiliated colleges, we actually have a decrease, a 0.3 per cent decrease. We can see as well with the tech institutes there's an overall additional, like a 2.5 increase, regional colleges a 5.2 per cent increase. And then post-secondary capital transfers, we're seeing, I believe it's 5.3 — I can't read my writing here; I think that's a 3 — a 5.3 per cent increase.

And so I would like to know what your rationale is for the differences in variance from the different institutions, or I guess the different classifications here, like especially seeing a decrease, as I mentioned, for universities, federated and affiliated colleges, but then you know, on the upper end a 5.2 per cent increase for regional colleges.

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — So on that vote, you talked about what you see under universities, federated and affiliated colleges. There is an increase to the Mitacs as mentioned in my introductory statement, a \$600,000 increase. We can go into that, if you so wish, later on.

The total now is 1.15 million going towards those scholarships. There's reduction of 4.27 million in supplementary funding. Now, little explanation on this one. You know, this is what I would call fall-off, not a drop in any operating funding. The 60 million upfront is still intact, and that is not touched. This isn't operating dollars.

About a decade ago or so, the university wanted to . . . Both universities wanted to do some borrowing for whatever capital projects they wanted to do in that particular time. We agreed at that point . . . the government agreed to cover the interest cost for those loans. And so this is simply essentially an amortization schedule. It's not, you pay off any loan, the dollar amount lessens every time you make a payment. And so that's what this reflects. There is less need to service that loan, and so that is the fall-off there.

There's 2.593 for the 150 nursing seats, as I mentioned, and there's a \$443,000 decrease in this part of the vote, and this again takes a little bit of explanation. Last year — I think the College of Medicine in fact asked for this — to separate the clinical side and the teaching side of the College of Medicine.

Before, it was completely split between Advanced Ed and Health, and to better reflect, you know, the money that goes to the clinical side and to the teaching side, quite a bit of money went over to the Health side of the estimates. I can't remember the exact dollar figure. This \$443 is the academic renal transplant funding. It should have happened last year. I guess for whatever reason it was an oversight or what have you, call it what you will. But it's clearly a clinical-side thing, so the Ministry of Health.

So there's no decrease in funding to the College of Medicine. No decrease at all to the funding for the universities for operating on that supplementary funding increases for Mitacs and the nursing seats.

So I think that covers the two areas, about why you might see a decrease of 1.520 when you get to the end of the day on those numbers.

Ms. Bowes: — Okay. And so you had mentioned the servicing of loans, and so can you let me know what were the dollar amounts of those loans and when were those undertaken?

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — I'd like to correct maybe . . . I had said before we just pay the interest. We pay the principal and interest, so excuse me on that. I think I might have misspoke. My officials corrected me here. Thanks for that.

So from the U of S what we have here is, from '03-04 the U of S borrowed 3.6, and then from '04 to 2012 they borrowed 4.7 million on a 15-year term. So the total amount of those loans in that I guess agreement, I could say, is 135.96 million. The U of R, from '03 it was 1.386, and then from '04 to '12 was 1.8 in each of those years, and then '12-13 was 5.387. Sorry, I'm going to back to the U of S. I might have misspoke. In '12-13 there was a \$94.76 million loan, so that if you're doing the math, I missed that particular side.

So again the bottom line is 135.96 million from U of S; U of R, 21.173 million. The amortization schedule and what we've sort of been talking about . . . So from what we have here is from '20-21 down to '27-28.

So at the U of S '20-21, it was 12.684 million that we spent to cover that loan, and the U of R was 1.61 million.

'21-22 U of S, 11.91 million; U of R, 1.353 million.

'22-23 — and again we see that large drop-off that we've been talking about — '22-23 U of S went down to 7.8 million; U of R, 1.185 million.

In 2023-24, the U of S will drop down again to 1.343 million; U of R to just over a million.

'24-25 U of S, 884,000; U of R, 922,000.

'25-26, 459,000 U of S; U of R, 730,000.

'26-27, 228,000, U of S; 585,000 U of R.

And '27-28 the U of S will completely fall off to zero; U of R, 193,000.

[18:30]

Ms. Bowes: — Okay, and again I haven't been around long enough to I guess remember this happening, and so I'm just curious for a few more details.

Is this standard with institutions in Saskatchewan to be borrowing this significant amount of money from the government? Are there other institutions that are also borrowing similarly, or is it just the universities?

Mr. Boehm: — So in terms of the information that's been provided, this took place for about a 10-year period where the institutions were provided room to borrow to take care of preventative maintenance and renewal requirements, with the exception of 2012-13, when the University of Saskatchewan borrowed a fairly significant amount for the Academic Health Sciences Building renewal. So you know, that's sort of the

background on the approach here.

Since 2012-13 the policy has shifted to providing the institutions with preventative maintenance and renewal grants as opposed to allowing them to borrow. And the borrowing was not from government. It was borrowing that they did on their own, but government simply, you know, helped out with these principal and interest payments in order to cover these loans.

Ms. Bowes: — Okay, thanks for clarifying that. All right, and so I guess my question about other institutions and borrowing then, I didn't quite hear an answer there.

Mr. Boehm: — Yeah. In the case of other institutions, no, there has been no borrowing. Well sorry, I have to back up. There was a small loan that was taken out by, I believe it was maybe North West College, at one point in time. All paid off, all in the past. But beyond those three institutions — the University of Saskatchewan, University of Regina, and North West College — no, the practice was not used within the other institutions.

Ms. Bowes: — Okay, thanks. Moving on, under (AE02) we're seeing a pretty significant difference in transfers for public services in terms of dollar amount, and so I'm wondering if you can let me know what is all included there.

Mr. Boehm: — So the adjustment, in terms of transfers for public services, would be a similar explanation to what we just walked through with respect to the institutions. And in particular, the downward adjustment in these — I think we called them sort of an amortization-type schedule or a payment schedule — the downward reduction in those payment schedules, particularly for the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina.

Ms. Bowes: — Okay, thanks. And then next line, transfers for public services capital. Yeah, a fairly significant increase, and I'm wondering if you can detail that.

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Yes. So on that line, this is essentially capital changes. So there is an increase of 10 per cent for the preventative and maintenance renewal budget, an increase of 2.24 million — and I can get the breakdown on that if you'd so choose; 24.6 for the base of post-secondary maintenance capital; 21.6 for base preventative maintenance and renewal capital; and 3 million for strategic project; 4 million to support the capital design funding of the Saskatoon campus renewal project at Saskatchewan Polytech; 1.1 million for capital requirements at the U of R and Saskatchewan Polytechnic to support the nurse seat expansion; \$1 million for planning and design work on the dental clinic at the University of Saskatchewan; 200,000 for Great Plains — they are looking to do an assessment of the auditorium renewal project, I think. There's a fall-off of a project that was done at Sask Poly Moose Jaw. There was some renovations being done there, so there was fall-off there of 6 million. And I think that covers it.

Ms. Bowes: — Thanks. And then turning to (AE03) there's, under operational support, a decrease of about 2.5 per cent. And can you just provide a bit more detail there?

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — So the \$40,000 you're talking about is the reduction of administrative savings. The provincial training allowance — we had, I guess, a small role in the intake of that

program — that has been moved over to Social Services. So that is the 40,000.

Ms. Bowes: — Okay, thank you. And just moving down to the line on salaries, a \$40,000 decrease representing 2.7 per cent, and can you give me a bit more detail on that?

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — So same answer essentially. We're no longer administering the program. It's the salary dollars moving over to Social Services.

Ms. Bowes: — Okay. So it's just the provincial training allowance salaries. That's what . . . Yes, gotcha. Okay. And then the line on transfers to individuals. What does this all cover?

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — So that would be the student supports we give. There's a decrease this year. I guess backing up a bit, in '17-18 SAGES [Saskatchewan advantage grant for education savings] was suspended, the payments, \$9 million payments that went into that program. With this budget we're winding down that program. And you'll see the \$600,000 that we paid to the federal government to administer those funds. So it's no longer represented here. So a \$600,000 decrease in those supports.

Ms. Bowes: — Okay. And so with the SAGES program, why is that being wound down?

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — So as I mentioned before, there was, you know, some difficult decisions we made a few years ago on this program in particular. So it avoids \$9 million or so annually that were paid by the government to those involved with the federal RESP [registered education savings plan] program.

[18:45]

But we were still continuing to pay a \$600,000 administration fee on top of that to the federal government to administer that program that was still, you know, that was suspended. So you know, if we weren't going to reinstate that 9 million, I'd rather have that 600,000 go towards other areas of student need, and Mitacs is one of the results of that.

Moving more towards a needs-based . . . We see in our student supports the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship, again which was moved to needs-based a few years ago, and the graduate retention program as well for those students to help them, you know, deal with the cost of their post-secondary studies.

And so you know, as I mentioned in my opening, 75,000 students plus have taken advantage of that program. And so again on this program, it's again moving a little more towards needs-based on some of our programming. And again a decision was made several years ago and 600 K to not have to pay that fee going forward of cost of . . . [inaudible].

Ms. Bowes: — Okay, thanks. And again pardon my ignorance here, but with the SAGES program . . . And I mean you've noted that you're moving more to a needs-based student support. And so am I correct in understanding that the SAGES program was not needs-based? Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Yeah, it was whoever paid into an RESP. So there's a federal component, and then Saskatchewan

would match 10 per cent of your individual's contribution to that, up to \$250 per year per child. And so it was a bit of a top-up on the federal program we suspended in '17-18, and then winding it down this budget.

Ms. Bowes: — Thanks. I wanted to, I think, just now turn back to a few of the comments you made in your opening remarks. One was noting the 150 new nursing seats, and I'm curious to know how you arrived at this number. Like, why 150?

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — So I guess a bit of an explanation. We certainly work with all our partners on the government side, whether it's ICT, Ministry of Health, and of course the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority]. And you know, ministry officials are always looking at that, working together on seeing what the right mix is, what the needs are out there, etc.

And so we have to keep in mind, you know, clinical placements — how many are we able to find in the system? — the physical space to train however many number you decide on, you know, budget, all those things. The number of instructors we have available, that would factor into that. How many we can reasonably increase based on all those things I mentioned? So we work across government, and you'll know as well in different ministries there's also recruitment and retention efforts also announced in this budget, not necessarily in this file but sort of part of the big picture from government on that.

So just a little note about some of the expansions that are taking place. So previous to budget day, there were 690 registered nurses; 40 nurse practitioners; 40 registered psych nurses, 16 registered psych nursing in North West, and so 56 in total registered psych nursing. Anyway the total was 786. And then after this expansion, on the RN [registered nurse] side, 814; nurse practitioner, 50; psych nurse, 80. So a total of 944, increase total of 20 per cent. On the RN side, 18 per cent increase; nurse practitioner, 25 per cent increase; registered psych nurse, 40 per cent increase.

So there's the percentages, the numbers, in case . . . just anticipating future questions. But again, we work together to try and find a number that works for the system.

Ms. Bowes: — Okay, thanks. And so is this the number you were hearing from stakeholders? Like I assume you engaged in consultations to arrive at this number of new seats that were needed. And is this the number that was reflected in the consultations that you undertook?

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — So yeah, I'd go back to my similar answer. As I said before, there's a certain amount of capacity that, when you talk to all the stakeholders for the reasons I mentioned before, and you know, you look at that capacity within the system, and that was the number that was reasonable, that they thought they could handle based on all those parameters I'd mentioned before. And so, you know, that's the number we're at. We're doubling the number of seats available in our province, more than doubling, since we became government. So that's why we have this, sort of, this collaborative approach, and to make sure, you know, it's a reasonable number that people can work with. You don't just pick a number; you have to have something behind it. This was looked at closely.

I would mention that the ministry, you know, all the partners, I guess I can speak, are always looking at different training needs. I think the example would be the, as I mentioned in my opening statement, the seats we purchased from other provinces. And that number has gone up in this budget. I believe it is, as well, in this vote. And so those are always being looked at with what the sector can handle and what also is needed.

Ms. Bowes: — Okay, thanks. I'm going to have a bunch of follow-up questions here. So as you know, the opposition has been calling for quite some time now for a health human resources strategy. And, of course, as you mentioned, there's a promise in the budget for a new recruitment and retention agency for health care workers. And I'm sure, as we're all aware, there's been a significant struggle for many years in terms of recruitment and retention in health care generally, really, across the board. And so specific to nurses, I'd like to know, what is the graduate retention rate of nurses in Saskatchewan? Is this something that the ministry tracks?

[19:00]

Ms. Kratzig: — Hi. I'm Kimberly Kratzig, the deputy minister of Advanced Education. A couple of points that I'll just flag in response to your question. First of all, one of the things that we keep a really close eye on is our number of graduates each year. And we sort of track a five-year average of graduates, so I'll share those numbers with you. So in licensed practical nursing we are graduating on average 156 a year; registered nursing, 554; registered psychiatric nursing, 33; and nurse practitioners, 21. And so those numbers have sort of . . . That's about a five-year average.

In terms of retention, which is also another factor that's really important to consider, we have about a 93 per cent retention rate in Saskatchewan in terms of people trained in Saskatchewan who stay in Saskatchewan. And we know anecdotally and from discussions with our institutions that are training our health care providers that, you know, people who are trained closer to home are more likely to stay closer to home. And that's certainly a principle that is sort of in all of our nursing programs and health human resources generally.

Ms. Bowes: — Okay, thanks. So I guess this is somewhat related but as you'll be aware, and as you're fully aware, there's the planned closure of the Regina campus nursing program based out of the U of S. And that's planned to close by 2024. So I am interested to know why the decision is being made to close that campus at a time where we have significant nursing shortages in our province. And I want to know I guess as well — this is a part 2 question — what is the rationale for (a) the planned closure, and (b) the plan for seat redistribution that's been determined?

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — So in what you're mentioning about things we've heard a fair amount about in the media, I just want to reinforce that this was a decision by the University of Saskatchewan, certainly not the ministry or the minister currently responsible for sure.

So my understanding is those same amount of seats, same amount as I mentioned before, number of nurses being trained in our province, again from what I understand, U of S made that decision. They think it will allow more opportunities for rural and

northern communities and learners to have an opportunity and sort of this idea of learn where you live. And of course as we all know, there is a need for rural recruitment of health professionals. So again totally a U of S decision. They are an autonomous institution and they make those decisions at their level.

So there are . . . In terms of backfilling, that work is undergoing. There'll be 62 more seats at the U of R-Sask Poly program. And you know, they'll work on that in the coming weeks and months. Here with their program, no firm decisions have been made on that, but we'll see where those seats land exactly.

Ms. Bowes: — Sorry. Yes, thanks. And I'm sorry if how I worded my question sounded like it was suggesting that that was a decision by your ministry. I understand. I do have just a question around . . . So the 150 new nursing seats, what's the breakdown per institution then?

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — So in terms of the breakdown we're anticipating right now on the U of R-Sask Poly collaborative program: on the registered nursing side, 62; on the nurse practitioner side, 5; total 67. At the U of S program: registered nursing, 62; nurse practitioner, 5; total 67. And then the registered psychiatric nursing program delivered by Sask Poly only, 16.

Ms. Bowes: — Sorry, you said six zero for registered?

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — One six.

Ms. Bowes: — One six.

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — For a total of 150.

Ms. Bowes: — Yes. Okay. So I guess again, sorry. It's a bit confusing, because I thought in your opening remarks you said 150 new nursing seats and 60 new psych nursing seats. I misheard then? Sixteen? And that was just under the total 150?

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Yes.

Ms. Bowes: — Yes. Okay, thank you.

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — I can't remember what I said but . . .

Ms. Bowes: — I think I misheard. So I guess stemming from that, I'm aware . . . Now just one second here; I'm just going to pull this up. But I'm aware that there was a proposal to the Government of Saskatchewan Ministry of Advanced Ed in September 2020 by the Registered Psychiatric Nurses Association about education expansion in Saskatchewan. And my understanding is that they had proposed 120 additional seats.

And so I don't understand. You're saying that 16 have been budgeted for. And so can you let me know, based on that, what I understand was a very extensive report which the opposition also received, can you let me know how you arrived at the number of 16 seats as opposed to the 120 that were proposed?

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — So yeah, I appreciate the analysis from the RPNAS [Registered Psychiatric Nurses Association of Saskatchewan]. I had several meetings with Ms. Balaski about

their proposal. And so again that analysis . . . But you know, as I mentioned before, we work with ICT, Health, the SHA to determine our priorities in the system and what is possible to do. And so you know, we have to ensure there's clinical capacity. We have to ensure there's instructors. We have to ensure there is square footage, etc., to train our health complement.

So you know, I would note, since we've formed government there's been a large increase in the number of registered psych nurses in our province. And you know, it's been tough to recover. For a number of years in our province, we trained zero psych nurses. And so that number has increased, pre-budget from 56, and now we are funding 80. Twenty-four, as I mentioned in the . . . sorry. Sixteen in the budget, North West is expanding by eight, and so for a total of 24 new, a total of 80 going forward.

[19:15]

So that's a significant increase, again a 43 per cent increase on the registered psych nurse. We realize how important this field is and, you know, to go along with the increases we're seeing in the health side with the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions. But these are important.

And again those eight at North West is specifically — increase of eight — specifically for the SHNB [Saskatchewan Hospital North Battleford]. So anyway, there is a 43 per cent increase. And again we have to keep in mind, to do a one-year massive increase is, you know, it's very taxing on the system. So we have to keep that in mind and listen to our particular health partners in the SHA and work with them to find a number that can be done in a reasonable fashion.

Ms. Bowes: — Okay, thank you for the answer. So you talked a bit about issues with capacity. And you'd mentioned faculty and issues there with capacity. And so, as you're aware, not only do we have a nursing shortage, but we also have a shortage of nursing educators in our province. And so I'm wanting to know, you know, what is your ministry's plan to deal not only with the shortage of nurses but also the shortage of nurse educators that exists?

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — So in general what I'd say on this is, you know, we rely on the institutions to have, you know, a complement of faculty to, you know, ensure their programs are high quality and what is needed for them to deliver those programs.

You know, my understanding is U of S, for instance — I think you brought that up — they are, you know, they're working on recruiting. They haven't really indicated in the past, when we're constantly talking to them and working with the institutions along with the health care providers, you know, that there's an imminent, you know, issue. I'm not saying that they're, you know . . . In the health human resources right across Canada, if not North America, there is, you know, need for these particular folks.

But I think that goes back to the previous questions, to make sure we're growing at a pace that the system can accommodate. And so again, teaching those master's degree and the few that go on to the Ph.D. [Doctor of Philosophy] level. That is in the purview of the institutions on those higher levels of learning that are

required to be able to teach the courses.

Ms. Bowes: — Okay. Moving on a bit but still talking about recruitment and retention and this new agency that's been announced, what role will the Ministry of Advanced Education be playing in relation to the new agency?

Ms. Kratzig: — Hi. The Ministry of Health is still working on some of those details around what that new agency will look like. So you know, we don't have all of the details right now, but the Ministry of Advanced Education will be represented at that table and will certainly be able to bring the training perspective and help inform all of those discussions and ensure that the training needs of the province are well understood among other partners that will be at that table. But the details are still being sorted out.

Ms. Bowes: — Thanks. And bouncing back then specifically to nurses and, you know, potential I guess incentives around recruitment and retention. It actually was recently brought to my attention that nurses during their preceptorship are unpaid, completely unpaid. This is I think of concern and I think something that certainly could provide an effective recruitment and retention piece for nursing. And so this is something that has been brought to my attention by stakeholders as a major concern. There's also the aspect of, you know, it being obviously a female-dominated profession, nursing. And you know, you look at paid versus unpaid sort of internships across other sectors like the trades or like with physicians, and you don't see that same issue. And so I certainly am being advised that it's perceived also as that factored in is that it's, you know, again the chronic undervaluation of women's work in our society.

And so I wonder if that is something that you've given some consideration to in terms of paid preceptorships, and if that's one tool that you might be open to exploring in terms of recruitment and retention initiatives for nurses.

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — So I guess in terms of support for nursing or any health care profession, that would be sort of . . . I would say the recruitment and retention side would be more Ministry of Health or the SHA. And you know, they have bursaries and scholarships they have on the retention side.

From our side, we mentioned before the graduate retention program helps defer those costs of post-secondary. Also note on the student supports available for our nurses that choose to work in rural locations, there's an ability to receive student loan relief up to \$20,000 for a five-year commitment to be in a designated location in rural Saskatchewan.

So just I don't . . . probably not our question to answer on the SHA health side. If there's ever been thought of paying those training to become a nurse or whatever it may be — lab tech, whatever field you choose — generally that's part of the training of those fields, but fair enough.

[19:30]

Ms. Bowes: — Okay, so I have a number of more like health-related questions. I'm probably going to maybe skip over to some things just so I don't run out of time. But what I'll just maybe end with on the health front, just for now at least, is I'd asked about the graduate retention rate for nurses, and wondering as well

about the graduate retention rate for doctors in Saskatchewan and if that's again something that you track and what that's looking like.

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — So we don't have that. We, as a ministry, don't have numbers on that. I will note we certainly spend a lot of money for the College of Medicine, and part of that is the increase from 40 to 100 seats and from 60 to 120 in, I believe it's post-graduate. So we don't know how many we keep after X amount of years, from our ministry's side anyway.

Ms. Bowes: — Okay thanks. And are you aware if that's tracked by any other ministries?

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — I think we'd have to check with the College of Medicine if they do track that and after how many years would they track and keep track of that. But we don't have that here with us tonight.

Ms. Bowes: — Okay thanks. And are you amenable to finding that information through your ministry and reporting back? I'm requesting to table.

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — We could try and track it down either through the ministry or the college or if they do any surveys of longer term retention.

Ms. Bowes: — Okay. And when would be a reasonable date that I could follow up with the ministry on that?

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — A couple of weeks I think might be a reasonable time.

Ms. Bowes: — Okay, thanks a lot, Minister. And then I think I'm going to move on from health at least for now and talk a little bit, ask some questions around support generally for post-secondary institutions, including operating grants, and a bit of follow-up on the multi-year funding agreement with the institutions.

So I know we talked about this last year, last time around. I am wondering with the sector-wide, multi-year funding agreement, in one respect it was certainly positive to see the stable, predictable funding for the institutions over four years. And again, I recognized that was something that was a long-standing wish and request from the institutions.

However the funding in terms of operating grants clearly continues to be insufficient, with the agreement freezing base operating grant funding at the 2020-2021 levels until 2024. So this zero per cent increase actually reflects a negative funding amount with collective bargaining agreement salary grid movements. And institutions are also concerned about the significant cost increases and inflationary pressures to the tune of 5 to 7 per cent, which will have to be absorbed by the institutions as the economy reopens.

I want to note too that the deficits we're seeing coming out of the province's two largest institutions, our universities, for example, are a particular concern. University of Regina's latest budget projections indicate a \$16 million shortfall for the '21-22 fiscal year. As well, a statement released in February 2022 from the U of R indicated that the university is "looking at all avenues of generating revenue and reducing costs to develop a balanced

budget in '22-23."

And then with the University of Saskatchewan, they have indicated they're anticipating a \$21 million shortfall per year, and consulting firm Cubane UniForum has been brought in to identify efficiencies at that institution.

I've also been advised that cuts are on the horizon over the next three years at the U of S, and I'm told that some of these cuts will be . . . They've been described as wrenching to me. And so the question is, as the Minister of Advanced Education, how do you feel that providing zero per cent increases will allow the institutions to remain financially viable?

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — All right, so a couple of things I'd say to that. I would disagree with the concept that it is a zero per cent increase: \$60 million upfront over four years with stable base funding, 5 per cent each in year one and two.

And so, you know, this allocation is very much appreciated by the sector. I think the U of S has stated to me they are certainly the envy of the universities across Canada. So again, the multi-year funding, that idea of the upfront funding is to drive those sustainability measures going into the future.

This was an agreement negotiated with the sector to emphasize the partnership we have with the sector. And so the institutions are using that money to generate revenue, reduce expenses, to deal with the long-term sustainability of the sector.

So I would note here the information I have in terms of the percentage of provincial funding for institutions across Canada. The U of S it's 59 per cent of all their revenue comes from government. Much higher there's several institutions that we — I could just pick them out here — ones we've heard of: University of Toronto, 25 per cent of their revenue comes from government; UBC [University of British Columbia] 39 per cent; and down the list we go. We compare very favourably. At the U of R 47 per cent of their total revenue comes from the provincial operating grant, much higher than York University, for example, which is at 29 per cent. Brock University, which the U of S beat in their first-round game at the national championship, is at 31 per cent.

And so I think we stack up fairly favourably in terms of the amount of their total funding that comes from the province of Saskatchewan.

Ms. Bowes: — Okay, thanks. And I may have missed one or two there, but are you . . . I understand these are all Ontario-based institutions.

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — I just picked ones. I could go down the entire list if you like.

Ms. Bowes: — No, I wouldn't like that.

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — I just picked them kind of out of thin air; ones that looked good to me.

Ms. Bowes: — Okay, great. And so in the scheme of things, nationwide where would we fall in Saskatchewan in terms of, you know, what percentage is funded by the province? Where do

we actually fall?

[19:45]

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — So I think in the U15, as I mentioned talking about all the universities in the U15, the top 15 research universities, we are only below Quebec-based universities. And I think we probably have a decent idea of where they get their funding from. So we're at 59 per cent. Oh, sorry — Memorial is in Newfoundland — so I'm sorry, Memorial University is the highest at 76 per cent. There's three more in Quebec and then the University of Saskatchewan, so I guess we're fifth highest.

Same for the University of Regina. The top three are Quebec-based: the highest is 72 per cent of their total funding pool comes from government grants, operating grants; University of Montreal is at 72 per cent; Concordia 53 per cent; University of Victoria 52 per cent; U of R 47 per cent. So we're fifth there as well, fifth out of 15.

Ms. Bowes: — Okay. Yeah, thanks for breaking that down for me. And yeah, noted your comment on Quebec and where that funding comes from. I assume you're referring to taxes, but that leads actually quite nicely into my next sort of phase of questioning here.

A few things I was hoping to get clear on. I did note on page 67 of the budget that the total amount allocated for the graduate retention program in '22-23 is \$65 million. Additionally the total dollar amount committed to student supports in this year's estimates is sitting at \$39.2 million. So I just wanted to double-check that I've got this right.

So like the total amount that the government is committing to in terms of overall student supports in this budget, including the GRP, is 104.2 million, is that correct? Is there anything I'm missing there?

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — So the number we have here is 102.62 million broken down by, as you mentioned, 65 million for GRP; 27 million appropriation of the Student Aid Fund. Scholarships: the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship, 7.125 million; Innovation and Opportunity Scholarship, 3 million. And other scholarships: I think I mentioned in my opening remarks that would be Queen Elizabeth Scholarship, Scholarship of Honour, French language. And so those three scholarships, those three amounts equal 10.62 million. So again that totals 102.6 million.

Ms. Bowes: — Okay, sorry. I don't know where my math went wrong there. I'm a bit tired. So anyway, we're in the ballpark. So something I'm really curious in finding out and hopefully you're able to provide the information, it's something that's come to my attention recently. I've been advised that the total amount the ministry allocates on an annual basis for all student supports, including the graduate retention program, is approximately equivalent to the cost of providing free tuition to all domestic students in Saskatchewan for a four-year B.A. [Bachelor of Arts]. And I really would love to know if that's accurate. And if it's not possible to confirm that at this time, I again would ask that the answer be tabled.

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — So we don't have that exact figure, and

I'm not sure if you're bringing that forward or you're saying that's what should be done. You know, I would think if you just focus on B.A.s, then well we talked extensively about nursing. What about nursing? What about doctors? What about all the areas, the fields that we certainly need as well?

You know, I think when you look at it, if you qualify for student loans, lower-income students — and again we talked earlier about needs-based assessment and that sort of thing where we should concentrate some of our student supports to — lower-income students qualify for up to \$7,800 in grants on the federal. The provincial side, as I mentioned before, the Saskatchewan student grant and the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship, those grants cover your tuition. They cover your tuition if you're here in Saskatchewan for that B.A. program.

And so combine that with, again we've talked about the graduate retention program. So if you're a student who has the opportunity to live at home, you know, at the end of the day you have a lot of your student experience covered already by the various programs that we have.

So I think in general it's reasonable for students to pay for some of the cost of their experience or their degree. In general, I've seen and read things, studies, that those who graduate from post-secondary certainly have an advantage in the rest of their careers in terms of earning power, and it can be quite extensive. And so that's another piece of this as well.

So you know, again if you're a lower-income student — I think it's pretty close — it's reasonable to say you don't pay a lot of tuition depending on what program you're in of course. But I don't know if you're doing it for a comparison sake or a for instance, but if that's what, you know, you're putting forward and think that shouldn't happen, you know, there's some arguments against that.

Ms. Bowes: — Okay, thanks for your answer. And so is your ministry committed to looking at those numbers and making that comparison and getting back to me on that?

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Yeah, fair enough. I don't think we know the exact number of arts students currently here in Sask. You know, and I think we have a good idea of what tuition costs, but we don't have it. But it'd be a straight-up multiplier calculation.

Ms. Bowes: — Right, but you would have access to enrolment rates, even just as an example through the institutions' rates . . .

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Yeah, yeah. Yeah, again I don't think we have the exact numbers in our, you know, in U of S, U of R, and then our regionals. If there's programs broken down, I don't think we have the exact total number and the tuition charge. But again we can get that, for sure.

Ms. Bowes: — Yeah, I appreciate that. I think, at least it's been suggested to me, if you're looking at essentially the overall average tuition, would be what you're looking at, and then also looking at the enrolment rates as a total. And then on that basis you could sort of make the calculations. Yeah.

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Yeah. Yeah.

Ms. Bowes: — And do you know when might be reasonable to expect that we could hear back on that?

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — We may be able to find an estimated number by the end of the night. The exact number, again, within a couple of weeks I think is reasonable.

Ms. Bowes: — Okay, thanks a lot. I appreciate that. And I guess, you know, I'll just say, and we'll see if it's able to be calculated by the end of tonight, but if it is the case that this is accurate, would your ministry consider dispensing with the current hodgepodge of student supports that exist and consider bringing in universal tuition for Saskatchewan students, at least at a starting point?

And again I'm talking just in terms of this example that we've discussed here. I mean, if the cost is truly equivalent to providing all domestic students with, you know, the cost of tuition for a four-year B.A., for example, would your ministry be amenable to considering changing the way things are done in terms of student supports in that manner?

[20:00]

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — So I guess some initial numbers that we came up with — and I think you had moved away from in your question — just the B.A. undergrad to total undergrad. Roughly 35,000 credentialed undergrad in the province; 8,500, let's say, average tuition is about 300 million bucks. So that's a significant amount over the current student supports. Again I think I'd go back to, I guess, several things. I think, again, I think it's reasonable for some students. And keep in mind, only half of the students in our institutions need some sort of aid. The rest are able to handle themselves, whether through their parents or what have you. So half the students don't need any sort of financial help, as it appears from our perspective anyway.

You know, again on the universal tuition thing, we've gone toward more of a needs-based system. You could hypothetically say if — as our institutions are autonomous — if we gave them \$300 million, that's not necessarily . . . I suppose we could have agreements on the side on that. But again, they're autonomous and, you know, that operating funding doesn't necessarily have to go to tuition. That's a small thing, and again, agreements could be made on that. I'd point out that a significant amount of the Student Aid Fund is federal funding. We'd lose that funding coming into the province.

It's interesting to note that I talked about some of the programs out there, particularly in the province of Quebec, that have very little or no tuition. And maybe, I think, I could be wrong on this, but some of their Cégep [collège d'enseignement général et professionnel] programs, there's no higher student uptake. So from that lesson at least, it doesn't appear that low or no tuition equals all sorts of other people accessing the system. So again, I think, you know, I'd say that it's not something we're looking at right now. I think the system is reasonable, and we have reasonable supports for those low-income students here in the province. And you combine that with some of the back-end supports: graduate retention program; if you're a nurse or a vet, loan forgiveness program. You know, there could be a substantial part of your tuition covered.

Ms. Bowes: — Okay, thanks. Thanks for the initial estimates. I still would really like to see kind of hard numbers if you're able to produce them within a couple of weeks. I think it's well worth the wait and, yeah, I look forward to receiving that information.

I guess just a couple of comments. We maybe just fundamentally disagree on sort of the merits of universal tuition or, you know, whether needs-based funding is appropriate for post-secondary, especially for something like a B.A.-level credential.

And I guess, you know, from not just my perspective, but certainly the students I speak to in, I guess, in my riding . . . Like, the U of S is in my riding so I speak to students on a continual basis, not just there but across the province. And I hear consistently about affordability issues for obtaining a post-secondary education in Saskatchewan. And that's something that is consistently the number one concern I hear from people in my riding, from stakeholders, with advanced education.

And so you've talked a bit about back-end supports like the graduate retention program, but unfortunately what I hear from students most often is the difficulties and the barriers experienced with the front end of funding their education. And so what I hear very often is that many prospective students, you know, folks that don't even end up being students, are simply prevented from even entering into a post-secondary education because of the upfront costs associated with it.

And then, you know, in addition to that, the incredible debt loads that students are carrying through funding a post-secondary education. You know, I don't want to give my age away here, but you know, even when I was attending university — like, and not to get too sort of anecdotal here — but you know, I came from a very low-income family. And so you know, I did receive some money. Certainly I received student loans and I received some money in terms of scholarships and awards, bursaries, but I still came out of that from a very, very low-income family with tens of thousands of dollars of debt.

And so, you know, when you're talking about needs-based funding — and not to say that obviously the ministry isn't providing some supports, of course you are — but it's simply not sufficient for a lot of students who, if they're able to fund that on the front end, are coming out with tens of thousands of dollars' worth of debt.

And I mean we're not talking about dentistry here. We're talking about a basic, if we're talking university, a basic bachelor's. So I guess, you know, this is why I would ask that you give some consideration and keep some of an open mind towards this, because there are a lot of barriers in place for prospective students and for students who do end up, you know, being able to, like in theory fund their education, but then end up being saddled with enormous levels of debt.

And so I would ask you to reconsider and to take a look at, you know, if those numbers approximately line up, whether that may be a better model here. And I know it's a bit more nuanced than that, and I know perhaps that may only sort of apply for an entry-level credential. But you know, you look at how the job market, the labour market has changed over the last number of decades, and whereas a high school education used to cut it, and you know, workers used to be able to enter the workforce, get a well-paying

job, buy a house, have a couple of kids, maybe everyone would have a car, right? Like, it's just not the case anymore.

So you know, the prospects for someone now graduating high school and entering the workforce with a high school education are, in many cases, pretty bleak in terms of their potential for earnings. And so it's more or less a requirement at this stage of the game to hold some form of credential beyond high school in order to be able to earn what would be, you know, considered a living income in Saskatchewan.

And so, I guess, to me that would be the fundamental argument, is to take another look at that. Because we do fund primary and secondary education universally in this province, and because of those changes over the last number of decades, I think that it warrants a second look at, you know, whether universal tuition, at least to some degree, for post-secondary education is something that the people of this province should be able to expect. So a bit of a tirade. Apologies. But it was nice to have the discussion with you, Minister. And so I'll look forward to hearing back. I'm just going to skip around here, I think, a little bit.

I wanted to talk a bit about the situation here for international students, and I'm sure this will come as no surprise to you. As you know, we've been presenting a petition in the House calling for a freeze for international tuition rates. And that came from stakeholders, that came directly from students. This isn't something that I cooked up in my office. It was very much coming and continues to come from the students, the international students in this province, who we've seen mobilizing increasingly in recent months.

And certainly I would say since the signing of the multi-year funding agreement last year which, as you recall from our discussion last year, excludes tuition caps for international students in Saskatchewan, so that was very much noted by international students in Saskatchewan. And we've seen increasing numbers of rallies and town halls and organizing happening on campuses.

And so I know that we've had somewhat this discussion before, but I don't think last year we got fully into consideration of the question of what the ministry's rationale was for excluding international students from the tuition caps that are entailed in the MOU for multi-year funding.

And I ask as well — sorry, a second part — will this be reconsidered by the ministry because, you know, I'm sure that you've been seeing the rallies too and what's been happening, particularly out of the U of R right here in Regina. They've had a lot of action on that front and have been getting very organized.

And so just a two-part question there.

[20:15]

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — So just on some of the comments you had made, you know, I would say we do see growing enrolment in our post-secondary sector. I think that shows people the value. It still is accessible. And you know, I think there's a strong suite of student financial supports. The multi-year funding you referenced before holds tuition at 4 per cent for domestic.

And so again there's the student loan side, repayment assistance program. I haven't talked about that. That's an important plan if graduates get into issues with repaying those student loans. So overall I think it's reasonably affordable, you know, and again, the good incomes we hope to see past graduation.

I urge students to, all the students I talk to, also take a look at the trades as well. You know, it doesn't have to be a four-year, a six-year, an eight-year degree. A lot of the trades, you know, you can learn for very little, and you can work while you learn as well. That's the way those are set up. So universal's not the norm in Canada.

I would point also that, you know, the private scholarships that are out there as well. There's all kinds of them, and you had mentioned that that was in your experience and a little bit in mine as well. So anyway, in terms of the international course institutions, as part of their autonomy they are responsible for setting the tuition and fees for students. You know, they want to be able to set fees that allow the cost of delivering that programming and to make sure they're quality.

You mentioned tuition rates for international undergrad students. They are higher than domestic students, yes, but compared to right across Canada they're among the lowest in Canada. They've increased by 15.8 per cent over the last five years compared to the national average at 31.6. International students in Saskatchewan pay on average 22,197. The national average is 33,623. That's the average.

Graduate retention program also applies to those folks who want to stay here in Saskatchewan, earn a living, and you know, hopefully raise a family and stay right here in Saskatchewan.

And I would also note the cost of living in Saskatchewan compared to, you know, University of Toronto, UBC, whatever it may be, is substantially lower here in Saskatchewan than those places for instance, if not right across the country in terms of rent, and you know, those sorts of costs. So I recognize the concern. But certainly when you look at what it's compared to, there is an advantage in also having great, wonderful institutions that are welcoming, have a variety of subject areas to look at, the help for international on the Innovation and Opportunity Scholarship as well as the Mitacs program as well. You know, it can help defray some of those costs.

I will note the U of S, for example, again the international is market based. So the institutions themselves have to look and keep that in mind. So this fall, USask [University of Saskatchewan] international Ph.D. students will now pay the domestic rates. So there's that as well. So they want to, as part of that market, they want make sure they're attracting top international Ph.D. students to Saskatchewan. So that's something they're offering this fall.

Ms. Bowes: — Thanks for that. So I want to, you know, you also mentioned the graduate retention program applies to international students. And I want to talk a bit about retention rates.

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Yeah, international, domestic, any student that . . .

Ms. Bowes: — Yeah, right. Okay, so my understanding is that, excluding the Maritimes, Saskatchewan has the lowest rates of graduate retention after both one year of graduation and after five years of graduation. And that's not just for international, but both domestic and international. So I'd like you to, if you could, talk about how you feel.

I mean, I know you mentioned earlier on about how many people have accessed the graduate retention program. But is that program . . . I mean it would appear by these numbers that that program isn't overly effective, unless I'm missing something, unless the numbers I've got here are incorrect. I wonder if you could speak to that. And you know, if there's consideration, and if those numbers are correct, if you would be considering a re-evaluation of that program and the utility of it?

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — So just in terms of the graduate retention program, there's been some numbers over time. Since '08 I mentioned the amount of people that have taken it certainly, you know . . . I think it's part of the mix when people decide what to do after graduation, you know, where to go. And there's a number of factors of course, I think the biggest being jobs.

And on that side of things, Saskatchewan's the place for you. Come on over. The unemployment rate is very low, among the lowest in the country. It has been for the last decade; 30,000 new jobs in the last year. Cost of living is reasonable, as I mentioned before. Low taxes, you know. And just the amount of private-sector jobs that they're forecasting or that have been announced and are forecasted as a result of those announcements, I think, is a very good reason to be here in Saskatchewan, stay here in Saskatchewan. Aided by the graduate retention program, I think is part of the mix. And certainly out-of-province students total that got that certificate, 28,575.

My understanding is the program's reported to have influenced roughly 4 in 10 graduates' decision to stay in the province after they've completed their program. Some of it . . . Again there's several things. I will note graduate mobility. Two years after graduation, 9 in 10 respondents who were living in Saskatchewan when they graduated were still living in Saskatchewan. That's the most recent survey completed in 2016.

[20:30]

So there is a lot going for Saskatchewan, you know. That affordability piece for those that stay and who took some sort of post-secondary degree is aided by that GRP, and you know, it's part of the mix for those young people. When you start out here, sometimes it's easier to stay. You know, I think of my generation. A lot of folks moved west in my day. My brother still lives there. He went there for a job and met someone and at that young age, once you're there, sometimes you stay there.

This is one part of the tool box to have people stay here, but it's part of the piece. But a strong economy with lots of jobs available, which is what we have in Saskatchewan, is also part of the mix.

Ms. Bowes: — Okay, thanks for the answer. I would hope that, as with any government program offered, there would be sort of an ongoing evaluation of the efficacy of the program and if that's money well spent, you know, using taxpayer dollars essentially.

I didn't hear you correcting my numbers about us being the lowest, excluding the Maritimes, in terms of rates of graduate retention. So if this program is not serving its intended purpose, then why would the government be continuing with this program? Instead of using a program like the GRP that is assisting with back-end costs of a post-secondary education, why would you not instead consider shifting that to front-end supports since, as I said, you know, the numbers just clearly indicate that that's not having the intended effect?

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — I should've asked . . . I don't think we have those numbers. I'm not sure where those were coming from.

Ms. Bowes: — Stats Canada.

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Okay.

Ms. Bowes: — They're from June 2021.

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Yeah, I think it's fair to say we certainly always look at government programs, you know, try and find what's expected because you're right, it's taxpayers' dollars.

If you did some sort of universal program at the front end, I don't think there's a guarantee either of students staying here in Saskatchewan, right? You might have more people coming to Saskatchewan, take their free degree, and then move on as well. So I don't think that that would necessarily solve that issue.

Ms. Bowes: — Yeah, thanks for the response. I guess you know, my point here is that if you've got a program that is not serving its intended purpose and in effect, you know, does not really help in reducing barriers to obtaining a post-secondary education, at least on the front end, then you know . . . and I'm not going to make this into a question. I guess I'll just say for your consideration, I would hope that the ministry would look at adjusting course there and looking at more front-end programs to aid with affordability for post-secondary students.

So from there I am going to talk a bit more and have a few more questions about affordability of post-secondary education, and you know, even just talking about undergrad fees. I know you talked about the trades, which are great too. But certainly when I'm looking at undergraduate tuition fees in Saskatchewan as a whole — again according to Statistics Canada — we're looking at first of all just in '21 to '22, undergraduate tuition fees increasing by 5.6 per cent and that representing the third-highest increase of tuition in that year, in '21 to '22, only behind Alberta and Quebec.

And so in addition to that, if you're taking a look at the scene here for the cost of a post-secondary education over the longer term, if you're looking at 10 years — again according to Statistics Canada — you're seeing that undergraduate fees for Saskatchewan students have increased by 43.6 per cent over the past 10 years. You're also seeing that undergraduate fees for international students in Saskatchewan have increased by 50 per cent in the last 10 years.

And so you know, I heard what you're saying about, sort of, where we fall in the scheme of things, U15 or otherwise. But I guess what I'm wanting to know is, you know, how that is viewed

as an affordable and accessible education. And I guess again, this is part of the argument for universal tuition. You know, you're talking about how this is relatively affordable. That's not affordable. Like in no circumstance could — I don't think — could anyone reasonably argue that it's affordable, in the past 10 years, to have those kind of increases to an undergraduate education in our province.

And I just want to move on, you know, a bit more on that front. And just sort of bear with me. I'm flipping back and forth here. So in terms of affordability, you know, I think that yes, you did mention that the institutions, certainly the universities, are autonomous. But of course we've seen with this multi-year funding agreement that there is an agreement made, that the province participated in, that includes tuition-setting measures. So yes, I agree they're autonomous, but they've willingly signed on to this agreement in order to secure multi-year funding.

And so that 4 per cent number, like, you talked about that before, at least in terms of domestic students. But you know, and I'm sure you know this but just to clarify for our viewers at home, the many of which I'm sure there are, like 4 per cent, that applies to institution-wide — that's my understanding — institution-wide increases. So my understanding is that there actually can be . . . There is no cap, per se, I guess, in the MOU on per-program, sort of, increases. And so I think that, well, it's just a bit misleading to say, you know, 4 per cent caps. And I don't mean to say you're trying to be misleading. But it's not quite that simple.

So I wanted to ask too, you know, related to that, have there been any exclusions that have been requested since we met last year relating to that MOU? I know that, you know, that's stipulated, that there can be exclusions.

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — So just to quickly go over the MOU. I think you referenced some of this, but it states, "to a maximum . . ." I'll back up:

The parties agree that for the protection of students and senior administration, the institution will annually recommend to its approving body that the institution will generally limit domestic tuition increase for credential programs to a maximum 4 per cent institution-wide average in each academic year with exemptions which will be confirmed annually.

Tuition for international students, as you mentioned; domestic tuition that falls below the peer comparator median; and any other exemptions confirmed by the parties.

And so again the exemptions: international students; U of S engineering and computer science are below their comparator medians by 10.2 and 8.9 per cent, respectively; grad studies are below the peer comparator; dental assistant certificate increased by 13.4 per cent; Western College of Vet Med at the U of S is also an exemption due to the interprovincial funding agreement and will see a tuition increase of 5 per cent and 0.9 for non-provincial agreement students; Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, an increase of 21.6, as it's far below the peer comparator.

And I believe those . . . Are they all at the U of S? I think, as I see, those are at the U of S.

Ms. Bowes: — Okay and so . . .

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — And I was, sorry, not quite finished. Just in terms of comparing, again we're comparing across other universities. Tuition revenue as a percentage of total operating revenue, at the U of S it's 27 per cent. That's sort of roughly in the middle of the pack, but in the top half of the least amount that relies on student tuition. And then U of R, 41 per cent, and I think they're again in the top half of comparator institutions, so kind of the reverse of the situation we talked about earlier in terms of provincial funding.

Ms. Bowes: — Okay thanks. And so just so I'm clear, two-part question here. So the — I think I said exclusions before; I meant exemptions — are only limited to the U of S? Those are the only exemptions that have been agreed to since last year?

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — The only one we see for U of R is Johnson-Shoyama. That's a joint-delivered program, and so that's the only one that we see. But no, it's not just for U of S; it just happens to be for U of S. I will note that U of R for the fall semester hasn't come out with their tuition schedule yet.

[20:45]

Ms. Bowes: — Okay, thanks. And I just . . . You had mentioned some of the specific increases, and I either didn't hear or I don't think it was mentioned for some of these, like for instance the engineering and computer science. If you could just very quickly go through what the increases are for each of those.

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Sorry, just to double-check, you're asking for the programs I mentioned, the per cent increase.

Ms. Bowes: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — U of S engineering, 10.2 per cent; computer science, 8.9, again below their comparator average of other institutions; dental assistant certificate, 13.4; WCVN [Western College of Veterinary Medicine], 5 per cent for interprovincial agreement seats; and Johnson-Shoyama, 21.6.

Ms. Bowes: — Okay, thanks. Sorry. So can I proceed with the next question?

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Yeah, yeah. We were . . .

Ms. Bowes: — Sorry about that.

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — If you want to just . . .

Ms. Bowes: — Oh yeah, for sure. And I don't mind if we want to jump back to it if it changes. So I'm wondering then, like really, what are the restrictions on exemptions for the MOU? Like, what restrictions exist? Because I mean we're seeing here just in the first year alone, like, multiple exemptions have been granted.

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — So again, as to the agreement in the MOU, if they're at the market, they're staying under that 4 per cent. If they're significantly under the market, they're bringing the cost of those programs up. Overall, my understanding at the U of S, I think you mentioned right at the beginning, across the

whole board is 3.7 per cent. So some are above that, some below. We mentioned the ones that have gone up a rather large amount. Again, they've fallen significantly under the market.

Ms. Bowes: — Okay, thanks. I'm running very short on time, so I'm going to just . . . I do have at least one more question I was hoping to ask today, and then perhaps some that I can submit in writing afterwards. But I'd like to know if there have been noticeable changes to enrolment, overall enrolment at institutions over the last year, both for domestic and international. And I would ask too, if the answers to these questions are not immediately available, I'd also ask that those be tabled.

Ms. Kratzig: — Hi there. I thought that I might . . . One of the things we were going to get back to you on was the retention of Saskatchewan College of Medicine students. We do have information from the College of Medicine annual report in terms of retention of U of S residents.

So I can tell you that for all programs in 2020-2021, there was a 63 per cent retention rate. For Royal College programs, there was a 57 per cent retention rate. And for family medicine programs, it was 69 per cent. And that is those who have remained and practised in Saskatchewan based on their type of program. So that's from the College of Medicine annual report. I just wanted to get that into the record, because that was one of the follow-ups we had for you. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — On to enrolments. So in '20-21 academic year, there was 53,410 students. This is down slightly from the year previous when there was 53,820 in '19-20, year 2019-2020. So year over year, 1 per cent decrease. But over the past five years, there was a 7 per cent increase in all provincial programs. I think that answers your question.

Ms. Bowes: — Okay thanks. And I think I'll . . . You know, I do have, as you can imagine, additional questions. We never quite get to all of them. But as I said, I can submit the other ones that you haven't heard yet tonight in writing. And then I believe it really is just the one remaining about those calculations around, you know, potential universal tuition. And yeah, it would be great to receive that in the next few weeks. I'll follow up if I don't hear from you. And I understand the Easter break is in between there too, so I'll give you that week as a freebie.

But yeah, I want to say thanks very much for answering questions. I don't know if it's customary for the minister to give closing remarks first, but I'll turn the floor over if that's the case.

The Chair: — It's really up to you. You can go ahead with your remarks and then I'll ask the minister to . . .

Ms. Bowes: — Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, Minister, I really appreciate your time. It was good to see you again this year, and thanks for going through all these questions. I know it's a bit exhausting having three hours in a row. And thanks a lot to your officials. I know — well, I've at least heard — how much time goes into preparing for these estimates. Many people committed to the work over, as I understand it, a number of months. And I really appreciate all the good work and prep that goes into this. And again, apologies that I'm still a bit new to this all and still learning as I go, and learning a lot from the information that you provided to me here tonight. So thanks so

much for that, and I look forward to Bill 61 coming up next.

The Chair: — Thank you very much, Ms. Bowes. Mr. Minister, the floor is yours for concluding remarks.

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Yeah, you bet. Some of the similar remarks. I'd like to thank the committee. I know you were here for several hours before this set of estimates. And thank those members for their questions and the dialogue, the respectful dialogue that took place here this evening. Officials, you know, they're so important to the people of the province of Saskatchewan, all the work they do behind the scenes. And you're right, there's an incredible amount of work that goes into, not only this, but ongoing work that we find ourselves doing throughout the year. And so they're very dedicated, and very lucky to have them to work alongside. And I really appreciate it so much. And we will get back to you with those outstanding items in a reasonable amount of time. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. Having reached our agreed-upon time for consideration of these estimates, we will adjourn consideration of the estimates and the lending and investing activities estimates for the Ministry of Advanced Education. Thank you.

We'll take a short break and resume consideration of Bill No. 61 in a few short minutes.

[The committee recessed for a period of time.]

The Chair: — All right. Welcome back, committee members and officials. Mr. Minister, do you have any new officials to introduce?

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Yes I do, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: — Oh, we're not on yet? Okay. We're good to go now? Yeah, you bet. You're good to go?

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Yeah.

The Chair: — All right.

Bill No. 61 — *The Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training Act, 2021*

Clause 1

The Chair: — We will now begin consideration of Bill No. 61, *The Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training Act, 2021*, clause 1, short title. Ms. Bowes, do you have any questions?

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Sorry, Mr. Chair. I would have a few different officials that I'd like to introduce.

The Chair: — Oh sorry, I misunderstood. Okay.

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Yeah, yeah, no. Joining us . . . Other officials here were here for estimates. Clint Repski is the deputy minister for Immigration and Career Training. Darcy Smynciuk is the ADM in ICT as well. Lindell was here earlier. Mike Pestill is here. Jill Tzupa, director of strategic and legislative priorities unit, Ministry of Advanced Education. And I have some opening

comments about Bill 61 if now is the time.

The Chair: — Please go ahead.

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Okay, thank you. So last fall I had the opportunity to introduce Bill 61, *The Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training Act, 2021*, and we're here to consider the bill in more detail. And to begin, I'd like to provide some context on what brought us to the development of this bill.

So for the past six years, the ministry's been working together with post-secondary education institutions to enhance accountability and better demonstrate how institutions are using government's investment to support students, communities, and the economy. What began with the introduction of five expectations for our sector in 2016 has led to enhanced data collection and reporting and the province's first multi-year funding commitment for post-secondary education launched with last year's budget.

We worked together with 16 institutions to build a shared accountability approach that better demonstrates the impact of government's investment in the post-secondary sector. The multi-year funding MOU, which was signed by all Saskatchewan post-secondary institutions that receive public funding, provides consistent funding to the sector over a four-year period, as we've outlined earlier, and outlines enhanced accountability requirements to ensure the ministry is better able to report on how each institution has uniquely targeted this investment to promote long-term financial sustainability. The forums for our legislative framework serve as an anchor to support these ongoing accountability efforts. Ministry officials consulted with post-secondary education institutions on each of these accountability initiatives, and Bill 61 was developed with their input and collaboration.

One overall objective of 61 is to clearly articulate the minister's roles, responsibilities, and obligations within the post-secondary education system. Within the current Act, the minister's authority was very broad, and Bill 61 adds additional details to better articulate what the minister must do and what the minister may do to fill the assigned mandate.

The powers section does not provide any additional ministerial oversight than what currently exists. It either maintains or provides greater specificity than what is in the existing Act. While the proposed new Act better articulates the minister's role to ensure oversight for the entire sector, the changes will not interfere with the crucial role of boards of governors to oversee their institutions. The new Act also complements existing post-secondary education legislation that articulates the powers and responsibilities of institutions and their boards to manage their operations.

The second objective of the bill is to apply oversight and accountability practices to all institutions that received government funding prior to this bill. Legislated accountability requirements were inconsistent between institutions and, in some cases, did not exist for institutions that do not have public Acts. Bill 61 aims to create a more consistent level of oversight and accountability across a diverse set of post-secondary education and skills training institutions that receive public dollars. The bill also reflects efforts to improve data collection and reporting and

align with the expectations outlined in the government's multi-year funding MOU.

So, Mr. Chair, in closing, I would like to emphasize the updated legislation better supports Saskatchewan's critical investment in the post-secondary education sector. And I'd be happy to answer any questions.

[21:15]

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Bowes, the floor is yours.

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thanks for your remarks, Minister. I understand that, you know, throughout adjourned debate you've heard the opposition's thoughts around this bill. And not thoughts that again are intended to be ideological or political in nature, but perspectives that have been shaped by numerous stakeholders who I, as the critic, have been consulting with and who some of my other colleagues have heard from as well in the course of their work as members of the Assembly.

And so I would like to get into . . . I know we have limited time here, so I'd like to just ask some general questions about a few specific aspects of the bill. The first I'll start with is, specifically what accountability measures will be implemented? And the second part: what specific criteria are included in the performance framework?

The Chair: — Committee members, I'll just remind you, we have a loose agreement to go till 10 o'clock. So I know Ms. Bowes has a number of questions, so if we could keep our answers tight and succinct, that would be helpful.

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — So some general comments and then I'll maybe get Lindell, some follow-ups to do with that.

So again I think I mentioned in my opening comments there, this stems from auditor recommendations. And so our efforts to enhance accountability in the post-secondary sector follow the two recommendations from the auditor: establish measurable targets to enable monitoring of the achievement of our strategies — ours, the ministry — analyze gaps in achieving our strategies, and use the analysis when determining how to best engage post-secondary institutions to contribute to the ministry's strategies.

So to address those recommendations, we've been working to more clearly articulate ministry goals and expectations, but understand how the sector is aligning with those goals and expectations, ensure we have the right information data to measure the sector's success.

So again, the bill reflects seven years of collaborative work with the sector. Extensive consultation and feedback was taken to demonstrate the incredible value of our public investment in Saskatchewan's post-secondary and training sector. So this performance was done before this bill. I would like to point that out as well.

So in terms of the accountability measures in clause 4, it's a term used in the bill to refer to any measures that may be used to help government understand the impact of our grants or funding

provided to the institution. So again, I think, a great example is the multi-year funding agreement we had with the sector and, you know, what we want to see from that investment in terms of long-term sustainability.

And you know, those reports are required from those institutions twice yearly on what they're up to with those funds. And we want to work together with those institutions to drive that sustainability. And the five sort of overarching areas that we came up . . . or the ministry came up with as a result of the auditor's intervention: accessible, responsive, accountable, sustainable, and high quality. And so that's sort of the criteria, overarching criteria we want to see from the sector.

Again, this is work that has already been undertaken. With this legislation, we want to make sure that it's clear to the sector, and the sector is on board with this to demonstrate the good work being done. And the expenditures and institutions I think realize that they are a public institution and they want to, you know, prove to the public that, you know, they are doing great things that they are. So with that, Mr. Veitch, if you had any other comments that would help with the answer.

Mr. Veitch: — Thanks, Minister. Lindell Veitch, executive director. As the minister said, our accountability journey has been going on for a number of years. In 2015, the auditor asked the ministry to be more diligent about making sure that we understood how public money was being used in the post-secondary system. And so we launched an indicators project to gather data from all the post-secondary institutions.

In 2016, as the minister mentioned, we launched these five expectations for post-secondary. We defined what each of them means, so the definition of what accessible, accountable, sustainable, high quality, and responsive means to the post-secondary institutions. Over the next number of years, we embedded those expectations into ministry budget letters, reports, and we saw those reflected back to the ministry from our various institutions.

And then in 2020, we launched a performance framework that we built collaboratively with the post-secondary institutions. The framework involves indicators aligned to each of those five expectations. So for instance, "successful" means offering qualified people the opportunity to attend and succeed in post-secondary education. We then defined what that means in the context of Saskatchewan's post-secondary system. We identified a number of government priorities that are linked to that, including things like target groups like First Nations and Métis students; students with disabilities; making sure that the health, safety, and well-being of students, faculty, and staff is improved. And we also started to align that with various data points to understand how the whole sector in Saskatchewan was doing in terms of accessibility.

So that's the crux of our performance framework. We're currently in development of the next steps of that framework, working with institutions to figure out which data they would like to associate with those expectations. So the performance framework is co-developed and it's driven both by the ministry and by the institutions.

Ms. Bowes: — I guess stemming from that question and those

answers, what metrics will be utilized under the performance framework?

Mr. Veitch: — So I can provide a bit more detail in terms of what the indicators look like that are coming from both the government side and from institutions. So as part of our data collection, we look at things like the number of credentials awarded to students in various programs, the enrolment at our post-secondary institutions, and then equally our institutions provide indicators back to us. So I have some examples here from the big three institutions — the two universities and Saskatchewan Polytechnic — and these indicators both align with the government expectations and with the individual priorities of the institutions.

So from the U of R for instance, when it comes to “accessibility,” their indicators that they’ve provided to us focus on courses available outside of Regina and Saskatoon, speaking to, you know, the broad nature of post-secondary across the province. In terms of “responsiveness,” programs with a work-integrated learning component. When it comes to “quality,” they measure student satisfaction. For “sustainability,” they look at things like a balanced operating fund, percentage surplus versus deficit. And under “accountability,” they look at administrative transparency. And so they’ve defined each of these terms for themselves. They track the numbers, and we work with them to self-assess where they’re at in each of those cases.

I can provide additional examples. For instance, at Sask Polytechnic they look at, under “accessible,” the number of programs with flexible delivery; under “sustainable,” the graduate employment rate; under “accountable,” the graduate provincial retention rate. The U of S is looking at things like, under “responsive,” experience-based learning for undergraduate students; under “sustainable,” the number or amount of philanthropic support that the institution receives. So a wide range of potential indicators.

Ms. Bowes: — Okay, thanks. I certainly have many more questions around this but not enough time. So I would ask that the performance framework be tabled at the next meeting. Is that agreeable?

Mr. Veitch: — The performance framework was launched last year during our budget, 2020-21 budget, and it’s included as the appendix to the budget letter. So it is available online, but we can always provide a copy of that as well.

Ms. Bowes: — Okay. Thank you. Like I said, I’m going to move on really quickly here. And so next question, Minister, is around a letter that I was copied on from the Saskatchewan Information and Privacy Commissioner to yourself, December 1st, 2021, where the commissioner outlined a number of concerns and suggestions relating to Bill 61.

And I am wanting to know if the concerns expressed by the commissioner relating to the collection, protection, and reporting on student data were considered. And if so, will they be addressed by your ministry?

[21:30]

Mr. Veitch: — So I can provide a bit of a background around

this one. We did receive the letter from the Privacy Commissioner raising some concerns about certain clauses in the bill. We followed up with the commissioner, had a very good meeting. Had a solid dialogue on his concerns and were able to address them in the meeting.

So I can run through exactly what his concerns were. There was a desire to see more use of de-identified data, so data that doesn’t in any way point to the individual. However, our legislation requires that we have that ability to use identified data. Our default of course as a ministry is to try wherever possible to use de-identified information, but there is a mix of identified data that does have to come into the ministry. In particular, we share this bill as well with the Ministry of Immigration and Career Training, and a number of their federal cost claims require that they identify individuals through social insurance numbers and other things like that.

So we had that discussion with the Privacy Commissioner, noted that uniqueness about our use of identified data. And the Ministry of Immigration and Career Training also emphasized that wherever possible they try to deal with consent upfront so it’s very clear to anybody whose information is being used how it’s being used and that they are clearly informed in advance about that information.

The other piece that the Privacy Commissioner mentioned is that more of our institutions should be captured under *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection Of Privacy Act*, otherwise called LAFOIP. So that provision wouldn’t be captured under Advanced Education’s legislation, it would be treated through other legislation by the Ministry of Justice. So we dealt with that piece.

Currently there is three institutions in the post-secondary system that aren’t covered by LAFOIP. Those are our Indigenous institutions, so First Nations University of Canada; the Gabriel Dumont Institute; and the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies. So if government was to consider including those institutions, there’d have to be consultations with them undertaken by another ministry.

And the last piece was just adding some clarity into our bill around the freedom of information Act and *The Health Information Protection Act*. And we felt that the clauses that we included in our Act were not in any way untoward or too broad, but we felt they met the needs of the ministries.

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you. I’m going to move on to my last question here before I move into a set of motions for amendments. I guess we’re running short here so if we can keep her tight.

Throughout my consultations with stakeholders around this bill, concern was expressed by multiple stakeholders that the bill may create a mechanism for performance-based funding. And now I know the minister has stated that bringing in performance-based funding is not the intention of Bill 61. So my question to the minister: will the minister provide unqualified assurance that the ministry will not pursue performance-based funding for our province’s post-secondary institutions?

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — So I guess what I’d say to that question

right now, Mr. Chair and committee members, there's a couple of points. This bill does not disallow nor does it allow any sort of performance situation. You know, that's outside of this bill. And so you know, that's more of a policy or would be part of an appropriation from the government. That's sort of not what this bill is intending. We've certainly been over that.

We do currently have a multi-year funding agreement, which I noted started in '21 and goes for four years, and that is what we've committed to for our term in government. And it has the parameters and what we've set, and we expect good collaboration between the ministry and the sector to continue.

You know, I would say with this bill we've seen, certainly in the media, there is . . . they are certainly on board with the multi-year funding, as I've mentioned earlier. But I would say Dr. Keshen from the U of R in an article, and I'm quoting here:

I know this bill itself doesn't move in that direction and again it was a highly collaborative process with government. I continue to look for that relationship that we have with government going forward.

You know, past the four years, we'll certainly continue to work with the sector and consult with them as we go forward.

Ms. Bowes: — Okay. Thank you for your response. I will note that I did not hear you, Minister, ruling out the possibility of the ministry bringing in performance-based funding in your answer. With that, Mr. Chair, that concludes my general line of questioning, and I'm okay to proceed from here.

The Chair: — All right. Proceed. All right. Are there any more questions or comments from any committee members? Seeing none, we will proceed with the vote on the clauses.

Clause 1, short title, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

[Clauses 2 to 5 inclusive agreed to.]

Clause 6

Ms. Bowes: — Mr. Chair, I'd like to make a motion to amend clause 6.

The Chair: — Okay. Go ahead. Ms. Bowes has moved an amendment to clause 6. Would you please read your amendment?

Ms. Bowes: — Yes. I would like to amend to create a new 6(3) of the bill to read as follows, and to immediately follow after 6(2) of the bill. It reads as follows:

“(3) The minister shall not:

(a) use student performance or achievement as a factor or indicia in any evaluation system, mechanism, accountability measure, term or condition referred to in

this Act; or

(b) use student performance or achievement in any way to constitute a breach of any requirement of this Act, any regulation, or any term or condition imposed on a grant or funding.”

The Chair: — All right. Committee members, Ms. Bowes has moved an amendment to clause 6. Do committee members agree with the amendment as read?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Chair: — All right, if we could just do that again. Those in favour of the amendment please say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Chair: — Those opposed to the amendment please say no.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Chair: — I believe the nos have it.

Ms. Bowes: — Mr. Chair, I would like to request a recorded vote.

The Chair: — Okay. A recorded vote has been called. The question before the committee is the amendment to clause 6 proposed by Ms. Bowes. All those in favour of the amendment please raise your hand. Ms. Bowes. All those opposed to the motion please raise your hand. Mr. Nerlien, Mr. . . . Let the record show that all members on the government side have voted against it.

Those in favour of the motion, one; those opposed to the motion, five. The amendment is defeated.

[21:45]

We will continue with the original clause. Clause 6, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Chair: — Carried.

[Clause 6 agreed to.]

[Clause 7 agreed to.]

Clause 8

The Chair: — Clause 8, is that agreed?

Ms. Bowes: — Mr. Chair, I'd like to make a motion to amend clause 8.

The Chair: — Ms. Bowes has moved an amendment to clause 8. Ms. Bowes, if you could please read your amendment.

Ms. Bowes: — The amendment is to clause 8(1) of the bill, and the amendment is to strike out the words:

. . . “performance and outcomes”.

The Chair: — Ms. Bowes has moved an amendment to clause 8(1)(b). Do committee members agree with the amendment as read?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

Ms. Bowes: — Mr. Chair, I’d like to request a recorded vote.

The Chair: — All right. Those in favour of the amendment please say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Chair: — Those opposed to the amendment please say no.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Chair: — I think the nos have it. A recorded vote has been called. The question before the committee is proposed by Ms. Bowes. All those in favour of the amendment please raise your hand. One. All those opposed to the motion please raise your hand. Five. The amendment is defeated.

We will continue with the original clause. Clause 8, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

[Clause 8 agreed to.]

[Clause 9 agreed to.]

Clause 10

The Chair: — Clause 10, is that agreed?

Ms. Bowes: — Mr. Chair, I would like to move an amendment — actually multiple amendments — to clause 10.

The Chair: — All right, begin with your first amendment.

Ms. Bowes: — The first amendment to clause 10 is to clause 10(3) of the bill. So to:

Amend Clause 10(3)(c) of the . . . Bill **by striking out** [the words] “, retention and completion” **and substituting** [the words] “and retention”.

The Chair: — All right, the amendment’s in order. Ms. Bowes has moved an amendment to clause 10(3)(c). Those in favour of the amendment say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Chair: — One. Those opposed to the amendment please say no.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

Ms. Bowes: — Mr. Chair, I would like to request a recorded vote.

The Chair: — All right. A recorded vote has been requested. The question before the committee is an amendment to clause 10(3)(c). All those in favour of the amendment please raise your hand. One, Ms. Bowes. Those against the amendment please raise your hand. Five. The amendment is defeated.

We will continue with the original clause. Clause 10, is that agreed?

Ms. Bowes: — I have a further amendment, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: — Okay. Please state your amendment.

Ms. Bowes: — The further amendment is add to clause 10(3) of the bill. To:

Amend Clause 10(3) of the . . . Bill **by striking out clause (h).**

in its entirety.

The Chair: — The Clerk advises me that the most recent amendment is in order. Ms. Bowes has moved an amendment to clause 10(3)(h). Do committee members agree with the amendment?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Chair: — Those in favour of the amendment please say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Chair: — Those opposed to the amendment please say no.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Chair: — I believe the nos have it.

Ms. Bowes: — Mr. Chair, I’d like a recorded vote, please.

The Chair: — A recorded vote has been called. The question before the committee is the amendment to 10(3)(h). All those in favour of the amendment please raise your hand. One. All those opposed to the motion please raise your hand. Five. The amendment is defeated.

We will continue with the original clause. Clause 10, is that agreed?

Ms. Bowes: — Mr. Chair, I have one further amendment.

The Chair: — All right. Ms. Bowes has a further amendment. Please read your amendment.

Ms. Bowes: — The amendment is to create, with clause 10, a new (6). And the following new clause after 10(5) of the bill would read:

“(6) Where practicable, only de-identified student information shall be collected, used or disclosed for the purposes mentioned in clause (3), if it will serve the purpose.”

The Chair: — All right, thank you. In discussions with the Clerk, we had some extensive discussions and we have ruled that the amendment is indeed in order.

So Ms. Bowes has moved an amendment to clause 10, adding subsection (6). Do committee members agree with this amendment as read?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

Those in favour of the amendment please say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Chair: — Those opposed to the amendment please say no.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Chair: — I believe the nos have it.

Ms. Bowes: — Mr. Chair, I would like to request a recorded vote.

The Chair: — A recorded vote has been called. The question before the committee is the addition of 10(6). All those in favour of the amendment please raise your hand. One. All those opposed to the motion please raise your hand. Five. The amendment is defeated.

We will continue with the original clause. Clause 10, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Chair: — Carried.

[Clause 10 agreed to.]

[Clauses 11 to 16 inclusive agreed to.]

The Chair: — Committee members, Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: *The Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training Act, 2021*.

I would ask a member to move that we report Bill No. 61, *The Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training Act, 2021*, without amendment. Mr. Nerlien moves. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Minister, do you have any closing comments?

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — No. Again, similar quick comments. Thanks to the committee members. Thanks to the officials for your time tonight.

The Chair: — Thank you very much to the critic, to the minister, officials, and colleagues here today. That concludes our business today. I would ask that a member move a motion of adjournment. Mr. Domotor. All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Have a good evening . . . Sorry, this committee stands adjourned until Tuesday, April 5th at 3:15 p.m. Thanks very much.

[The committee adjourned at 21:56.]