

Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

Speaker

Hon. Tony Akoak
(Gjoa Haven)

Hon. David Akeeagok
(Quttiktuq)

*Minister of Environment; Minister of Economic
Development and Transportation; Minister of
Energy*

Joelie Kaernerck
(Amittuq)

Mary Killiktee
(Uqqummiut)

Karen Nutarak
(Tununiq)

Daniel Qavvik
(Hudson Bay)

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok
(Iqaluit-Niaqunngu)

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Intergovernmental Affairs; Minister responsible
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Indigenous Affairs; Minister responsible for the
Utility Rates Review Council*

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(Rankin Inlet South)

*Minister of Finance, Chair of the
Financial Management Board; Minister
responsible for the Nunavut Housing
Corporation*

Hon. Joanna Quassa
(Aggu)

*Minister of Culture and Heritage;
Minister of Languages; Minister
responsible for Seniors*

Bobby Anavilok
(Kugluktuk)

Janet Brewster
(Iqaluit-Sinaa)

Hon. Pamela Gross
(Cambridge Bay)

*Deputy Premier; Minister of Education; Minister
responsible for Nunavut Arctic College*

Adam Lightstone
(Iqaluit-Manirajak)

Hon. John Main
(Arviat North-Whale Cove)

*Minister of Health; Minister responsible
for Suicide Prevention*

Inagayuk Quqqiaq
(Netsilik)

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(Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield
Inlet)

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Joe Savikataaq
(Arviat South)

*Deputy Chair, Committee of the
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(Iqaluit-Tasiluk)

*Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of
the Whole*

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk
(Pangnirtung)

*Minister of Family Services; Minister
responsible for Homelessness; Minister of
Human Resources;*

Hon. Craig Simailak
(Baker Lake)

*Minister of Justice; Minister
responsible for Labour; Minister
responsible for the Qulliq Energy
Corporation*

Hon. David Joanasic
(South Baffin)

*Government House Leader; Minister of
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*Minister responsible for the Status of
Women; Minister responsible for the
Workers' Safety and Compensation
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Table of Contents

Opening Prayer.....	1
Ministers' Statements	1
Members' Statements	6
Returns to Oral Questions	10
Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery.....	11
Oral Questions.....	13
Tabling of Documents.....	34
Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters	35
Report of the Committee of the Whole	115
Orders of the Day	116

A.

Daily References

Monday, March 6, 2023 1

B.

Ministers' Statements

177 – 6(2): Minister Absent from the House (Joanasie) 1

178 – 6(2): Bilateral Meeting with Premier of Ontario (Akeeagok, P) 1

179 – 6(2): First Vessel to Use Iqaluit Deep Sea Port (Akeeagok, D) 2

180 – 6(2): GN Collections Management Workshop Series at the WAG (Quassa)..... 3

181 – 6(2): Red Seal Recipients (Nakashuk)..... 3

182 – 6(2): Team Nunavut – Canada Winter Games (Joanasie) 4

183 – 6(2): Sexual and Reproductive Health (Main) 5

C.

Members' Statements

228 – 6(2): Emergency Only at Sanirajak Health Centre (Kaernek) 6

229 – 6(2): Stop and Think before Suicide (Qavvik) 7

230 – 6(2): Elders Tea Program in Pond Inlet (Nutarak) 8

231 – 6(2): Addressing Issues with Cancer (Killiktee) 9

232 – 6(2): New Health Centre for Kugluktuk (Anavilok) 9

D.

Returns to Oral Questions

Return to Oral Question 289 – 6(2): Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Nunavut (Simailak) 10

Return to Oral Question 341 – 6(2): Fuel Prices (Joanasie)..... 11

E.

Oral Questions

350 – 6(2): Inuit Employment Statistics (Nutarak) 13

351 – 6(2): Screening for Health Risks (Killiktee)..... 14

352 – 6(2): On-the-Land Safety (Brewster) 17

353 – 6(2): Community Transportation Initiatives Program (Quqqiaq)..... 19

354 – 6(2): New Health Centre for Kugluktuk (Anavilok) 21

355 – 6(2): Emergency Only Status of Health Centres (Kaernek)..... 23

356 – 6(2): Medical Travel Concerns (Qavvik) 25

357 – 6(2): Safe Space Facility for Chesterfield Inlet (Sammurtok)..... 26

358 – 6(2): Decentralization and Devolution (Malliki)..... 28

359 – 6(2): Community Wellness Funding (Savikataaq) 30

360 – 6(2): Nunavut Cancer Rates (Killiktee)..... 31

F.

Tabling of Documents

111 – 6(2): Information and Privacy Commissioner’s Response to the Report of the Standing
Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts on the Review of
the 2020-21 and 2021-22 Annual Reports of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of
Nunavut (Speaker) 34

G.

Bills

Bill 18 – Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2023-2024 – Education –
Consideration in Committee 35

Bill 18 – Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2023-2024 – Nunavut Housing
Corporation – Consideration in Committee 112

Iqaluit, Nunavut
Monday, March 6, 2023

Members Present:

Hon. David Akeeagok, Hon. P.J. Akeeagok, Hon. Tony Akoak, Mr. Bobby Anavilok, Ms. Janet Brewster, Hon. Pamela Gross, Mr. George Hickes, Hon. David Joanasie, Mr. Joeline Kaerner, Ms. Mary Killiktee, Hon. John Main, Mr. Solomon Malliki, Hon. Margaret Nakashuk, Ms. Karen Nutarak, Mr. Daniel Qavvik, Hon. Joanna Quassa, Mr. Inagayuk Quqqiaq, Mr. Alexander Sammurtok, Mr. Joe Savikataaq, Hon. Craig Simailak.

>>*House commenced at 9:59*

Item 1: Opening Prayer

Speaker (Hon. Tony Akoak)(interpretation): Good morning. Before we proceed, Mr. Anavilok, can you say the opening prayer, please.

>>*Prayer*

Speaker (interpretation): Good morning my dear colleagues, and I hope you enjoyed your break over this weekend and that you were able to do the work that was required, and I am grateful that we are all able to be present at our sitting.

(interpretation ends) Before we start, I would like to say “hats off” to our doctors and nurses in Ottawa. They are very important and that’s why my family member is now in recovery. Thank you very much.

>>*Applause*

Ministers’ Statements. Hon. Government House Leader, Mr. Joanasie.

Item 2: Ministers’ Statements

Minister’s Statement 177 – 6(2): Minister Absent from the House

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, Nunavummiut.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise members that Minister Lorne Kusugak will be absent from the House today due to illness. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Ministers’ Statements. Hon. Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Minister’s Statement 178 – 6(2): Bilateral Meeting with Premier of Ontario

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Good morning. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s great to see you back in the House and we thought of your family.

I say “good morning” to my colleagues and Nunavummiut who are listening to the proceedings.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share that on February 7, I met with Ontario Premier Ford for a bilateral meeting in Ottawa.

Nunavut is reliant on our southern neighbours for goods and services. This is especially true for specialized health care we cannot provide in our territory.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank my friend, Premier Ford, for vocalizing his support for Canada’s territories at a national level, as together the provinces and territories negotiate health care funding with the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, Premier Ford has never been to Nunavut, and I have invited him to visit Iqaluit at his earliest convenience.

Mr. Speaker, through partnership with Premier Ford, our government plans to expand our relationship with the Province of Ontario. Together we can collaborate on economic opportunities in business and industry, as well as health and social wellness opportunities for Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Ministers’ Statements. Hon. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Minister’s Statement 179 – 6(2): First Vessel to Use Iqaluit Deep Sea Port

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Attagutsiak and Kalluk families are in my thoughts at this time.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to provide the Assembly with an update on the Iqaluit Deep Sea Port.

In September 2022 the port achieved substantial completion. It was our intention that it would be ready for use for the first arrivals in the 2023 shipping season.

Mr. Speaker, in mid-November it became apparent that we would have to advance this plan and have the facility ready for two fuel tankers arriving near the beginning of December. Our department worked closely the Petroleum Products Division at Community and Government Services, the vessel operators, and Uqsuq Corporation to ensure the site would be ready and that fuel could be safely and efficiently offloaded.

Mr. Speaker, with the support of the Coast Guard icebreaker, the Woodward’s MT Kitikmeot W fuel tanker arrived at our port on November 30, followed on December 1 by its sister ship, the MT Qikiqtaaluk W. Colleagues at the Petroleum Products Division at

Community and Government Services indicate that approximately 35 million litres of fuel were offloaded from the vessels. The success of these two operations under extremely challenging conditions will help inform our planning for future seasons.

I look forward to providing my colleagues with details on the Iqaluit Deep Sea Port operations in the spring sitting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Culture and Heritage, Ms. Quassa.

Minister's Statement 180 – 6(2): GN Collections Management Workshop Series at the WAG

Hon. Joanna Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say “good morning” to the people of Igloolik and Nunavummiut.

Mr. Speaker, in January 2023 the Department of Culture and Heritage held a heritage collections workshop at the Winnipeg Art Gallery. My department arranged for staff from museums, visitor's centres, and heritage centres across Nunavut to gather and exchange knowledge on the topics of Inuit heritage and belongings. Ten Nunavummiut participated representing Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet, Pangnirtung, Pond Inlet, Cambridge Bay, and Gjoa Haven.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Nunavut Fine Art Collection is currently housed at the Winnipeg Art Gallery on a five-year loan. This is my department's fourth workshop series done in partnership with the Winnipeg Art Gallery. These workshops focus on general museum practices, including methods of care and handling of our fine art pieces. Participants are also able to tour the Qaumajuq Art Gallery, which includes over 7,000 of the GN's art pieces.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Culture and Heritage is committed to the conservation, protection, promotion, and enhancement of our heritage collection. We are proud to offer and support these workshops that provide beneficial training to Nunavummiut working in heritage collections management. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

Minister's Statement 181 – 6(2): Red Seal Recipients

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, my colleagues and Nunavummiut.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the achievements of 14 Nunavummiut who, despite the significant challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic, earned Red Seal certification in their chosen trades.

(interpretation ends) Red Seal certification is the highest level of achievement in Canada for tradespersons. To achieve this certification, journeypersons must write an extensive exam covering all aspects of their trade and achieve a grade of at least 70 percent.

I would like to congratulate the following on their great achievement: Dennis Angnatsiak, Daniel Emmons, Christopher Freda, Sateana Goupil, Marc Illnik, Dustin Illnik, Raymond Makpah, Amelia Netser, Johnwayne O'Brien, Ryan Paungrat, Mishal Pewatoalook, Zorya Qaunaq, Cory Samok, and Matthew Uttaq.

Mr. Speaker, some of these individuals achieved their Red Seal certification through a pilot program where my department provided funding so that they could take Red Seal Exam preparation courses through remote learning. As a result of the success of this pilot project, my department now provides funding for any Nunavut-registered journeyperson to take a Red Seal Exam preparation program. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasie.

Minister's Statement 182 – 6(2): Team Nunavut – Canada Winter Games

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It has been a busy month for Team Nunavut.

Two weeks after the conclusion of the 2023 Arctic Winter Games, Team Nunavut headed to Prince Edward Island for the 2023 Canada Winter Games. Mr. Speaker, at the 2023 Canada Winter Games, we had athletes competing in hockey, table tennis, short-track speed skating, badminton, and judo.

The Canada Games provide an opportunity for our athletes to compete at the highest level of competition in a major multi games atmosphere.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to meet virtually with my federal, provincial and territorial colleagues to discuss important topics within the Canadian sport system, including our collaboration on Safe Sport and encouraging women and girls' participation in sport. (interpretation) Mr. Speaker, these initiatives require all coaches and mission staff to complete Safe Sport Training in order to participate with Team Nunavut.

I am pleased to report that we have over 54 Safe Sport trained coaches in the territory.

I look forward to sharing more on the initiatives we are undertaking to ensure sport in Nunavut is welcoming, inclusive, and free from harassment.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I invite Nunavummiut to join me in congratulating the athletes that represented our territory at the 2023 Canada Winter Games. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. *Atii aksut!* (interpretation ends) Go, Team Nunavut!

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Minister's Statement 183 – 6(2): Sexual and Reproductive Health

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning. It's great to see you back in the House.

(interpretation ends) *Uqaqtitsijii*, February 14 to 18 was Sexual Health Week across Canada. The theme this year was "Get the Facts" because we know having the right information is the best way to a safe and healthy lifestyle.

We live in a world where information is at our fingertips at every moment, the swipe of a phone or the click of a mouse. Unfortunately the Internet and social media isn't always the best source of health information and it can be hard to sort fact from fiction.

Knowing the facts isn't just about preventing sexually transmitted infections; it's about knowing what services are available to aid and promote good sexual health.

Along with testing for sexually transmitted infections, services in Nunavut include advice on family planning, mental health support, abortion services, and trans. services. All sexual health services in Nunavut are publicly funded and are considered essential care.

I want all Nunavummiut to know they have the right to access sexual health care and information about:

- Safer sex and testing for sexually transmitted infections;
- Contraception and family planning;
- Puberty and reproduction;
- Fostering healthy relationships; and
- Gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation.

I encourage Nunavummiut who need advice, support, or care in any of these areas to reach out to their health centre or medical provider for assistance.

The Government of Nunavut's Health website, irespectmyself.ca, also has valuable and accurate information for Nunavummiut to access on these important topics. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Item 3. Members' Statements. Member for Amittuq, Mr. Kaernerck.

Item 3: Members' Statements

Member's Statement 228 – 6(2): Emergency Only at Sanirajak Health Centre

Mr. Kaernerck: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to show my condolences to my community, as there was a death that occurred last night.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the ongoing concerns in Sanirajak.

Mr. Speaker, since last summer, the Sanirajak Community Health Centre has been constantly on emergency services only, and I do recognize that the health centres are understaffed. The nurses need rest and I greatly appreciate the services that they provide in the community that they provide the services. It's often above and beyond their duties, Mr. Speaker.

However, there are times when an emergency is just that, an emergency, and people need to have confidence that their emergency is going to be addressed in a timely manner.

Mr. Speaker, again, the residents of Sanirajak are told to be patient if they need to go to the health centre after hours. The community is trying very hard to respect that, to respect this when it's an after-hours call.

Mr. Speaker, again, when community members are told to call out for assistance or they are required to use the virtual care, they anticipate a prompt response, especially when they have urgent concerns.

I apologize for this, Mr. Speaker.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are none. Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernerck: Thank you, colleagues. I'm not usually like this. I guess I'm too compassionate and passive guy, but hey, what can you say, Mr. Speaker? Thank you, members.

Mr. Speaker, I call upon our government to take immediate steps to improve the levels of emergency services available at community health centres and through the telephone and virtual services. I call upon the government to take immediate action.

Nunavummiut should have access to the health services they need, when and where they need them. Nunavummiut need to know that in an emergency, they are not left without any response or support.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I strongly encourage our government to make the provision of emergency health services a top priority for all communities before another tragedy occurs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Members' Statements. Hon. Member for Hudson Bay, Mr. Qavvik.

Member's Statement 229 – 6(2): Stop and Think before Suicide

Mr. Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, colleagues.

I have a message for the people of Nunavut this morning, especially to the young people of Nunavut. My objective for my member's statement today is: stop and think about suicide and youth.

I read on Facebook one morning another young person has died
How many in the family will weep and cry?
That's the tenth one this week, so stop and think will your momma cry?

Many wonder in their wandering mind, what is going on in your young mind
And as your father buries you, will he drop on his knees and whisper "why?"
A cry out for help
What is going on among our young
A cry out for help
This has got to stop, so we can move on
Do you ever wonder what would happen if you try?
Stop and think, your grandma who loves you, will feel like slowly dying
Your grandpa, who taught you so much, will walk around wondering, "what did I do wrong?"

Your friend, who walked beside you, will wonder if I only had been there, would you still be here?
Your partner cries and yells out, why?
Plays the same music, wishing you still held her dear
Wishing you still held him dear
Thinks about suicide, dark thoughts into the mind
Stop and think, will that change or bring her home?

Will that change or bring him home?

Stop and think

You're now just a stat of people gone

Stop and think

You are now just a picture on the wall

Stop and think

Your father will still whisper, "why?"

Stop and think

Yes, your momma will still cry.

(interpretation) Life is precious, and we are all loved by everyone. That's all. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Tununiq, Ms. Nutarak.

Member's Statement 230 – 6(2): Elders Tea Program in Pond Inlet

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the families enduring these hardships, we sympathize and feel for their loss.

Mr. Speaker, back in 1995, an elders' soup kitchen program was initiated by Hannah Quaraq, who, due to her mother's insistence and encouragement, provided a healthy meal for the local elders and those who had lost their spouses.

She used her own money to initiate this elders' food supplemental program, and it was not until another program was introduced, specifically (interpretation ends) Home Care (interpretation) that Hannah Quaraq was able to start working in that position, and begin using the program funding, Mr. Speaker.

Now, I ended up being the successor to Hannah in 2005 for the homecare program, and we implemented the nutritional supplements every Wednesday by offering an elders' feast and also cooking nutritious and healthy foods with them, to teach recipes.

As well, we included life skills training for living a good life, along with age-appropriate exercise programs and I am quite ecstatic to state that today, this program is still running successfully and it is called in English (interpretation ends) the Elders Tea Program (interpretation) and it is funded in part by the Diabetes foundation.

The elders still gather weekly to partake in the nutritious foods offered at their meeting, and most often it is country food they share, and they socialize and banter. As well, other groups take this opportunity to meet with the elders, and they share in being both taught and teaching the other party about issues. They sometimes are gathered to get their opinions.

This year, it is the 28th year where the elders gather and I take pride in this program, and I want to publicly acknowledge Hannah Quaraq for having initiated this weekly elder's program. I ask my colleagues to share in celebrating Hannah's hard work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Uqqurmiut, Ms. Killiktee.

Member's Statement 231 – 6(2): Addressing Issues with Cancer

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Good morning, colleagues, members, and Nunavummiut. (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(interpretation) At this time, I rise to speak of an unsavoury subject. However, it revolves around our lives up in the north, which is continually cropping up seemingly without any interim gaps, this disease of (interpretation ends) cancer. (interpretation) Mr. Speaker, today, many Inuit are suffering many diseases that occur with great speed, and this disease of cancer seems to be growing in leaps and bounds.

Mr. Speaker, (interpretation ends) in this lifetime now, when our loved ones, friends, community members are given the tragic news about illness or cancer, we all get affected.

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, for this reason, this has to be our utmost concern due to the vast implications because of its seriousness. At the appropriate time I will ask my questions to the Minister of Health on this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Kugluktuk, Mr. Anavilok.

Member's Statement 232 – 6(2): New Health Centre for Kugluktuk

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say "good day" to Nunavummiut and my colleagues. The topic that I would like to address today is in regard to the healthcare centre in Kugluktuk.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the urgent need for a new, larger, better-equipped health centre for the community of Kugluktuk. Mr. Speaker, I first wish to acknowledge the excellent work being done by our healthcare workers at the Kugluktuk community centre. The Kugluktuk care team includes: a supervisor of health programs for community health nurses; a public health nurse; a licensed practitioner nurse; a homecare supervisor; a homecare nurse; two mental health nurses; three mental health workers; and a paramedic, all serving a population of over 1600 people.

Mr. Speaker, this team works out of a building with only four clinic rooms. You can imagine how the lack of space impacts their work and when there are specialist clinics, they need to accommodate the extra doctors, nurses, and other staff. Mr. Speaker, the community of Kugluktuk needs a larger health centre to meet the needs of our growing population. We need a facility that is big enough for the current healthcare team to work out of, and the space needed when it runs clinics when the medical specialist teams visit. It is important to have adequate space to be able to deliver the quality of health care that Kugluktuk residents deserve.

Mr. Speaker, the *Katujjiluta* mandate identifies elders and aging with dignity as key priority areas for our government. Kugluktuk residents have expressed the concern that elders should be able to remain in their home community for as much of their lives as possible. It has been further suggested that a new health centre should include four to six beds that can be dedicated to elder care. I look forward to seeing a new health centre for Kugluktuk being included in the capital plan. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Members' Statements. I have no more names. Item 4. Returns to Oral Questions. Hon. Minister of Justice, Mr. Simailak.

Item 4: Returns to Oral Questions

Return to Oral Question 289 – 6(2): Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Nunavut

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a Return to Oral Question 289 – 6(2), asked by the Member for Uqqummiut on February 27, 2023, concerning the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, this return is quite detailed. I have filed it with the Clerk for transcribing into *Hansard* for the public record, and for distribution to all members.

I would like to supplement my answer to my colleague, Ms. Killiktee, who had asked about adequate housing for RCMP officers in her riding. She requested clarification how local housing for police officers is secured and what the process is for renewing a housing rental contact?

The initial answer I provided was that if there are local realty companies that leases out units to the Government of Nunavut or Community and Government Services, there are some Government of Nunavut apartment units that are available.

However, under our Territorial Police Services Agreement (TPSA) with the RCMP, the Government of Nunavut provides funding through the accommodation program for the RCMP to build and lease housing. The RCMP and Public Works and Government Services Canada are responsible for the acquisition and construction of housing for RCMP members in Nunavut.

The RCMP have many units across Nunavut which they have built and own, and they continue to look to expand their owned stock through new construction. RCMP and Public Works and Government Services Canada also lease housing units on the private market for the use of RCMP members.

In rare circumstances, the Department of Justice will work with the Nunavut Housing Corporation to sublease housing units for RCMP. This is only done in circumstances where there is no other recourse and is to be a temporary solution to allow the RCMP and Public Works to acquire their own units.

RCMP housing priorities are determined based on number of members in the community, growth trends, the state and adequacy of current stock, number of occupants in a unit, and the private market availability. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Item 4. Returns to Oral Questions. Hon. Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasie.

Return to Oral Question 341 – 6(2): Fuel Prices

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to supplement an answer I gave during question period on March 3, 2023, Oral Question 341 – 6(2). The Member for Aivilik requested information on petroleum products on the current volume of fuel purchased for the 2023 resupply.

Mr. Speaker, as of today, or March 3... . Not today, but March 3, the Petroleum Products Division has purchased a total of 125 million litres of bulk fuel, representing 55 percent of the total volume of fuel to be purchased for the 2023 resupply. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Item. 5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member for Pangnirtung, Ms. Nakashuk.

Item 5: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During my ministers' statement I announced that there were students learning on-the-job and that there were 14 students who can work anywhere in Canada due to their qualifications.

Today, some of them are here in the Gallery and although we wanted to see them all, not everyone was able to attend. The visitors today are part of the recently graduating class and I wanted to recognize several of them: Daniel Emmons, an electrician (interpretation ends) certified journeyman (interpretation) and further;

>>Applause

Johnny Wayne O'Brien, a plumber journeyman, but the other person just left who I wanted to recognize, Sateana Gulpil, which is unfortunate but please welcome all the recent graduates. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Welcome to your Assembly. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member for Iqaluit-Sinaa, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, Iqalummiut and all Nunavummiut. I am also really happy to recognize Daniel Emmons. I think anybody who's ever had any electrical problems will be really happy to know that we have yet another young Inuk who is certified to help us to maintain our homes, and businesses. Welcome to your House, Daniel.

Mr. Speaker, it is not very often that we get the opportunity to recognize our friends and people who support us in becoming elected. I'm really, really happy to recognize my friend, John Wayne O'Brien. Yes, his name is John Wayne.

>>Laughter

John Wayne was a member of my campaign team, and worked really hard to get me here where I am today and I appreciate that. The world needs more plumbers, and I'm really happy and proud to say that John Wayne is certified now as a journeyman. I know that he put a lot of years of work into that, and made some big sacrifices to accomplish that. I'm really proud, proud, proud that you are here today, John Wayne. Welcome. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Welcome to your Assembly. I guess the Duke is here.

>>Laughter

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member for Iqaluit-Niaqunngu, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker for recognizing me as I too wish to welcome warmly the visitors to our House. Actually to their House, and I wanted to congratulate them for their accomplishments, and especially Daniel, who provided a lot of assistance when I was building our cabin, and to date I am very grateful for that, and I learned a lot of skills just for helping me that time.

Now, the reason why I rose, Mr. Speaker, is to acknowledge my good friend who I have viewed at a very high level, and with whom I have worked for, for many, many years at NTI and Qikiqtani Inuit Association. For many years, she has been working as the

language holder for Nunavut; Emily Illnik. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>*Applause*

Speaker: Welcome to your Assembly. Recognition of Visitors to the Gallery. I have no more names. Item 6. Oral Questions. Member for Tununiq, Ms. Nutarak.

Item 6: Oral Questions

Question 350 – 6(2): Inuit Employment Statistics

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question this morning to the minister of CGS; Community and Government Services. I would like to return to a question that I have previously asked that was in regard to employees.

When the minister was sitting at the witness table and we were dealing with budget estimates, while examining a five-year period, beginning in 2018, looking at Inuit employment from 2018 to 2021, 11 to 13 Inuit employees were hired. In 2022 the number of Inuit employees hired went down to eight. Looking at this, the number of Inuit employees has decreased dramatically. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister if they have noticed this drastic decrease in the number of Inuit employees being hired. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to thank the Member for Tununiq for her question. In regard to the number of Inuit employees in the Tununiq region, we definitely make an effort to stay updated on the numbers. Mr. Speaker, we pay close attention to the number of Inuit employees that fill those positions, and we are also looking at the vacant positions.

We are able to monitor the numbers carefully because Inuit employee statistics are organized by level; whether it be municipalities or various departments, and they do report the information to HR every three months and we review that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I should have explained further that I am talking about Pond Inlet office employees. The number of Inuit employees in Pond Inlet has drastically gone down. Can the minister try to find out why the number of Inuit employees are going down? I would like to know why that is occurring. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to thank the member again for that question. The Department Human Resources is the one that has the responsibility for employees. I know that some employees have resigned.

I know that the Department of Human Resources provides an exit questionnaire at the end of an individual's employment. If they fill out the forms, we can have a better idea why the Pond Inlet employees have left the workforce, and I can get back to my colleague. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister. I would like to see the results. I am sure there are policies in place within the government where you can review the status of why employees are resigning, and the reason why they are resigning. I request that these be reviewed again. Why is this occurring in Pond Inlet where employees are resigning. There are many qualified Inuit up there, but they're usually replaced when they are capable of doing their jobs. That's just a comment, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Just a comment, but if the minister wants to respond. Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to reiterate that our department does also review the casuals. If we have casuals, we look at the ways of how we can bring them up to the level with their positions. I'm sure these opportunities are available in Pond Inlet and I can make that request. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Uqqummiut, Ms. Killiktee.

Question 351 – 6(2): Screening for Health Risks

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Health.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, it seems that the level of illness in Nunavut is growing rapidly across the north. Not having medical doctors in our communities poses additional challenges for addressing illness at its root. Earlier this sitting the minister announced the launch of colorectal screening program in the communities of Gjoa Haven, Arviat, and Pond Inlet this March.

Can the minister provide a more detailed update on when he anticipates this screening program will be expanded to other communities? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for her question. In regard to her question, this will be launched in three communities. According to my understanding, this is a pilot project in three communities, Arviat, Pond Inlet, and Gjoa Haven.

This is now being launched this month. As to when it will be expanded to all the communities of Nunavut, I don't know the date as yet, but perhaps within six months. We will do a pilot project, and later on, we can enhance the (interpretation ends) colorectal cancer screening program (interpretation) to other communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for his response.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, (interpretation) looking at the *Hansard* from February 27, 2023 the minister had stated that the department would like to expand this pilot project to other communities.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I believe that health screening programs can play a very important role in ensuring that Nunavummiut stay as healthy as possible.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister elaborate on what factors will determine whether his department will implement regular screening programs for such illnesses as cervical cancer, breast cancer, and lung cancer? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I thank the member for the question. In terms of the longer term vision, we absolutely want to put in place additional types of screening programs. Currently we have none in terms of organized screening activities. Currently what's being done across Nunavut is opportunistic screening, basically when things are flagged that screening is taking place, so this is a systematic approach to it.

In terms of the other types of cancers that the member mentioned, we do want to put in place screening programs for them, cervical cancer, breast cancer, and lung cancer. In terms of what would be required to bring those into place, it would be incumbent on the department to develop a business case as we did for the colorectal cancer screening program and get that business case approved through the Department of Finance first of all and then through the House to put those in place, but we want to go in that direction eventually, and colorectal cancer screening has been chosen as the first one to work on. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, absolutely! This is where we stand today, at the point of despair due to the devastation and impacts of incurable diseases on people, although some are treatable if caught early enough and we see that sometimes. Nonetheless, I have to move forward with this matter. Almost daily, we keep hearing about news happening to more people.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, we hear of more and more individuals who are diagnosed with cancer. After a long period of illness and waiting, by the time they are sent out of their community to see a doctor and the cancer is detected, they are given the sad news that it has already progressed too far.

Mr. Speaker, the most recent cancer statistics from Nunavut are from 1999 to 2011 and were published by the Department of Health in 2014. That was almost ten years ago. Will the minister commit to complying and tabling Nunavut's cancer statistics for this past decade in this House? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I do believe that the chief public health officer is preparing a report on that topic, so I don't believe my commitment is necessarily required. I believe that it's already in the works, so to speak, so I look forward to seeing those brought forward in terms of communicating with the public, making people aware around the risks of cancer. I think providing information is very important.

As I mentioned the other day, Mr. Speaker, there are things that people can do in their everyday lives. Two things you can do to reduce your risk of cancer is eat nutritious food and exercise regularly. Those two things taken together...I mean, there are other factors, but those two things taken together have a huge impact on cancer risks.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to add that Iqaluit will be hosting a Cancer Care for Nunavut Conference this coming May. It's going to be a very exciting event. A multidisciplinary group of doctors, nurses, oncologists, and others from right across Canada will be gathering here in Nunavut, including some of the specialists who treat Nunavummiut in the southern jurisdictions that we work with. The goals of that conference are to build towards care closer to home as well as build a roadmap for cancer care in the north. It's very exciting and I plan to follow that conference very closely. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Sinaa, Ms. Brewster.

Question 352 – 6(2): On-the-Land Safety

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Community and Government Services and they concern the issue of on-the-land safety.

Mr. Speaker, though I was raised not to complain about the weather, I think we all have our fingers crossed here in Iqaluit that the cold weather that we have been experiencing in recent weeks is finally over and that our harvesters and families will soon be enjoying more seasonal conditions as spring arrives.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues know that I like to begin committee meetings here in the Assembly with a safety briefing, as I believe that is a best practice. That is why I strongly support actions and initiatives that embrace and enhance safety in other spaces, including out-of-doors; outside.

Mr. Speaker, in reviewing his department's most recently tabled annual reports from Nunavut Emergency Management and the Office of the Fire Marshal, I noted some useful initiatives to provide information to the public. Can the minister highlight what specific new work is planned for the upcoming year? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for the question. Mr. Speaker, it gives me an opportunity to provide some sound bites. Around springtime is, we know, with brighter days and people want to get out more regularly. It's an opportunity to be safe out on the land. Mr. Speaker, our emergency management office has an ongoing, regular communication with the boots on the ground and we do have planning on developing on some search and rescue training across the territory and this is an ongoing thing that my department works with search and rescue organizations. We know that you can never be over prepared when you're going out on the land.

Along with that, we know that there have been some recent activities around here in Iqaluit, but these activities around being prepared for search or rescue operations. I would like to applaud our territorial and local participants that have taken training around this and they volunteer their time away from family, but over the coming years, there are more activities to anticipate. I look forward to those ongoing efforts by our volunteers and community members around this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Information published in the most recently tabled annual report from Nunavut Emergency Management includes descriptions of those very public information safety campaigns for "self-reliance on the land." I think that's really important, along with the traditional knowledge that we have around being safe on the land. I applaud these efforts and pay tribute to the many community

volunteers and members of our hunters and trappers organization who take part in search and rescue activities and operations.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister will be aware, there is an extensive network of emergency cabins in this area. A good suggestion that I have heard from constituents is that the department should work with the hunters and trappers organization and other partners to set up a network of “emergency boxes” in well-traversed locations that contain essential emergency supplies such as first aid kits, warm clothing, tarps, and other items that could help save lives in an emergency.

Will the minister commit to considering this idea and reporting back to the House at our upcoming spring sitting? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe with my colleague’s question the same way. For example, we do know that the trails between here and Kimmirut as well as Pangnirtung, there are cabins situated along the trails and I believe that is through the Department of Environment, but we will follow up with the recommendation that my colleague suggests, that we work with the hunters and trappers organizations and see where we can work better on this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for that response. I think anything that we can do to ensure that we save lives in emergency situations is extremely important and given the fact that when somebody runs into an emergency on the land, it really can very quickly become a life-or-death situation.

Mr. Speaker, information published in the most recently tabled annual report of the Office of the Fire Marshal indicates that the government adopted the *Building Code Act* in September 2018 with enforcement of building safety codes, including fire code requirements for new construction and renovation projects.

Mr. Speaker, I recognize that a cabin on the land is not going to be as large or complex a structure as a new school or a health centre, however, I believe very strongly that all structures should be safe. Can the minister clarify the extent to which fire code requirements extend to cabins and can he describe what assistance his department provides to Nunavut cabin owners in respect to fire safety training? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I think we can’t hit the message hard enough around making sure people return home safe when they are going out on the

land. So I advise Nunavummiut to take advantage of communication devices like SPOTs or other equipment that are readily available through different organizations.

To the question, Mr. Speaker, for traditional activities; hunting camps, or fishing camps and other similar buildings used for traditional activities that are not used for or intended to be for commercial purposes, these are exempt from building permits and as such, but I thank the member for bring up that we do want them to be safe, of course. In terms of the communication or the message that we provide to the communities, we work closely with each fire department through the municipalities on making sure that there is information education awareness around fire safety on different structures, both that are not through the permitting process, but also those which are built through the building code. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Netsilik, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Question 353 – 6(2): Community Transportation Initiatives Program

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I go on to ask my questions, I wanted to congratulate Matthew Uttak on your red seal certification according to the Minister of Family Services minister's statement. Congratulations Matthew and it's a job well done. I'm proud of you.

Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation. As the minister will recall, I have asked him a number of questions in the Legislative Assembly concerning his department's very important Community Transportation Initiatives Program, which is why I was very, very pleased to listen to his minister's statement last Friday.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister is aware, his department approved almost \$250,000 in funding under this program for three projects in Taloyoak and Kugaaruk during the 2019-2020 fiscal year.

Two of the projects related to access roads and one of the projects related to small-scale marine infrastructure.

Can the minister confirm which projects in Kugaaruk and Taloyoak received funding under the Community Transportation Initiatives Program during the recent 2020-21 and 2021-22 fiscal years? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That information I will be tabling in the very near days. I do have the documents ready to table onto which projects were approved and that were granted under that program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the minister is aware, my colleagues representing the constituencies of Amittuq and Hudson Bay have also been raising important concerns about this program.

As the minister is aware, his department's Community Transportation Initiatives Program Policy sunsetted in March of 2020, two years ago.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister provide a clear timetable for when an updated policy will be finalized and can he indicate what specific changes to the policy are being considered? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for raising the awareness of our expired policies. A number of policies under Economic Development have lapsed and my department is working on updating all of them. We are trying to make sure that we bundle them and make sure that we have the proper policies and procedures in this.

As for the Community Transportation Initiative Program, this is a very oversubscribed program. I don't plan on making a lot of significant changes because it is working. This is one that communities really like. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In his statement last Friday, the minister announced that call letters will be sent to Nunavut municipalities in April of this year, inviting funding submissions to his department under the Community Transportation Initiatives Program.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud this proactive action, and I encourage both of my communities' municipalities to apply for funding.

Will the minister commit to ensuring that all Members of the Legislative Assembly receive copies of the call letter that is being sent to municipalities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Mr. Speaker, yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Kugluktuk, Mr. Anavilok.

Question 354 – 6(2): New Health Centre for Kugluktuk

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Health.

Mr. Speaker, in my member's statement I spoke about the wonderful health care team in Kugluktuk and the constraints they face in delivering health care services in the community.

Can the minister describe how his department evaluates the need for space and resources to deliver high quality health care in a community? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for that question. (interpretation ends) First of all, in terms of Kugluktuk, I look forward to travelling to the community. I do have plans to visit Kugluktuk and meet with the hamlet council as well as see the facility and meet with our health staff myself. I look forward to that. My understanding is that health care service delivery is being impacted by the facility or the inadequacy of the facility and so that's a big concern. I have already visited Qikiqtarjuaq, so I expect to see similar pressures.

In terms of the member's question, the GN uses 13 criteria to understand, evaluate, and rank capital projects for potential investment. This system helps departments understand and decide how to best invest limited taxpayer dollars across our territory with a significant infrastructure need. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for his response. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, it is clear the health centre in Kugluktuk is no longer big enough to accommodate the health care programs as well as the specialist clinics.

Can the minister tell us when he anticipates introducing a new health centre project for Kugluktuk into the capital plan? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) As soon as possible. It is a case of Health needing to secure the infrastructure dollars to get our projects actioned and the concerning situation with Qikiqtarjuaq where we had completed the initial planning and now we're looking at a potential... . Based on the current planning, the planning was completed and now we're looking at like a six-year gap between when the planning was completed and then when we're planning to go into

detailed planning and design. I think that paints a picture of how difficult it has been for Health to find the infrastructure dollars that we desperately need.

On Kugluktuk, I really can't say a date as to when we would be introducing that into the capital plan. It's all a case of competing needs within the government and it's incumbent also on Health to find the dollars and we have been pushing quite hard with our federal partners, raising the issue of health infrastructure, not just health centres but also long-term care and other types of infrastructure, mental health related infrastructure, and I really look forward to further collaboration with our federal partners. I believe that there is some potential there for some infrastructure assistance from them that would help us get things built here in Nunavut. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for his response. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the minister bringing forward Kugluktuk's new health centre project in the next capital plan.

As I mentioned in my member's statement, the new health centre could also include a number of beds dedicated for long-term care so that our elders don't have to leave the community when they require more medical care.

Will the minister commit to including beds for elders in the plans for the new health centre in Kugluktuk? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) In terms of that future facility, in terms of the different elements that would be included, it's not my role as minister to tell the department what a specific facility is going to look like.

In terms of health centres, we're continually updating our designs. The most recent health centre built in Nunavut is in Sanikiluaq, so already we're looking at Sanikiluaq, looking towards Qikiqtarjuaq which will be the next one built, we believe, and looking at how we can change the design from Sanikiluaq and learn from that experience to continually making the designs better.

In terms of including elders' accommodations within health centres, currently only Cambridge Bay has a continuing care centre actually in their health facility. From a living environment perspective, my understanding is that it's not ideal to have elders living in a health facility; just in terms of the environment. It feels like you are in a medical facility. We want elders' accommodation to feel as home-like as possible, to feel cozy, or comfortable, and health centres are not always designed from that perspective, but I thank the member for that suggestion. I will be sure to direct my department to look into that going forward. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Amittuq, Mr. Kaernerk.

Question 355 – 6(2): Emergency Only Status of Health Centres

Mr. Kaernerk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my member's statement I was talking about emergency services.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my questions to the Minister of Health. I'm aware of the emergency services only in Sanirajak and Igloolik. How many other communities are currently still in an on an emergency basis only? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) In terms of the number of communities that are currently on emergency services only, I don't have that information here in front of me.

There are basically four different statuses that a community could be under, in terms of the staffing at their community health centre. Its either: full services; reduced services; emergency services only; and complete closure. So right now, I can say that we don't have any health centres that are in closure state, however, we do have a number that are on reduced services, and/or emergency services only.

That is a big concern for me, Mr. Speaker. The root issue that we are dealing with here is staffing, and we need the staff to have our health centres at full services, so that we can provide the full suite of programs that communities need, and that is something that my department understands, it's something that I understand, and we have been working quite hard in light of how serious this is around staffing, Mr. Speaker.

We've brought in one package to improve our staffing at the community-level, which includes a number of measures, including looking at changing the hours of operation of operation for health centres. We are working with Human Resources and the Nunavut Employees Union to implement that first package, and the next package that we are currently working on, Mr. Speaker, to strengthen our staffing is looking at retention or other bonus measures to bring us up to par with the rest of the country, because wages and benefits and things are very competitive nationally. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Mr. Kaernerk.

Mr. Kaernerk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you to the minister for the detailed answer that he provided. I just have one question: how many communities are in emergency service only, in terms of that Mr. Speaker?

I am sure the minister cannot say in terms of these protocols that are set in place by the Department of Health for these nurses. The communities have these shortages of nurses due to the minister's answer; due to shortages.

Ok, now; I am sure there are agency nurses that are sent to communities who have a shortage of nurses, in terms of that, Mr. Speaker. What is in place for those people that have to follow the protocols in terms of emergency services only? What protocols are in place for the people to follow in terms of that emergency services only? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) We do have protocols that are put in place when it's emergency services only and it's to prioritize the care that's being provided, trying to make sure that we're making the best use of the available staff.

I should have mentioned first off in response to the earlier question that the department recognizes the difficulties that Sanirajammiut are going through, and we extend our full condolences to the community and the affected family, and we thank them for their support and collaboration in recent days. (interpretation) There is that.

(interpretation ends) In terms of emergency services only, the services that are provided are for all emergent life-threatening conditions, all urgent health conditions requiring medical attention within 24 to 48 hours, and all time-sensitive chronic care visits are scheduled. Urgent care visits are scheduled, but they may be delayed depending on volume, acuity, and available nursing personnel.

In order to support communities that are in emergency services only, we have a triage service that is used in terms of fielding calls to the health centre when there's no staff available to respond to those calls in the community at the given time. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernerck: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In terms of protocols that nurses have to follow and the procedures set by the Department of Health that these are the procedures and policies that the health practitioners or the nurses or the agency nurses have to practise and follow each and every day in terms of emergency services only.

Now, in saying that, as the minister has just stated, when it comes to these shortages and nurses that are sent to communities when there is a death occurrence, when the communities are on emergency services only, let me make a quote here. When there is a death occurrence, there is an investigation conducted thoroughly.

As well, Health has an internal committee. With these internal committees, do these internal committees look into the shortages of nurses when there is an investigation that has to happen or there has to be an inquest that makes recommendations by these internal committees in terms of that?

How is the department following procedures and policies that are put in place when it comes to making recommendations when there is a death in the community in terms of emergency services only? I hope the minister can clarify on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I thank the member for the question. In terms of investigations in terms of the recent death in Sanirajak, that matter has been referred to the chief coroner's office and so an investigation will be conducted through that office. As well, Health's internal investigation process will also be followed.

I can't speak for the coroner's office investigation in any great detail, but in terms of the circumstances, my understanding is that the circumstances leading to the death would include looking at what status or what the staffing situation was in the community at the time of the death and whether or not that was a contributing factor. My department takes these matters very seriously and we do follow up in terms of recommendations that come out of investigations and we're continually looking for ways to improve our services and to fill gaps if there are any in our continuum of service. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Hudson Bay, Mr. Qavvik.

Question 356 – 6(2): Medical Travel Concerns

Mr. Qavvik: *Merci beaucoup, Monsieur l'orateur.* Mr. Speaker, I also have questions to the Minister of Health.

Mr. Speaker, I have received concerns from my constituents regarding the meal vouchers that are provided to medical clients while on medical travel.

Can the minister explain why some medical travellers get meal vouchers for one amount, but other medical travellers receive meal vouchers worth much less than the same meal? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for asking that question. (interpretation ends) Meal vouchers that are provided to overflow medical travellers are determined by the boarding home contractor. The contractor is

provided contractual service fees to deliver meals, transportation, and lodging to Non-Insured Health Benefits eligible medical travel clients. It's the contractor that determines the voucher rate in Winnipeg by reviewing the menu at Aalto's, which is the name of the restaurant at the Canad Inns. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Qavvik.

Mr. Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. From time to time, a medical client travelling outside of their community to receive health care does something that gets them barred from staying at the boarding home. Some of those clients have noted that the amount provided for their meal vouchers at a hotel is less than what other medical clients receive.

Can the minister clearly explain the policy with respect to medical clients who have been barred from staying at the medical boarding homes and whether they are entitled to the same supports for meals and accommodations as other medical clients? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) My understanding is that whether or not the client has been banned from the boarding home, the meal voucher amount should still be the same. Travellers who are banned from the Kivalliq Inuit Centre may be provided accommodations or hotel and meal vouchers by regional medical travel teams. Ground transportation may also be provided when possible. Health incurs these additional costs. The Kivalliq Inuit Centre has a zero-tolerance policy for the consumption of alcohol or violence on the premises.

Mr. Speaker, I'll add that there are currently 136 individuals banned from staying at the Kivalliq Inuit Centre. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet, Mr. Sammurtok.

Question 357 – 6(2): Safe Space Facility for Chesterfield Inlet

Mr. Sammurtok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I would like to direct my questions to the Minister of Family Services.

Mr. Speaker, on February 28 I tabled a document signed by a number of my constituents from Chesterfield Inlet who are in support of a safe place facility for the community. Can the minister confirm that she had the opportunity to see this signed document? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for asking that question. I have reviewed the document that you tabled in the House and the 23 signatures. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Chesterfield Inlet is not the only community which struggles with situations where individuals need to escape a dangerous or unhealthy situation for a few hours or a night.

Can the minister describe what kind of support her department can provide to communities that wish to open a safe place facility? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for your supplementary question. This is a particularly relevant question, as we have officially acknowledged some communities who are working to create or initiate a safe home, a temporary safe place or a safe shelter and most of these local bodies are not-for-profit or (interpretation ends) non-profit organizations (interpretation) or the local hamlet has commenced the initiative locally.

This includes identification of a building as our department does not build safe shelters, nonetheless, we provide operating funding or program funding for any activities, and Family Services can usually provide this type of funding assistance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for her response, but does she make the community or the hamlet aware that they would be able to get assistance in regard to this?

Mr. Speaker, the residents of Chesterfield Inlet have made it very clear that they want a safe place facility in the community. The document showed the level of their concerns.

Will the minister commit to reaching out to my constituents to help them set up a safe place facility for the community? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for asking that question. Our office located in Rankin Inlet would be the best place to get further information by your local hamlet administration on their options towards realizing this important facility, which can be a safe shelter or even a youth facility as I am unsure of the exact facility they are thinking about.

However, the hamlet in Chesterfield can directly contact the regional Family Services offices as it is the regional office, or if you prefer, you can contact the Iqaluit offices for more information. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Aivilik, Mr. Malliki.

Question 358 – 6(2): Decentralization and Devolution

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to my constituents in Coral Harbour and Naujaat, as well as Nunavummiut.

Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Premier of Nunavut.

(interpretation ends) As the Premier will recall, I have asked him a number of questions concerning the issue of decentralizing devolution.

During our recent fall sitting, ministerial mandate letters were tabled in the Legislative Assembly. The Premier's own mandate letter indicates that one of his priorities is to "Review the current status of decentralization, establish key goals and objectives for improving decentralization, and develop an updated decentralization action plan, with the support of the Department of Human Resources."

Can the Premier provide a clear timetable for when the updated decentralization action plan will be ready to be tabled in the Legislative Assembly? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank my colleague for continuing to push on this very important issue. Mr. Speaker, with the blessing of the House here, once the business plans go through the Committee of the Whole, that very important work is something that we're hoping to initiate immediately in the new fiscal year.

I've had initial discussions with my colleague, Minister of Human Resources, and really to look at what that review could look like. There hasn't been a thorough public review on decentralization since the inception of the territory, since the creation of the territory. So I very much look forward to engaging the regular members on this very important work as we undertake it. I immediately expect to start that April 1, onwards. I can't definitively say exactly when that report would be concluded for now, but as work progresses, I very much look forward to engaging the member across. Thank you, *Iksivautaaq*.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Premier.

(interpretation ends) When I raised this issue during our last spring sitting, the Premier indicated that devolution negotiation with the federal government will have an impact on decentralization and the number and location of GN positions.

Can the Premier provide an update today on how many federal positions are expected to be transferred to the territorial government as part of devolution, and can the Premier indicate approximately how many of these positions will go to non-decentralized communities like Naujaat and Coral Harbour? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I thank my member colleague for asking that question. I think we have been very clear that devolution is really a high priority of this government. It is really essential for our territory's long-term political, as well as economic development.

I am really proud to say that we have been making some huge headway with our partners; both the federal government, as well as Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated in these negotiations. Those negotiations are continuing as we speak. As such, due to the sensitive nature of those negotiations, I am unable to comment right now on the specifics of those negotiations. Decentralization remains a key part as we start looking at Nunavummiut making decisions for Nunavummiut's future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Premier.

(interpretation ends) The Department of Human Resources is working to develop a new remote-work policy. As the MLA representing Aivilik, I want my constituency Coral Harbour and Naujaat to have every opportunity to seek meaningful employment opportunities.

Can the Premier indicate how his department's review of decentralization will take into account the government's development of a new remote-work policy? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. Pauloosie Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I thank my colleague. I am working very closely with my colleague, the Minister responsible for Human Resources, as we review the remote-work policy, as well as the flexible policy. In discussions to decentralization, I think that is really the fundamental question, as we start doing the review of how decentralization has evolved, the original merits, and the original intentions. I very much look forward to looking at what we could learn from that experience. Is it working? Is it not working? Those are the very hard questions, I believe, that study will undertake throughout the review process.

I could commit to ensuring that all communities show interest, in terms of having the ability to see if their constituency can find employment opportunities. As we embark the review process, I will make sure that the concerns that my colleague is mentioning here in this House, are factored in as we move forward in the review process as the business plans get approved, if they get approved. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Question. Member for Arviat South, Mr. Savikataaq.

Question 359 – 6(2): Community Wellness Funding

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to the people of Arviat.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I would like question the Health minister on the community wellness plan funding again. I'm not going to revisit what we already discussed here. The minister stated at that time in our exchange that meetings outside of the setting here would be beneficial and I thank the Minister of Health for inviting me to a phone meeting that the minister had with Mayor of Arviat concerning the funding. Some of the stuff that came out of the meeting was that it was one-year funding for this agency to get the community wellness planning funds and that they would be able to do community consultations after the contract is signed and that it is a one-year contract. That was that, and it seem fairly straight forward.

We go onto the next day or a day later and an email was received by the Hamlet of Arviat from the Minister of Health's officials stating that it's not one-year funding, it is five-year funding until 2027. Just to get confirmation from the minister whether what he stated at our meeting or what the officials wrote in the email is correct; one-year funding or five-year funding under the Community Wellness Program for Arviat. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I thank the member for the question and I thank the member for joining the call the other day. I believe it was productive and I think we got some things clarified. I may have misspoken. The staff member was correct in that it is multi-year funding.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not about to get into the habit of discussing the merits of specific funding proposals in the House. In terms of the details, when it comes to the many funding proposals that float through my department, I'm just not in a place to get into them. I don't sign off on community wellness funds. In fact, I can tell the House how many community wellness funding applications I have signed off on, and the number is zero, Mr. Speaker.

How the department works and how the government works is that we entrust our staff with running our programs in order to give those staff directions, we establish policies,

and that is how it works, Mr. Speaker. So there is a policy in place that governs this funding and I should add that to make it even more complicated, there are partners on this funding; so Indigenous Services Canada, as well as Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated. We work on the *Nunavut Wellness Agreement* funding and so I can speak about policy here in the House, debate different ideas around policy, but in terms of debating individual funding applications, that is not, I believe something that I will be doing here. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister is correct; he doesn't sign-off on funding contracts. I'm fully aware of that, Mr. Speaker. It's a \$242 million funding arrangement, so I know ministers don't get involved in signing contracts. I know ministers don't get involved in issuing contracts. The Minister of Health stated that he is here about policy debate. I'll ask the minister: wouldn't the funding duration, the five-year funding agreement, be a part of that policy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) If the member would like to clarify which specific policy he is asking about. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Member Savikataaq, please clarify your first supplementary.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The policy on community wellness plan funding, the fact that it's a five-year program. Would that not be in the policy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) In order to get this straight in terms of which specific... . Again, we are getting into a lot of detail and I would like to get this straight for the member because I know that he does want to understand this process better in terms of which pieces are contained within the policy and which pieces are contained within the *Nunavut Wellness Agreement*, which is a \$242 million, 10-year agreement. I'm going to take the question as notice. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The question is taken as notice. Oral Questions. Member for Uqqummiut, Ms. Killiktee.

Question 360 – 6(2): Nunavut Cancer Rates

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker for acknowledging me again. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Health.

As the minister stated earlier in response to my question, (interpretation ends) I stated in my question earlier he said to all Nunavummiut to eat right, to be healthy, and exercise. Thank you for the reminder for all of us. That goes for all of us.

Mr. Speaker, (interpretation) I ardently wish to focus solely on the Inuit health issues related to physical pain and illnesses. I ask the minister if he has undertaken any research specifically related to southern hospitals and federal public health officials to determine if the total numbers point to trending upwards.

I refer specifically to Inuit medical patients who follow this process from our homelands for medical treatment of physical ailments and illnesses, and I wonder if the minister has ever enquired about whether a noticeable trend exists? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) In terms of the member's question, I believe the member was asking in regard to all different types of cancers, not just colorectal cancer. In terms of whether or not rates are increasing, I can't say. I think it depends on what timeframe you're looking at.

If you're looking at cancer rates increasing over the last decade, over the last two years, as a result of the pandemic, there are a lot of different pieces to pull out there, but I do look forward to digging out some more detailed statistics and bringing them back to the member.

With regard to colorectal cancer, which we were talking about earlier, and thank you very much for asking those questions, they are important; colorectal cancer is the second most common cancer, accounting for nearly one in five or 19 percent of reported cancer cases. For Nunavummiut who are diagnosed with colorectal cancer, 26 percent die within one year of diagnosis, and Nunavut's death rate from colorectal cancer is four times higher than the national average.

So that is a big red flag for us. We want to be catching cancers earlier, whether it is colorectal cancer or others. That is some of the related numbers around this serious threat to Nunavummiut's health. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the (interpretation ends) Minister of Health. (interpretation) The first question that I posed, have federal health officials contacted you or made you aware that patients from the north coming down for medical purposes have increased in numbers?

I'm talking about today. It seems like the rate of medical patients having to go down is increasing. Have southern federal officials contacted you to ask why the number of patients from the north have increased. I was asking if they had consulted with you, but

with regard to (interpretation ends) Inuit communities, are in need of more help from your department.

Mr. Speaker, (interpretation) how many patients are going down for treatment? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) In terms of the data, real-time data in terms of how many travellers are out right now, I don't have that data at my fingertips.

We are working within the Department of Health. We have established an information unit. We recognize, along with Health Canada or jurisdictions right across Canada, that data is very powerful. We recognize that if we can map and track what's happening in Nunavut closer and use that data to inform our strategies to treat and prevent, it is a very powerful tool.

In terms of how many patients are currently out of Nunavut on cancer treatment, I'm not in a position to say, but I can certainly request that information and get back to the member in that regard. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, your response includes this contextual detail, and the reason why I asked the question relates to the specific diagnosis which are now seemingly required to be jolted alive in order to speed up the assessments of these medical diagnostics of bodily illnesses.

What I want to turn to, is the inordinate amount of actual time medical patients spend in southern locales, Mr. Speaker. Many patients are quite stoic in their patience as they endure long periods in the south. Due to these harsh realities, either immediately or soon in the future, we must emphasize the need for faster diagnostic assessments, perhaps as (interpretation ends) a pilot project (interpretation) so that larger funding amounts be set aside towards the quick completion of these tests?

I urge you to stand firmly against Health Canada on this subject. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The communication protocol with the federal government dictates that we keep an ongoing dialogue on health issues, and just now, I have a scheduled video conference today with my counterparts at 12:30 and I will need to go upstairs to the video conferencing room.

With respect to (interpretation ends) cancer (interpretation) or body fighting itself. At least that word I believe is our dialectal word for cancer. I will again speak to the need for faster diagnosis processing on the topic, and yes, I should also use an example since we have submitted a funding request towards this. The three territories of Yukon, NWT, and Nunavut simultaneously requested additional funding for this of \$75 million.

(interpretation ends) I'll switch to English. Through the Territorial Health Investment Fund, we did put in a business case for additional funds that went to Health Canada last year. I know that our Premier did a great job of pushing for those funds to be approved at the First Ministers' table when they were discussing the Canada Health Transfer. Unfortunately, we haven't heard back yet in terms of a firm number that Health Canada will be providing us under the Territorial Health Investment Fund, but that money has been used in the past to kickstart the colorectal cancer screening program.

We're already pushing for more funding and I thank the member for raising this issue and we will continue pushing quite hard for more resources. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Item 6. Oral Questions. I have no more names. Item 7. Written Questions. Item 8. Returns to Written Questions. Item 9. Replies to Opening Address. Item 10. Petitions. Item 11. Responses to Petitions. Item 12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters. Item 13. Tabling of Documents. I have one.

Item 13: Tabling of Documents

Tabled Document 111 – 6(2): Information and Privacy Commissioner's Response to the Report of the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts on the Review of the 2020-21 and 2021-22 Annual Reports of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Nunavut

I wish to table the Information and Privacy Commissioner's Response to the Report of the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts on the Review of the 2020-21 and 2021-22 Annual Reports of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Nunavut.

I wish to note for the record that an extension has been granted under Rule 91(7) to the Government of Nunavut for its response to the report. The government's response is now due April 7, 2023.

Item 14. Notices of Motions. Item 15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. Item 16. Motions. Item 17. First Reading of Bills. Item 18. Second Reading of Bills. Item 19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. Bills 12, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21 with Mr. Savikataaq in the Chair.

In accordance with the authority provided to me by Motion 14 – 6(2), the committee will stay in session until it reports itself out.

Before we proceed to the Committee of the Whole, we will take a 20-minute break.

I forgot to take a look at the clock there.

>>*Laughter*

We will come back at 1:30 this afternoon.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House recessed at 11:52 and Committee resumed at 13:28*

Item 19: Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

Chairman (Mr. Savikataaq): Good afternoon. I would like to call the committee meeting back to order. In Committee of the Whole, we have the following items to deal with: Bills 12, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) We wish to continue with the review of the main estimates and business plan for the Department of Education, following by the housing corporation and, if time permits, the Department of Family Services. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Are we in agreement that we first deal with Bill 18?

Some Members: Agreed.

Bill 18 – Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2023-2024 – Education – Consideration in Committee

Chairman: I would like to ask Minister Gross: do you have any officials that you would like to appear before the committee? Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Good afternoon. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I do. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Does the committee agree to let the officials appear before you?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Sergeant-at-Arms, escort the officials.

For the record, Minister Gross, please reintroduce or introduce your officials. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. To my left, we have Rebecca Hainnu, Deputy Minister of Education, and to my right, we have Dr. Sonja Osbourne, Assistant Deputy Minister of Education. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I would like all the members to go to page G-8 under Education. Advanced Education. We have had some questions already. I'll go to the person on the list. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I forgot to grab my *Blues*. Just to make sure that I don't repeat the questions that I had. It's hard to remember after a weekend. Welcome back everyone.

My first question today is on the Adult Programs Pathway to Adult Secondary School. On the business plan, on page 126, the budget for that program in 2022-23, was \$390,000, and in 2023-2024, it is down to \$247,000 and I'd like to have an explanation about why that program is being budgeted at a lower cost. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to ask Assistant Deputy Minister, Sonja Osbourne, to answer that question. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Osbourne.

Ms. Osbourne: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At this time we need more details for that answer, which will be provided later. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is it an issue with the question that I asked? Is it not enough information to provide a justification for lowering that fund by a significant amount of money? It was \$390,000 and it is down to \$247,000. I would hope that, through you, Mr. Chairman, that the minister and team would be able to justify that significant change in funding, while we're here in the Committee of the Whole? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The member just wants to know why the budget went down for that. Ms. Osbourne.

Ms. Osbourne: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Now that I have a better understanding of the question, the reason for that is due to internal reallocation of the funds. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Through you, can the minister and department officials explain where those funds were reprofiled to? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. Those funds were coming from various different branches, so they have been moved around from several different places to be allocated to that program. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I think the member just wants to know it was budgeted for X amount, and the budget went down to run the same program, and the member just wants to know what are the factors that made the budget go down. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. Those funds were reallocated from within the department, and moved from different places to fund the operation of that program. We're still funding it, but it's being moved around from various, different departments internally. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll just move on. On page 127 of the department's business plan there is a commitment, "In collaboration with NAC, implement actions to support increased engagement of Inuit men in the PASS program." I am wondering if, through the Chair, the minister can tell us what is keeping Inuit men from participating in the program so far. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. There was a review of the PASS program and there was work to ensure that more men can participate in the program. The department created a report about the program on engagement and we can provide that report to the member and our colleagues at a later time. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) We're looking forward to receiving that. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is the Pathway to Adult Secondary School program a full-time program and, if not, how are students accessing the program? During the day? Evening? Is it a set program where they apply at a certain time of year and have a certain amount of time to complete that program or is it a flexible learning program? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. With the PASS program, there is a low amount enrolled in the program. However, those that are typically enrolled only need one or two more courses per semester on a part-time basis in order to graduate and sometimes it typically takes learners several years to obtain their post-secondary diploma through the PASS program.

In terms of high school students and people that are enrolled in the program, it is an evening course and it is flexible. The student will work directly with the educator to work on the particular course that they need and require on a case-by-case basis. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister, is that program available to individuals who are working, for example, at a mine and not actually working in a community? Are they able to access that if they're enrolled in it? Are they able to access that program from a distance so as not to interrupt their ability to go off to work? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. Yes, they are able to take it distantly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question regarding programs in Iqaluit and how they may or may not have been impacted by the rash of shutdowns recently. To my memory, I can't recall whether or not any of Nunavut Arctic College's campuses were closed down, but if the minister, through the Chair, could let us know of any challenges related to those recent shutdowns and whether or not there will be ongoing impacts to students. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster, if you can just clarify if it is Education shutdowns or Arctic College shutdowns, as we're dealing with Advanced Education. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Sure. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm speaking in general about the way that students are accessing education programs here, so that would include any students who are taking part in the PASS program, or Pathway to Adult Secondary School, as well as of course the students who are going to K to 12 here in Iqaluit. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na* for the clarification. Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. In terms of our high school students accessing the PASS program, there hasn't been any delays or challenges

that I'm aware of or that the department is aware of for the learners that are in the program. I can say that we have 22 active learners across seven communities and we had 72 applications and 31 of them were accepted as of January 11, 2023.

In terms of any other delays with the shutdowns or COVID, I don't believe that any of those have affected the students. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that response, minister. I would just like to go back to the work that was done on creating the recommendations on how to further engage Inuit men in the PASS program. I realize and acknowledge that there is a commitment to share that information with us through the Chair. However, I would just like to hear just a little bit more about what some of the recommendations are that the minister's team is engaging on in terms of helping more men to access that program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. There are several different recommendations. The pathway to adult success continues to be a recommended program for adult secondary school completion in most cases. Nunavut made the decision in 2023 to slowly phase out the use of general education development, or GED, test due to a very low success rate of 17 percent as of July 2013, and the fact that the GED test was expected to undergo significant changes that would affect the availability of the Canadian version of the test in the future.

The program looked at a number of different scenarios and work to really look into the program. In 2019 the report of the Auditor General of Canada and a consultant-led review of the pathway for adult success identified ambiguities surrounding the number of credits required to earn a secondary diploma through that program.

There are also a number of different things that were also outlined or included in the business case. That also includes the graduation level courses from each of the general standards and the two additional courses at the grade 12 level, the 30 level credits. Although there were a number of different requirements that have been reiterated through Nunavut Arctic College's program outline, there was a directive for a policy at the time of the program's initial implementation.

There have been a number of different areas where the program needed some improvement and a case-by-case support. All those different recommendations, I think, go into supporting our students, whether they are male or female, and ensuring that they can have ease when they're going through that program to be fully successful. We want all of our students to be able to graduate and come out of this program successfully.

I can share that this past January, I did sign several different graduation diplomas from the PASS program and I'm very proud of them for completing. Congratulations to all those who have gone through this past year and are graduating and moving on to new chapters of life.

I hope that answers the member's question. It's a pretty complex area to articulate, but as I said earlier, I would be happy to provide that report and the details of it when I'm able to through you, Chair. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. I appreciate that response.

We did talk last week about the Young Parents Stay Learning program and how important that is to ensuring that young parents are able to graduate. My question today is whether or not the Young Parents Stay Learning program is applicable to young people who are taking the Pathway to Adult Secondary School program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. That program Young Parents Stay Learning, is for high school students, K to 12, so not applicable to the other program. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister, since that program isn't available to the people who are taking the Pathway to Adult Secondary School program, is there another program that's available to help these students take care of any children that they may have so that they can successfully complete this program and receive their Nunavut Secondary School Diploma? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. Some of the students are funded in different ways. Some of them are funded through the Department of Family Services to take the pathway to adult success program and some of them are funded through our Inuit organizations and through those means, they get the funding to attend that program.

In terms of daycare subsidies, we have gone down to \$10 a day, which is very compelling for all Nunavummiut and hopefully it doesn't become a hindrance for people, having that as a great means for success that people are able to access daycare programs at that rate and able to either go to work or school because it's affordable. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Through you, can the minister tell us whether or not the department keeps statistics and publishes statistics on who is accessing the Pathway to Adult Secondary School program, including where they live, how old they are, what their gender is, and the time from enrolment to completion? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. We do collect those numbers and that data; however, we don't publicize them. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the data that the department is collecting, is the department collecting data on the areas of study that are most needed that they work on during this program in order to achieve their Nunavut Secondary School Diploma? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. No. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reason I asked that question, minister, is because it seems to me that it would be wise to consider what barriers students are facing while they are actually enrolled in K to 12. If there are specific areas of education, whether it be the sciences or maths or social studies, I would think that it would be wise for the Department of Education to have knowledge of what barriers students are facing to learning within the education system that will allow them to complete their grade 12 diploma during the regular allotted time frame for finishing high school. I would ask, then, through the Chair if the minister can tell us why they are not tracking that information that could very well inform the department's work. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. I would like Associate Deputy Minister Sonia Osbourne to answer that question. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Osbourne.

Ms. Osbourne: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the member for that question. If we are talking about collecting data in terms of the quantitative piece, to know that we

have in terms of the qualitative piece, that is happening at the schools, for sure, in the high schools, the school and the school team have those kinds of data in terms of the qualitative piece. They put things in place checking in on our students to know what are some of the barriers and then they even have staff members calling sometimes at different times just checking on what is happening and this supportive method happens at different times at different schools to help our graduates to graduate.

If we are talking about formalized tracking information to inform the general system as to what is happening in each school to move forward, that is in our conversations and in development. We recognize, as a developing territory, in our schools that there are things that we can do. We can look into working with the Nunavut Arctic College to track these things. We can make those kinds of processes moving forward.

That is where we are at right now and we recognize the importance of data to inform our work. We're doing that. We continue to dig deeper into that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the department's work on advanced education and all of these programs, an important question would be looking at the education system through the lens of bringing our students into advanced education.

Through the Chairman, does the department review each regional school operation for areas of concern, such as a high number of students who are having trouble completing certain aspects of the compulsory programs, such as sciences, math, and English that I may have mentioned earlier to identify trends where the Department of Education can make improvements in order to ensure that some of these adult learning programs are as not as needed down the road, so that we are managing students to success from K to 12? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Hello, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we do help them get through what they need to. As I mentioned earlier, we go through on a case-by-case basis to help support the students.

In terms of tracking, those numbers that need a Grade 12 credits, as I mentioned earlier, that is one of the recommendations where the Grade 12 level is where the students need extra support. So we can commit to working with the Nunavut Arctic College to look at that information and see what level courses, and what supports further that the students do need to attain their Pathway to Adult Secondary School Diploma. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. We are on Advanced Education. G-8. The next person on my list: Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In the business plan, (interpretation) page 126 outlines this and I will read it in English here. (interpretation ends) Adult literacy and basic education, Adult programs - Pathway to Adult Secondary School and pre-employment training (interpretation) are these all specific to the adult education category?

I would like to understand why this is written as being under the Education (interpretation ends) business plan? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. Sorry, there were some technical difficulties. I missed a part of the question. If the member can please repeat. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Ms. Nutarak, can you please repeat your question.

Ms. Nutarak: On page 126 in your business plan, these programs that are listed are programs in adult education in the Nunavut Arctic College programs; Adult Literacy and Basic Education, the Pathway to Adult Secondary School and Pre-employment Training.

Can you explain why these are in the Education department business plan? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask Assistant Deputy Minister Sonia Osbourne to articulate that answer. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Osbourne.

Ms. Osbourne: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for that question. We recognize that with literacy we need to support our young adults in those areas, so we have contribution agreements that support those programs.

That is part of why we have that in our budget and it comes under specific focus where we work with the different groups of adults to ensure that their literacy continues because there is that connection between wanting them to become part of the labour force. So, because it is such an important objective in the literacy piece, we support those programs to ensure that literacy continues right across to landing them in a better place when they go into the labour force. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For adults who want to go to school in Pond Inlet, people who want to go to school, are able to go back to the school? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. Yes, adults can go back to school unless they are under the age of 21. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Just before I go back there, just a clarification. The minister just stated “unless they are under the age of 21, they can go back to school?” Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for catching that. I meant to say if they are under the age of 21.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I asked that question based on the fact last week the Minister of Education made an announcement about basic adult education skills in her statement previously, actually (interpretation ends) Adult Basic Essential Skills (interpretation) was the subject and furthermore, as the Minister responsible for (interpretation ends) Nunavut Arctic College and the Department of Education business plans or adult literacy and basic education.

(interpretation) I am aware and am not confused, yet I wanted to ask about this as it seems to be a dual-pronged approach, or the same program for two departments, which is what I wanted to speak to. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and this is my last comment.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. I would like Deputy Minister Hainnu to articulate the answer to that. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Hainnu.

Ms. Hainnu (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the member for the question. If you are not too immersed in the actual program, nor too invested in the actual work, one generally wants to figure out how things operate, to look at those specific to the Arctic College as well as education for K to 12.

They work in collaboration to work towards this (interpretation ends) Pathway or PASS (interpretation) as it is known by (interpretation ends) Pathway to Education (interpretation) maybe I will say it in Inuktitut. It pertains to the curricula or programming from K to 12 if you are going to pass, you need 100 credits accumulated.

If you haven't accumulated these 100 credits, then you are ineligible for receiving your diploma of completion. Just to use this example, if you accumulated 78 credits, then you need to take the programs that can allow you to reach 100 credits prior to being overaged and disallowed from high school.

This is where it ties into this Arctic College programming such as distance learning via internet or even directly taking courses at your local CLC facility, and you would then take the courses to allow you to reach 100 credits in order to advance, and this is why it seems to be parallel or double-pronged.

Yes, we are working together in both Arctic College and Education and collaborating on the K to 12 credit system so that students who fell short of reaching the 100 credits can try to earn their high school diploma learning. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. That was very understandable. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ms. Nutarak had asked why the Department of Education has all of these programs while Nunavut Arctic College provides the program. I'm not sure if the minister had clearly indicated that. Although it is the college that provides these programs, it is the Department of Education that provides some assistance through these contributions.

Moving to my first line of questioning, under the FANS program, I was wondering if the minister would be able to provide the committee with some updated figures on the number of Nunavummiut who are currently enrolled to participating in the FANS program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. Right now, as of February 21, 2023, there are currently 411 enrolled in the Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students for the winter semester, which means all required documentation has been received and their payments have been initiated. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. That seems like a low figure; 411 students enrolled in FANS. Are we still below pre-pandemic levels, or can the minister elaborate a little bit further on any sort of trends in this area? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. Our number are, I think, on par. In the fall of 2021, there were 363 Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students recipients. In winter 2022, there were 435 recipients. In the fall of 2022, there were 398 recipients, and as I

just mentioned, we currently have 411 recipients that are receiving Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister, for that. I was looking at a wrong number. I was comparing it to applicants. I see that approved applicants in previous is around that area.

My next question: does the department track, or what is the current success rate for FANS students? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. In terms of the success rates for the Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students, we currently do not track those numbers. However, we are undergoing a comprehensive review of the Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students Program. We can look into collecting some of that data. As our database grows, hopefully, we will be able to collect more information, with our hopeful new database in the near future, and we can look at it at that time. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. I would like to ask if the department tracks the number of students, who are unable to complete a semester and drop out of programs? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we do. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the department does not track the current success rate, would the minister be able to provide us with the unsuccessful rates, with the number of dropouts? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. We do not have that information on hand, but we can provide it through you, through a letter. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. We're looking forward to getting that information. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. I'd like to move on to my next line of questioning.

Again, this is something that I have been raising over the last number of years. It is the additional disability funding that is available for students participating in Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students. The minister can refer to page 6 of the correspondence the minister wrote to the committee on February 16. In committee, we would have some more information about the utilization of disability funding, and it mentions that to be eligible for this funding, the student must provide proof and medical, or ability assessment by a certified professional describing the manner in which their disability impacts their participation in post-secondary studies. It further states that "We recognize that the eligibility of this funding that is currently set out is prohibitive to maybe students who should be accessing this funding, but are not because of the onerous application requirements."

I've got a few lines of questioning in this particular area. I would first like to ask when the department first determined that the eligibility requirement to access this disability grant is prohibitive? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman and *quana* for the question. I believe we learned about that since we took the Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students back over from the Department of Family Services. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. I think that would put it about... I can't recall if it's been two or three years now. My next question is: how does the department foresee overcoming the prohibitive eligibility requirements for this disability grant? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. The whole Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students is under a comprehensive review. This particular topic is being reviewed. We hope to have a better understanding and suggestions for improvement after the review is complete. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have been raising concerns over the lack of utilization of this essential funding, given the substantial number of Nunavummiut who have learning disabilities, and just would like to recommend that doing away with the certified professional assessment and just making this funding based on a voluntary disclosure of the student.

The nature of this funding is of the utmost importance, students with learning disabilities in southern institutions, post-secondary institutions are offered a substantial amount of assistance from assistance in writing exams to being provided with electronic devices for note taking, to actually paying students to take notes for them. So, this funding, the additional support that is available to students with learning disabilities is crucial to their success.

So, I just want to reiterate again that I think that the department should be giving as much additional funding to students, especially if they disclose that they have a learning disability, and regardless if they don't have proper certified assessment completed. I would just like to ask the minister if she would like to elaborate on that a bit further? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na*. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman, and *Quana* for the question. We do recognize that there can be things that are prohibitive for people with disabilities when they are accessing Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students, and we are ensuring that this is taken into deep consideration under the comprehensive review.

The review is scheduled to be completed by March 31 of this year, so in a few more weeks we hope to have a detailed report in the near future outlining recommendations for improvements in the program. I foresee this area being one area for strengthening to support those students that want to go on to post secondary, that they have limited barriers as that's been the key target for the whole review process, to ensure that our Nunavummiut students have access to funding to go on to post secondary and without limited constraints to do so. So, I take the members comment and it will be passed on to the department. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na*. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the minister's response and I would like to thank you and your staff for all of that. Now, my last question: in the priorities in the business plan, there is a collaboration between the Department of Education and the Department of Family Services on the Nunavut adult learning strategy, and I think that is essential in your efforts to support the interdepartmental work to identify what Nunavut's labour market needs.

So, my last question; as there is collaboration between the Department of Education and the Department of Family Services on a number of different initiatives, I am curious if there is any collaboration between the two departments and the adult learning strategy in order to track the number of income support recipients who are taking part in the Department of Education's advanced education programs? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na*. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman, and *Quana* for the question. So, with the *Katujjiluta* mandate and the committees that are struck, education and training being one of the pillars and I being the chair of that committee, we have established our meetings and we are looking forward to diving into some of these subjects. I have had a meeting with my colleague in terms of that very topic to see how we can work together to support people who may be receiving assistance and to see how we can get them into furthering their education. So I know there has been discussion at our level and also at the department level. Furthermore, we look forward to elaborating more and talking more about it with the education and training committee. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I have no more names on my list. We are on Advanced Education Branch. G-8. Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernerck: Alright, Mr. Chairman, since there are no more names, I would like to touch base on Mr. Lightstone's questioning on disabilities. Does the Department of Education have a PY under the FANS program for disabilities? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I would remind members about acronyms; person years, or whatever it is. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. We don't currently have a PY specifically allocated for people with disabilities. However, we do have a new chain of restructuring, which happened this fall. So all of our students have a specific case worker that deals with their files, so it's on a case-by-case basis. If the applicant indicates that they do have a disability, then their case worker at the Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students office would be working directly with that student to gather that information. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernerck: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. I would like to see staff that is actually looking into disabilities, such as sign language, because I'm sure when it comes to employability, I'm sure they are very capable of furthering their education and getting a government job, such as maybe a Nunavut Arctic College instructor position in promoting this sign language. Would the minister agree with me that the department would be hiring more of that kind of staff? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. The Department of Education has an open door policy and we accept all resumes and applications, so if there is ever anyone interested in working that may have a disability, we are always happy to have them screened in, just like everybody else and go through the process.

In terms of confidentiality, I don't know the HR side. It's not my say on the hiring side, but I thank the member for the comment and we will look into what he has to say within the review of the Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students program. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Kaerner.

Mr. Kaerner: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 126 it says "The budget also provides the resources required for staff and operating costs to support the delivery of the FANS program. FANS also offers a grant for students with disabilities." That is the reasoning of my questioning on this subject.

Moving onto my next question, with the Pathway to Adult Education, on page 127, Mr. Chairman, it says under bullet number 4, I'll just go on the Status part, "*In collaboration with NAC, a report has been completed with recommendations on how to further engage Inuit men... .*" So what kind of recommendations were actually engaged in furthering this Pathway to Adult Secondary Education? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I know we talked about this. It's been asked as a question here, but Minister Gross if you could just elaborate a bit more for the member. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman and *quana* for the question. As that report is available, I had indicated that I can share that report through the Chair to the members. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Kaerner.

Mr. Kaerner: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under this budget, what kind of recommendations have been put in place in other programs such as the pre-employment training? Are there any other recommendations and other programs? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. Yes, the Department of Education has collaborated with the Nunavut Arctic College and there has been a report that has been completed with recommendations on how to further engage Inuit men into the Pathway to Adult Secondary School. I have agreed to share the details of that report with the committee, through you, Mr. Chairman. *Quana*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Kaerner.

Mr. Kaerner: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I'll be expecting that. Was there a recommendation on this general education development? It was budgeted before and now

for this fiscal and next fiscal year it is down to zero. So was that one of the recommendations that was engaged? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. The number is down to zero as the funds, as I indicated earlier with this question, have been reallocated from within the department from other various other departments. We did an internal transfer of the funds from within to create and still operate that program. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I have no more names on my list here. We are at G-8. Advanced Education. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$14,329,000. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed

Chairman: Go onto the next page. G-10. Under Education. K to 12 School Operations. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The K to 12 School Operations Branch is projected to receive a significant increase in funding for 2023-24. What accounts for this increase in funding? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman and *quana* for the question. The increase is due to the salary and the Nunavut Teachers Association adjustment, the business case to student ratio formula as well as the Nunavut Employees Union Collective Agreement adjustment. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the minister. (interpretation ends) On Priorities 2023-24, bullet 1 “Implement the standardized principal’s report across all schools.” Are they not standardized? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman and *quana* for the question. The principal’s monthly report is now standardized and it’s an online fillable form for our principals to do every month. That report allows the department to ensure that all schools’ learning objectives and *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* and the departmental priorities are incorporated into our schools. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) Same bullet on the Priority 2023-24, continue to support of implementing of a made-in-Nunavut curriculum in the language of instruction implementation plan, ensures consistency and quality curriculum development across Nunavut's schools, including focus on career planning and pre-employment work experience. Does this include the Grade 12 final exam? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. Yes, the review does. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) On page 129 of the business plan indicates that the Regional School Operations will continue to work on the inter-departmental working group to identify needs and ways to enhance a standardized food mail program.

To this date, what specific issues have been identified by the Department of Education in this area? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. So there are a number of different areas that the department is focussing on to add. The first one being there is no standardized priority for the school meal program, and there is no food guide, as well as our capital standards for our kitchens are now being incorporated into our new school builds. So they'll all have commercial kitchens, ensuring that there are a number of different areas for improvement, to enhance the school meal program, and the availability to cook the school meals at the school. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you. (interpretation ends) Is the school meal program part of the curriculum? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. No, it is not. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So the school cooking program can be used as a teaching place for students. Cooking is very important. It can also be taught as a classroom course, because they can use what they learned at home. Why is this not being done? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for that question. The department has looked into the home economics program. That program is being created as a curriculum. We're looking at a few different factors, when we think of the school meal program. Our schools do use them for the school meal program, but we also have the learning and training aspect with the home economics.

Some schools do offer home economics and some don't. It's up to the District Education Authority to choose which programs they'd like to offer in their schools. That is also for the extra credits that are offered.

When a new school is being built, it is up to the district education authorities to have those consultations with their communities to figure out which types of extra curricular credit the school would like to offer.

Some of our schools do have fully equipped kitchens for home economics, and some don't. With our new school builds, for them all to have a commercial kitchen, as I noted earlier. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the minister. I will move on to another question. (interpretation ends) One of the department's ongoing priority is to support, monitor and advise on effective school leadership practices and standards within Nunavut schools. What specific challenges do principals, teachers and support staff face in this area? (interpretation) Thank you Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends)

Chairman: *Ma'na*. Minister Gross

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman, our regional school operations work directly with the principals and vice-principals, to support their leadership efforts and to ensure that they align with the department priorities. Our regional school operations are the departments direct link to the front-line staff within our schools, and the principals report has been developed and has begun the implementation stage across all schools, and the report will help ensure that *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* and the departmental priorities are being met in all our schools across the territory. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na*. Mr. Malliki

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) One of the biggest challenges to school students' success is poor attendance at school. Are any new actions or initiatives being considered to promote good attendance? (interpretation) Thank you Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends)

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Minister Gross

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana,* Mr. Chairman, and *Quana* for the question. So, we recently rolled out the attendance toolkit for our schools to enhance attendance, and it has activities and ideas or suggestions for increasing attendance in our schools. So, the schools have been working to utilize that new tool kit to improve attendance rates and it is a joint effort between our department and the community, for those efforts to increase.

Its not, it can't all happen in the schools, it has to happen with the parents, and with the teachers and educators as well as our school community to ensure that we are encouraging our children to attend school. *Quana,* Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Mr. Malliki

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you Mr. Chairman and thank you to the minister. (interpretation ends) How much is the department funding to tackle down the poor attendance? (interpretation) Thank you Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends)

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Minister Gross

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana,* Mr. Chairman. So that funding is funded through the District Education Authority through their operations and maintenance. *Quana,* Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Mr. Malliki

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you Mr. Chairman and thank you to the minister. (interpretation ends) department is not funding the poor attendance to Nunavut schools? (interpretation) Thank you Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends)

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Minister Gross

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana,* Mr. Chairman. So, the department funds the district education authorities to oversee attendance, as it is part of their policy, and within their policy and jurisdiction to increase attendance. With that, funds flow through the department to the District Education Authority to host their incentives and activities from within the District Education Authority. So, each school and community is different

based on what the District Education Authority chooses is best for their community.
Quana, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na*. Mr. Malliki

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) One would think the department would be tackling on its own instead of going through DEA. I'll move away from that. What steps has the department taken to access and evaluate the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the success of Nunavut students? (interpretation) Thank you Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends)

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. There are a few different things. We have developed a core-curriculum, and we've also developed learning packages. Right now, we are more available, and readily available to utilize laptops and internet sticks thanks to funding during the COVID-19 pandemic that enabled the department to purchase laptops for our schools and our students, as well as the internet sticks. So we're able to have instruction away from the school, and learning, as well all, live with COVID-19 and work through COVID-19, is another priority area where the department created a manual on returning back to school through a pandemic.
Quana, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) What specific school programs are currently in place to support students with career planning, pre-trade courses, and pre-employment training, or work experience. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. So the Department of Education is working with Nunavut Arctic College on a dual credit program, which we're in the pilot of that program, and working to have the Trades School in Rankin Inlet, through the Nunavut Arctic College, to be able to have and offer credits that students can attain in high school, in order to have credits from high school be transferred also over to the Nunavut Arctic College for our Inuit youth to go into and think about trades. That work is under development.

Wearing both hats, Mr. Chairman, I know that Nunavummiut look very much forward to being able to attain credits in high school that are transferable into the college level, and we look forward to students to access those credits and be able to go and work in the trades if they so choose. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The department's business noted on page 130 that Regional School Operations are department's direct link to front line. How do the regional offices collaborate to ensure consistency in the implementation of language of instruction plan and curriculum delivered in schools across the three regions? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. The department has developed an approach for language of instruction and implementation that includes a 20-year plan for curriculum resource development, assessment, and educator training for all subject areas. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The minister indicated that you're working with the Nunavut Arctic College in regard to getting prepared for employment. Have you had discussions with businesses or organizations where those students can take on-the-job training with those organizations? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. I know there have been some discussions with various departments for the Nunavut 3000 and ensuring that we have Nunavummiut that are going to be educated and trained under that partnership. I look forward to further discussion with this dual credit program and how we can utilize that program to certify and get our students into accessing the college and becoming interested in the trades field through that program. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The next person on my list: Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) On page 128 of your business plan, it indicates "To support and ensure high-quality instructional, assessment and student support practices are occurring within Nunavut schools." In bullet no. 7 it also indicates "To support schools in hiring, retaining, relocating and other human resource supports."

I guess my question is in regard to the vacant grade 5/6 teacher. There was a letter sent out to both myself and the minister back in January, and the school year for '22-23 is almost over. The schools don't have a grade 5/6 teacher, even though in the fall it went through the process of going through the interviews and they found a qualified individual. The DEA is asking why the person wasn't offered in a timely basis because now we're now in the last quarter of the school year. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Mr. Sammurtok, if you can just clarify to the minister what school you're elaborating on for the ease of the minister to get to that. Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is the Victor Sammurtok School in Chesterfield Inlet. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. In regard to the staffing position at the Victor Sammurtok School in Chesterfield Inlet, as far as I'm aware, the position has been filled. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: I'm just wondering when it was filled because the letter that I received and that she was copied to was dated January 23, 2023. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. Those are the details that I was provided and I can look further into the date, as I don't have that on hand, but provide it to the member when we do have that information. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I'll move on to the next person on my list: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Last week there was some discussion about graduation success rates and the minister had made a commitment to provide the committee with some statistics on student enrolment to give us an idea of what sort of ballpark we're looking at with graduation rates. I was wondering if the minister has had an opportunity yet to put that information together. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. The department right now is currently working to determine the best way to measure our graduation rate. We have begun our discussions with other jurisdictions on how to most accurately represent graduation rates, including factoring in cohorts of students and attrition.

With the information we have, we can calculate the gross graduate rate, which is the number of graduates divided by the average estimated 17- and 18-year-old population in the territory. For 2022, our gross graduation rate is 38.4 percent. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister, for providing that information. That is alarmingly low, but with our attendance and dropout rate, I understand that that is not a very good statistic, but I'll move on and that's something that we can continue to tackle at.

One of the issues that was requested to the minister during the standing committee appearance was the Nunavut Teacher Education Program graduate retention rate within the Department of Education. For example, in 2019 the previous Minister of Education did provide some NTEP graduate employment statistics and at that time, since 1985, there were 284 NTEP grads and 156 were employed by the Department of Education with a retention rate of 55 percent.

I was wondering if the minister would be able to provide us today with some updated figures in relation to the retention percentage of NTEP graduates. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I'll just remind members if we could at least once say what the acronym stands for, for the sake of the interpreters. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. I don't have that information on hand of the percentage, but I can get that in letter through you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I'm looking forward to receiving that. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that commitment, minister.

I would like to move on to my next line of questioning regarding the letters of authority. Every year the Department of Education finds itself in a hard place when the academic school year begins and there is a significant number of teaching vacancies, of which the Minister of Education does offer letters of authority to allow those without a teacher's certificate to teach in our school classrooms.

During the minister's appearance and through correspondence, the minister had indicated that she had issued 75 of these letters of authority this year, which is somewhat of an uptick in previous years, but I was wondering if the minister would be able to elaborate or provide some details to the committee today about the department's reliance on letters of authority to fill teaching vacancies and if there have been any identifiable trends in that area. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. There are a few factors at play for the department to hire letters of authority. The first major one is the lack of teachers out there nationwide. There is a hard time, just like other fields, with a nursing shortage, for example; we also have a teacher shortage across the country. This year we have seen a larger increase in the letter of authority due to that being one of the major circumstances, as well as the department has an issue with the lack of housing for staff and that can also attribute to having staff housing. We always advocate for our teachers and our educators for the staff housing, but it is an issue for the department. Also supporting the Nunavut Teacher Education Program, we hope that our numbers will be able to increase as we do have a low number of Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun speaker teachers and educators within the department and we are looking to have that number increase. Hopefully with the current 175 students that are enrolled in that program we will be able to hire more Inuit that have the capabilities to share our language in our schools. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. Before I move onto my next line of questioning, the minister had mentioned staff housing as being a barrier for teacher recruitment. One issue that the Iqaluit District Education Authority has raised concern over is the difficulty in filling language specialists and cultural specialist positions in our schools; specifically, that they are hard to fill due to the lack of staff housing associated with those positions.

I would like to ask the minister if the Department of Education has discussed this issue with the Iqaluit District Education Authority and if the Department of Education has submitted staff housing requests for those vacant positions in Iqaluit? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman and *quana* for the question. As you know, staff housing lies under Human Resources, however, I would like to note that the language specialist positions do come with housing and the letter of authority, however, do not come with housing. With the Nunavut 3000 we hope that we can ease some of these barriers and have more Inuit in staff housing. If they are a language of authority, for example, or in other positions that the department doesn't staff housing for, we are hoping that that can change over the coming years with the increased number of new units that will be available.

As I said, we always advocate for our educators and people who are working within the department for staff housing. We see the need for it right across the territory and I do hope that things can change in the future with Nunavut 3000 and that more Nunavummiut will be able to access staff housing. I'm not sure if I missed a question, Mr. Speaker, but if I did, if the member can please repeat. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you. Just to rephrase my question; the Iqaluit DEA has expressed concern over the difficulty in filling the language specialist positions in Iqaluit schools due to the lack of staff housing being provided or advertised with these positions. So I would like to ask again if the Department of Education has requested and/or received staff housing specifically for language specialist positions in Iqaluit. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. There are several agencies that are involved with that. So we have the Coalition of Nunavut District Education Authorities. We also have the Iqaluit District Education Authority, and within our department, partner relations working with the executive director of regional school operations. So for that matter, that internal work funnels through several different channels in order to advocate for housing. As I said, we always try and advocate for housing. It is a need for the job and we always want our staff to feel comfortable and have housing available.

So yes, we do advocate for housing and we continue to do so. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. I'll move onto my next topic. With relation to learning disabilities in our K to 12 school system, I was wondering if the minister would be able to provide the number of student support teachers and student support assistants there to provide assistance to students with learning disabilities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. I would like Assistant Deputy Minister, Dr. Sonia Osbourne to answer that question. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Osbourne.

Ms. Osbourne: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At this time I don't have the details of that question. We will provide that at a later date. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: I look forward to receiving the information through the Chair so that we can pass it on to the members. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This an issue that I have been raising for a number of years and I believe the last time that I raised this in the previous Assembly, specifically in relation to the number of students in our school system that have diagnosed learning disabilities, the previous minister had indicated that the Department of

Education at that time did not track the number of students. I was wondering if the minister would be able to provide us an update on the situation today. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman and *quana* for the question. That is a very broad area and we don't track that currently. I'm not sure if we are capable of tracking that information, but we can look into it. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I highly encourage the minister to begin efforts in identifying the current situation with the number of students with diagnosed learning disabilities. I think that is crucial to achieving the success of their education, academic education.

I agree that it is a very broad statement. There are a number of different learning disabilities, but just to be more specific; one of the more prominent disabilities is related to fetal alcohol syndrome. I believe across Canada, 4 percent of the population have been diagnosed fetal alcohol syndrome or fetal alcohol syndrome disorder, FASD. The last time I raised this in the Assembly, the Minister of Education said that the Department of Education does not track students that have been diagnosed with fetal alcohol syndrome although those are the students that are most in need for additional supports through student support teachers and student support assistants, as well as teachers in general.

I would like to ask the minister if she would be able to provide an update on that specific situation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman and *quana* for the question. The school-based team supports teachers to ensure that all needs of students are met, including students exhibiting symptoms of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, whether or not there is a medical diagnosis. I can say that this past February there was an *ilinniarvimmi inuusilirijiit* virtual symposium and they received training on fetal alcohol disorder and designed to assist them in meeting the needs of our students.

In terms of tracking those numbers, I think there is maybe a hard discrepancy as some people are diagnosed and some aren't. In terms of tracking that information, there are a number of different statistics and information that would be great for us to track and we can look into it in the future. However, we do have constraints with budget and a lack of PY statisticians and we can look into that in the future. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When it comes to students with learning disabilities, whether they are anywhere on the spectrum, from significant to slight, it is important that teachers and schools and the department recognize that in order to provide the appropriate level of assistance that a specific individual requires. I just wanted to let the minister and the Department of Education know again that I will continue to bring up these specific matters, but I'll leave it for now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's all; it's just a comment.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) That was just a comment, unless the minister wants to comment? No.

I'm going to use my discretion as Chairman to take a 10-minute break while we have issues with heat in here and maybe we can cool this place down. I'm talking physical heat in the building, not the members. We will take a 10-minute break and try to cool down the building. (interpretation) Thank you.

>>*Committee recessed at 15:07 and resumed at 15:31*

Chairman: Good afternoon. I would like to reconvene our committee meeting. We're doing the Department of Education. K to 12 School Operations. G-10. Next person on my list: Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to follow up on a couple of my colleagues' questions. My first question is: other than student grades, what type of student information is tracked and inputted into the current student database? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. The information is as follows: the name, the guardian or parent, and the school. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When we talk about our students as part of the legislation, there is supposed to be an individual learning plan for each student in Nunavut. Are those also stored somewhere in the school? Is it with the teacher? Is it with the regional school ops? Where is that information stored? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. That information is stored in the student file and other various files within the department. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My colleague, Mr. Lightstone, was asking questions on students with disabilities or other learning challenges. I know this has been brought up in the past, so I'm still kind of surprised that there's not a better tracking mechanism to assist our students.

Again, I hate using the word "assume," Mr. Chairman, but I'm going to do it anyway. I would assume that those types of issues would be tracked within the student's learning plan because you have to adapt the learning plan to the individual student needs and, if there are learning challenges that that student is challenged with within their academic stream, I would imagine that that would be tracked within the learning plan. I'm surprised that there is not an ability to be able to track students that have learning disabilities.

I know that with the Child First Initiative, there are sometimes student support assistants that are able to assist students once that program is enabled or approved, but it does bring to light the statement that was made earlier by the minister that fetal alcohol spectrum disorder being one example of something that gets recognized from a student level and even the minister had stated even undiagnosed fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, students that are suffering through that.

I would just like to get a little bit more clarification from the minister of how the department would be able to meet the expectation of being able to track students not just with disabilities but with even just simple learning challenges. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. The department is currently aiming to contract and work with Edsembli, our student information system, to be the provider of our Nunavut student information system to design, field test, and implement software customized to the existing inclusive education record software and to add it as an extension to that platform. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to that being implemented. I'm sure that myself and my colleagues will follow up on that.

Mr. Chairman, another question that was asked by one of my colleagues was the steps the department is taking to assess and evaluate the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the success of Nunavut students. Now, it may be more anecdotal, but I have heard from a number of students that were challenged during the pandemic with the lack of in-person learning.

I know the teachers did their best and I know the Department of Education did their best to make sure that students did have access to student supports to help support their learning activities, yet at the same time I do know of students that were very challenged

with that lack of in-person teaching. In fact, some students even didn't take the higher levels of education that was available to them.

When you look at a grade 12 student, you have your 30-1 programming, then you have your 30-2 programming, and you have your 30-3 programming. Now I'm hearing that some students are not meeting the requirements of some of the programs that they were initially interested in because they maybe took 30-2 in something instead of the 30-1.

From what I understand, universities haven't really taken that into consideration. They have been sticking to their guns, if you want to call it that, on the academic requirements for certain programming. Even as a non-academic, when you think of certain trades or certain academic studies or programs, it may not seem as important to have like a 30-1 math versus 30-2 when math is not a component of that program, yet it's still a requirement.

I was wondering if the department has had any tracking on the statistics on students on a trend, whether there was a gap of students taking the higher-level academics during the pandemic and taking lower-level courses simply to meet their graduation requirements. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* to the member for the question. We're not aware of any students that deviated from their career pathing plan to take any lower credit courses during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll leave that alone for now as, hopefully, we are at the final stages of this global pandemic and students can get back and on track, and hopefully students will be able to avail themselves of upgrading opportunities to meet their course requirements.

Mr. Chairman, please correct me if this question has been asked already. I was a little distracted earlier in this page. On page 144 of the department's Inuit Employment Plan, it indicates that the department "will work to fill 99 positions with Nunavut Inuit by March 31, 2024..." On page 145 it indicates that recruitment and retention efforts will include support for Nunavut Arctic College's expansion of the Nunavut Teacher Education Program. Is the department working with the college specifically to fill the 99 positions and, if so, which educator roles will be filled as a priority? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) A variation was asked, but there's enough news in there, so I'll let it go.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. K to 6 is our priority focus at the moment. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand that because the Nunavut Teacher Education Program graduates, from what I understand, are only eligible to teach at the K to 6 level. The reason I was asking that question is it leads to my next question. When we look at the Nunavut Teacher Education Program, how many students are registered and attending that program that have the ability to graduate before March 2024? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman and *quana* for the questions. The department is on a tripartite working group with the Nunavut Arctic College, Culture and Heritage, the Department of Education, the federal government, as well as Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated on the particular topic of the Nunavut Teacher Education Program and creating more opportunities for Nunavummiut to attain that program in our communities. So there are 15 communities access the program currently, with 176 students.

The breakdown; the specific numbers for the ones that will graduate in Iqaluit, I don't know the specific details of how many are in their final year, but through first to fifth year there are currently 56 enrolled throughout those years. In Arviat we are enrolled in years four and five; there are currently nine students. In Gjoa Haven there are currently six students enrolled in their final year, and that is the final numbers for this, but for the more accurate and detailed number we can work with Nunavut Arctic College to get the number of students that are currently in their final year across the territory. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank you for that information. I do look forward to more details on it. The point that I'm trying to make, Mr. Chairman, is when you're looking at trying to fill a specific number; 99 positions before March 2024, when we look at the eligible students to graduate, would that meet the number of 99 positions if all the graduates went to work with the Government of Nunavut in a teaching capacity? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. With the recruitment efforts of the Nunavut Teacher Education Program we are hopeful that we will be able to graduate the 176 students to have them work in our schools. I know that the 99 positions by next year is not a tangible target when you are looking to recruit from the Nunavut Teacher Education Program. However, I can say that we do have people that are working under language of authority and we utilize that work field to hire Inuit in that position.

I will say that with the revised Nunavut Teacher Education Program, students who attain their first and second year of the Nunavut Teacher Education Program are able to come into our schools and work as letters of authority as they have met the requirements to work in that specialized field with the education that they had attained through their two years in the Nunavut Teacher Education Program. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll kind of divert for a second. The minister had mentioned the letters of authority criteria being met through the first two years of the Nunavut Teacher Education Program. What is the criteria needed for an instructed to be provided with a letter of authority to be a teacher? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. I would like the particulars to be answered by Deputy Minister Hainnu. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Hainnu.

Ms. Hainnu: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. Letters of authority may be anything to do with an education program plan that has been identified by the district education authority and the school team. So in one community, a letter of authority feature may be an Inuinnaqtun speaker who has no bachelors, no maters, but can speak Inuinnaqtun to preserve the language, so they may teach Inuinnaqtun classes from K-3, K-6, but it is very specific. It pertains to each individual program planning of one of the 45 schools. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is what I believed. One of the challenges that I have with that process is that just because somebody can speak the language doesn't mean they can teach a language. With the gaps in Nunavut-specific curriculum, it is often left up to the instructor to develop their own, maybe not full-blown curriculum, but they're teaching methodology. I know from experience, I have had a couple of kids go through the school system here in Nunavut, and I have to say the Inuktitut teaching component of their education mixed.

At one point there was a phenomenal woman that was teaching, I believe she was from Pond Inlet, that was fantastic with the kids. They were actually learning to speak some Inuktitut and even to read it, yet at the same time, I have heard of parents being concerned that their grade 5 and 6 students are bringing home colouring and crossword puzzles, where you're just trying to locate words that you don't even know what they mean.

I am very concerned at the consistency of education that is brought forward, especially with their language instructors, but that goes into the academic side as well, too. If somebody is operating under a letter of authority to be a teacher when they don't necessarily have a teaching background, it makes it very difficult for the students to have a consistent level of achievement across the territory.

I would just like to get the minister's plan on how we're going to overcome some of these gaps on being able to provide some consistent level of education across the territory for our students. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman and *quana* to the member for those comments and the question. It is a very valid concern that the department does have with the letters of authority and being able to teach. We do have learning coaches who work directly with the letter of authority educator to create plans and teach them how to instruct in the classroom. They also have the principal's support and work with the principal directly to ensure that things like the school plans are being met. There is a whole school team that is there for the learning of the students to ensure that the letters of authority are instructing material to students and it is a collaborative approach to having our letters of authority be in our schools. We are hoping that we can address this and as I mentioned, the tripartite on teachers specifically, and ensuring that we are increasing our numbers.

This is an avenue that is going to take some time for our numbers to increase, but I think it does look promising to have so many students enrolled in the program and we are continuing to see more people go through that program and we hope that having more communities across Nunavut be able to offer the Nunavut Teacher Education Program in our communities that Nunavummiut won't have to leave their hometowns and be able to attend the program in our smallest communities to our biggest communities and be able to attain their bachelor degree through the Nunavut Arctic College, with the support from the funders, including the Department of Education to have an increase in recruitment and retention of our Inuit teachers, specifically. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Those supports and resources for teachers teaching under letter of authority sound great on paper, but when you look at the inconsistencies and capacity issues across the territory, I would challenge the minister on how affective that would be consistently across the territory.

Mr. Chairman, when we look at the number of 99 positions need to be filled by March 2024, can the minister assure me that any numbers added to those 99 positions will not include any teachers with letters of authority? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman and *quana* for the question. Those 99 positions are throughout all of our positions within the Nunavut Teachers Association positions or the Nunavut Employees Union positions. Within the letters of authority, they are one-year terms. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you and I appreciate the Chairman's staff for stopping the clock as soon as I finished talking and give me one more kick at the can.

Mr. Chairman, I do have an issue with the strategy of building, even though it's a one-year term, it could still technically be counted to these numbers of the 99 before March 2024 and I just want to get confirmation from the minister that these are actually teachers or positions within the Nunavut Employees Union or within the district education authorities' approved positions.

When it comes to teaching, I for one, have a strong belief and faith in our students that given proper instruction and the proper resources to fulfill their academic goals, led by teachers, and I'm talking bachelor of education trained teachers, those expectations are across the country, and I don't think we should be lowering our expectations on the delivery support to our students. We have a very, very bright future ahead of us, with a lot of fantastic kids and people going through our education system, whether it be K to 12 or post-secondary, and I've spoken in this House that we do not need road blocks at any level of the academic stream. I just want to reiterate how important it is to bring in trained teachers to teach our students so we can continue to develop our potential as a territory. Just a comment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. That was just a comment, but Minister Gross, if you want to elaborate. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman and *quana* for the remarks. I just wanted to say that we are not a can. The Department of Education takes education very seriously and we do recognize that it is for our youngest learners that we are here to be here for them. I just wanted to say that for the record, Mr. Chairman.

Yes, we are working on a number of issues, and as I stated, this is one area that has a very direct concern for us and we are working. There are a number of issues that we always need to work on and this is one area where we do want to improve our letters of authority and having the letters of authority be hired through, as I mentioned, if the student has taken the Nunavut Teacher Education Program year one and two of that program and for some reason it might not have been for them or it might not have been the right time, that we can hire them in this position as letter of authority. There are a lot of different areas to strengthen, we do want to see more Inuit teachers, and I am thankful for the tripartite group that is there working on this very issue to have more Inuit educators in our schools. I look forward to the day when we get closer to those targets and the numbers for our students. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Just before I go to the next person on my list, just for clarification, the minister stated that letter of authority are for one year. Does that mean that all the teachers that are teaching under a letter of authority are casuals and not indeterminate? Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. They are on term positions for one year. So, that is another area where we are looking to support, as they are only one year per term for the letter of authority, and we have some letters of authority that are at various different levels of teaching in our schools, but every year they have to be renewed. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na*. Next person on my list, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you Mr. Chairman, and I appreciate that last question that you asked because that was one of my questions and I'm wondering as well: in addition to that one-year limitation, is there a limit to the number of times an individual can be hired to teach under a letter of authority?

Chairman: *Ma'na*. Minister Gross

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman and *Quana* for the question. That information is not stipulated within the human resources manual. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na*. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you Mr. Chairman, in a response a couple of minutes ago, the minister mentioned that the department wants to hire as many Inuit as they can, so I'm wondering: are these letters of authority limited only to Nunavut Inuit? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na*. Minister Gross

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. No they are not. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na*. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you Mr. Chairman. We know that public servants are often evaluated on a regular basis in terms of how well they are meeting expectations for employment and I'd like to know from the minister how often those who are under letters of authority are evaluated for their performance. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Ma'na*. Minister Gross

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. That happens once a year. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Are those evaluations applied to any person who may have a letter of authority to teach in our schools reinstated, or a new one at any given time? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Minister Gross

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana,* Mr. Chairman. Can the member please rephrase the question? *Quana,* Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Ms. Brewster, please rephrase your question. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you Mr. Chairman. The minister stated that individuals who are on letters of authority are evaluated for their performance on an annual basis, and my question Mr. Chairman to the minister is whether or not those evaluations are applied to a persons record of employment, to be taken into account should there be a need to put that person under additional letters of authority in order that they can teach within our schools. I hope that's clear. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Minister Gross

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana,* Mr. Chairman and *Quana* to the member for rephrasing the question. Yes, that information is there. However, it is not required. *Quana,* Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Can the minister, through you tell us why its not required? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Minister Gross

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana,* Mr. Chairman and *Quana* for the question. For the simple fact being that the letters of authority are only for one year. *Quana,* Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you Mr. Chairman. I think its of utmost importance that we are ensuring that the people that we are bringing into our classrooms to educate our children are evaluated fairly, and that those evaluations are taken into account so that important feedback can be given to the person who is a term employee, in order that they may improve as an employee or so that any specific needs that they have can be met, so that they can do a little bit better at their job. So, can the minister please explain further why that is not required, or seem to be deemed as something that's important? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. Sorry for the technical difficulty. *Quana* to the member for the question.

Each letter of authority has a professional framework. I would like Deputy Minister Hainnu to further elaborate on the Professional Development Framework that each letter of authority receives. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Hainnu.

Ms. Hainnu: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. Teachers, unlike other professions, do not give an evaluation. That is done outside of their work. Teachers, substitute teachers, and letters of authority teachers, it's a very big professional development framework, where everything you do, how you conduct yourself, what your classroom looks like, what your long-range planning, classroom management plan, and delivery look like.

The letters of authority teachers engage in the professional framework that teachers engage with. It's multiple levels. There are different milestones throughout the entire year. So it's not a simple evaluation that goes into their file. They don't actually require it to be re-hired. When they have it, it does go towards getting re-hired, hands down. I hope that answers the question. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I think what the member was getting at is if the evaluations are done, and if they're not going to be used for re-hire of a letter of authority, why are they even done? That's as close as I can hear what the member wanted. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A performance evaluation of any public servant helps to serve them as employees so that they may improve on issues and areas of concern, as well as to receive guidance and support in improving as public servants. Aside from that, the technical evaluation of performance related to curriculum development and the classroom work.

Are people under letters of authority evaluated for things like attendance, and other areas that other public servants are evaluated for as well. Communication skills, that sort of thing. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* to the member for the question. I'd like to ask Deputy Minister Hainnu to further elaborate. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Hainnu.

Ms. Hainnu: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. Attendance is not one of the evaluation aspects, but the quality of education, quality of lesson plan, quality of instructional time, those are all things that are assessed and included, but very unique to assessments. What makes teacher's assessment different from other evaluations that are GN employees is that the feedback is immediate. It's given on an ongoing and regular basis, with one-on-one meetings with the school team. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For those who are on letters of authority, especially for those who are Nunavut Inuit, is there instructional time counted toward any hours that they need toward the Nunavut Teacher Education Program? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I don't know if the minister would have that there, as it's straddling Arctic College. Minister, if you can give it a try. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. No, their hours not put counted toward the Nunavut Teacher Education Program. However, we do encourage out staff that by working with our department to undergo training, if they foresee.

We do have supports for our educators, whether they are student support assistants, or letters of authority, to be able to avail to training opportunities, and we encourage whoever would like to go to enter into the teaching profession education through the Nunavut Teacher Education Program, or through a program down south that is similar. We do have the paid education leave, for those that are willing and qualify for that. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to move back to the minister's earlier statement that the minister is not aware of any students taking a different course of action in terms of their learning during COVID-19. I find it really hard to believe, especially because I know of so many students, anecdotally, who took a different course of action, in terms of their studies.

I am just wondering why the minister has shared that with us. Is it because the department didn't track that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. That information is coming from the department, it's not something that we're aware of. That information is what I have available from the department because it was asked and that is the answer that I had. If there is any information out there through our regional school operations,

maybe they can dive deeper into that topic and look to working with our school leaders to see if there are any individuals who might have had to change, we can do that.

As far as we're aware at the moment, Mr. Chairman, there hasn't been anyone that we've been aware of, that had to change their course of action due to COVID-19. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. Minister did the department track how many early leavers we had, as a result of COVID-19? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for that question. Could the member please clarify early leavers. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster, please clarify.

Ms. Brewster: Sure. In education educators are moving away from the term dropout to early leavers, given that often educators are working very hard to ensure that students come back. So instead of calling students dropouts, they're referred to as early leavers, especially in the hopes that they will be sometime returners. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* to the member for clarifying that. It's a new term for me, so thank you for sharing that information.

In terms of tracking the numbers of early leavers, that's not any information that we have right now. However, we can dive deeper into that and see if the numbers and what the data is on early leavers during the period of the pandemic, and see if there is any correlation. We can get that back through letter format, through you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. 'm looking forward to that. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you for that, minister. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The minister earlier responded to a question regarding the effects of COVID-19 pandemic on the success of Nunavut students, mentioning a manual for returning back to school after a pandemic.

Can the minister please, through the Chairman, clarify whether that's a manual for students, or if it's a manual for educators? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* to the member for the question. That is a manual for our educators as well as out district education authorities. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na*. Ms. Brewster

Ms. Brewster: Thank you minister, and thank you Mr. Chairman. Can the minister, through the chair, confirm for me whether or not that manual includes information on how to reach out to early leavers in order to bring them back into the education fold? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na*. Minister Gross

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman and *Quana* for the question. The manual currently doesn't have that information included. However, we can work within the department to come up with some strategies for that topic. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na*. Ms. Brewster

Ms. Brewster: Thank you for that minister, and thank you Mr. Chairman. Can the minister, let us know whether or not the Department of Education is taking part in any research or any specific evaluation of the department's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the impacts on the success of Nunavut students? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na*. Minister Gross

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman and *Quana* for the question. I would like Dr. Sonia Osbourne to elaborate on the answer to that question. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na*. Ms. Osbourne.

Ms. Osbourne: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are excited that that question has been asked because we are currently gathering information from our schools as to what that looked like, and so we have some data, we just haven't had all the data to report out in a way that will...First, we want it to inform us internally and then to report out how to deal with that.

Generally, based on what we have gathered, we noticed that schools in some settings, in some communities is more positive than negative in terms of what has happened really. I am very cautious to say its post-COVID, because we are living with it. We have to be very careful when we talk about data and how that informs.

However, we are doing that, so thanks to the member for that question, Mr. Chairman and we look forward to the end result of what we have gathered. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Ms. Brewster

Ms. Brewster: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Through the Chairman, can the minister indicate when we as members might hear back from the Department of Education on that very important work that's being done? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Minister Gross

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana,* Mr. Chairman and *Quana* for the question. We hope that we can have that information by the next academic year. *Quana,* Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Ms. Brewster

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Back to a response that the minister made in regard to a question about individual learning plans, the minister responded that there are individual learning plans kept on student files and then quote "and other various files within the department." Through the Chairman, can the minister tell us what those other areas files within the department are? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Minister Gross

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana,* Mr. Chairman and *Quana* for the question. I would like Deputy Minister Hainnu to elaborate on the details of that question. *Quana,* Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Ms. Hainnu.

Ms. Hainnu (interpretation): Thank you Mr. Chairman, and I thank the member for enquiring about that matter. Now, we catalogue different types of information in our schools that pertain to our students. The storage files are even colour-coded.

It varies, as the white colouration is where you gather the issues specific to the student, information such as the identity of the student, the parental names, their point of origin, their age and if previous evaluations and assessments occurred, which are recorded.

Further, there is another red colouration which incorporates anything stored in that file specifically for behavioural tendencies or student peculiarities, such as the tendency to cause mischief, whether they have hit other students, if they caused consternation to the teachers, or even to another parent.

Additionally, we have a blue coloured file that is specific to the life counsellors who provide life counselling treatment to our students, and this file also stores information about the student's emotional issues, if the student was uncomfortable, whether they required counselling or further treatment by a mental health therapist and this type of information would be stored there.

Also, the colours are white, red, green that also stores information about any agreement betwixt the parents and teacher specific to the student, and any other points that the parents, student and teacher would all sign off on towards these goals, such as the (interpretation ends) individual student support plan (interpretation) and this different set of files collect different sets of information on the student. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that response. I would just like to go back to the discussions about diagnosing fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. We know that it is a very complex disorder to evaluate and diagnose and I'm wondering if the minister, through the Chair can tell us whether or not there is a diagnostic team specific to Nunavut and how educators might be a part of that diagnostic team. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman and *quana* for the question. That diagnostic team would be through the Department of Health that would undergo to see and determine if a child does have fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. I can say that the exact prevalence of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder here in Nunavut schools are not tracked. Studies show that a lack of concrete prevalence rates and under reporting is common in all provinces and territories for multiple reasons, including the complexity of the diagnosis, misdiagnosis, and also stigma. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know the prevalence rates are very difficult to track if we do not have that complex diagnostic team in place and I'm just really unsure about whether or not my question was answered, Mr. Chairman, whether or not there is a diagnostic team that of course would be led by the Department of Health, but in consultation with the Department of Education.

So is there a diagnostic team within Health the Department of Education works with, and if so, is there an information sharing agreement with the Department of Health to ensure that the educators have the information that they need in order to help individual students who may be diagnosed on that spectrum disorder. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman and *quana* for the question. The diagnosis of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder is a medical diagnosis which is made up by a multidisciplinary team and that is usually a pediatrician, a speech language pathologist and a "neurocopy" psychologist, using a rigid and standardized criteria. So, the Department of Education can refer a child or a student to the Department of Health to see

if there is a diagnosis. The diagnosis for fetal alcohol spectrum disorder is currently done through the Department of Health as a medical diagnosis. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know and understand that it does take a very large team in order to diagnose fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. The minister, in her response just now, mentioned as a part of that team a speech language therapist. I'm wondering, through the Chair, if the minister can tell us whether or not the Department of Education has any speech language therapists on their teams. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. Just to clarify, that is a speech language pathologist. The department can hire that specific position when required. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know that often it really does take a heads-up from educators in order to ensure that especially a very young person is flagged as possibly having this issue of concern and so that's really important.

I'm just going to move on to another response from earlier today in a question regarding a working group to identify needs and ways to enhance a standardized school meal program. In her response, the minister stated that there is no food guide currently to direct that work. Can the minister, through the Chair, please elaborate on that response? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. Currently there are no meal requirements or healthy food standards that our schools use to deliver food meal programs and that's an area where we do want to focus on as we are looking at the food programs in our schools and enhancing them through extra funds and supporting the *Katujjiluta* mandate of having food in our schools. This is an area that we are working with the Department of Health to ensure that these areas that have been gaps are being addressed in our schools. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Through you, can the minister confirm currently that the Department of Education is using the 2012 *Nunavut Food Guide Educator's Handbook*? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. As the school food programs are different in each school, it isn't a requirement, but we hope that the schools are using the program. I can say that the Department of Health does distribute that food guide and we hope that our schools are following it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Next person on my list: Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It has almost been a month now that my constituency community of Taloyoak hasn't been going to their school. It's going to be exactly one month tomorrow that they didn't go to the Netsilik School in Taloyoak. Alternatives that they found or the locations that they found were the community hall, the NTI office, and the preschool. Now my question is: does the department find alternatives with the communities or with the DEAs within the communities? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* to the member for the question on the Netsilik School. Currently the regional school operations is working with the district education authority to find various community locations to deliver some in-person instruction. The spaces that are being used right now are the hamlet community complex, the preschool building, the Elders Palace, and the NTI office at the hotel. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In respect to my other constituency community, they had to find alternatives too and I assume that the department and the Kitikmeot School Operations were a part of the funding alternatives. I wanted to thank the hamlet and I wanted to thank NTI, the Elders Palace, and the preschool for helping the Netsilik School find alternatives for the children to continue learning their education.

Hopefully other communities won't have to find alternatives for the children to continue their education. I highly recommend that the department come up with backup plans for other communities just in case they have to find alternatives to find locations for the children to continue learning their education.

Mr. Chairman, I thank Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, the hamlet, and the preschool for allowing the Netsilik School to have these alternatives for the students to continue learning their education. (interpretation) I feel compassion for the children who need to go to school every day. It's unfortunate that the school experienced a fuel spill. I feel compassionate for them.

(interpretation ends) To my understanding, Mr. Chairman, if I'm not mistaken, the Netsilik School will be operating by March 13. Can the minister confirm that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* to the member for the words. Yes, the department hopes that the school would be operational by March 13; however, we're still not 100 percent sure. If nothing else comes up, then the school should be opening by then and we're hopeful for that. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm really hopeful that the school can continue to operate and hopefully March 13 will be the day that the students will get back to their school. My hope is that this does not happen to other Nunavut communities and that the children need to continue their education.

Mr. Chairman, I have two girls and a son that go to the school. Education is great, like even my youngest one takes Inuktut classes and those Inuktut classes are effective. She's going to correct you if you're missing your *naaniqs*, Mr. Chairman.

I love to see the kids continue going to school daily and my hope is that types of this kind of stuff at the schools just don't happen. Mr. Chairman, I have some more questions, but I would like to thank my colleagues for asking those questions and it has already answered a lot of my questions.

Now for K to 12 School Operations, when it comes to Inuktut and the dialects, from kindergarten to what grade do they continue doing the Inuktut classes? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* to the member for the comments and the question. In terms of the reopening of the Netsilik School, it's all about safety for us. I just want to reassure the member and the community of Taloyoak that we are really are hopeful that we'll be able to open the school as soon as possible when it's safe to do. There have been environmental tests that have undergone throughout the school, air quality testing to ensure that the school is going to be safe. When we have the readings from those air canisters we will be able to determine if the school is able to reopen. When we have those numbers, that's what will be our determining factor.

In terms of Inuktut in the school, it's K to 12 that we do offer Inuktut in our schools and it depends under education programming planning. Education program planning is involved with the different models of education that each district education authority

chooses for the school. Each community is different depending on which level and model they use and have been using.

We are undergoing a review of our language if instruction models. The Coalition of Nunavut District Education Authorities is currently on tour and will be for the duration of the work, which is supposed to be concluded in July 2025. With that, all of the school communities will be consulted not once, but twice, in terms of what type of education model best suites the school and community in terms of not just today, but thinking about the future and what level of instruction and bilingual education the community is wanting to have for the students.

We leave that in their hands as all of our communities are at different of using our language and it's our hope that we can have Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun in all of our schools, but they are all at different levels. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you minister for your response. When it comes to Inuit education and Inuktit classes, how long does a student get those classes daily? Is it one hour? Is it two hours per day? I'd like to know that information. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman, and *quana* to the member for the question. The particular details I'd like to ask Deputy Minister Hainnu to elaborate on the answer. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Hainnu.

Ms. Hainnu: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, member, for the question. It very much depends on the workforce that's been hired into the school. So if you're in a Qulliq Model school, you can choose to teach Inuktitut language arts, you can teach math in Inuktitut, you can do physical education in Inuktitut, you can do home economics in Inuktitut, but if you only have one Inuktitut-speaking teacher, you might just have Inuktitut language arts.

So it very much depends on what the community was able to bring in as a teacher. The Qulliq Model does say 85 percent of the classes should be in Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How many schools and which communities use that Qulliq Model? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman, and *quana* to the member for the question. Most of our schools are on the Qulliq Model. We have two that are on immersion or dual model. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) This language of ours is extremely precious and dear to us and for these education models, at least for encouraging the usage of Inuktitut in our schools, even myself, I have to force myself to speak although I am steadily improving.

Our students who are being taught in Inuktitut and if they continue to use the Inuktitut stream, then obviously they also would begin to increase their vocabulary, Mr. Speaker, and this is something I have been very passionate about offering education in Inuktitut in our schools. It behooves me to know that I must continue to fight for that right to have it taught in our schools.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Chairman, I tried very hard to promote Inuit language in the schools in territory. Even myself, I continue to try to learn the Inuktitut language. The more we talk, the more we speak about Inuktitut, it gets a lot easier.

For the language-of-instruction when it's completed, will we see a curriculum being developed for more Inuktitut is more utilized in the school in the near future? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* to the member. I think some of the members words were lost due to technical difficulties. The sentiment of promoting language is felt and I appreciate the member for bringing up the concern and the issue regarding using our language in our schools.

It's my hope, I know, as a territory, that we can have the best quality language-of-instruction offered in our schools to promote our language in our communities, and for Nunavummiut to be able to learn our mother tongues and have that being offered in our schools is a great way to learn the language. Learning our language first starts at home. We encourage people to speak the language. I love hearing people speaking our language. We're creating an example. Being somebody that's learning the language, and slowly learning more and understanding more, you hear and learn more through people speaking. I commend everybody, including everyone who is here who does speak our language to be able to transmit that for Nunavummiut and pass it on.

In terms of K to 12 curricula, it is our goal to create curriculum that is embedded in *Inuit Qaujimagatunqangit*. That we will be able to have a full suite of curriculums that is made-

in-Nunavut that is on our traditional values that shares who we are as Nunavummiut throughout the curriculum, and uses our language embedded into the curriculum, in terms of what we have to offer for it to be able to be in our mother tongues.

The department is currently working on creating that. We're focussing on kindergarten to Grade six, currently. I can say that for kindergarten to Grade six, what we have completed in 2022 was the third draft of the Inuktitut language arts first language, and Inuktitut second language Inuktitut curriculum, and the first draft of the Inuktitut language immersion curriculum has also been done. The second draft of the physical education, health and wellness, as well as the social studies curricula has been drafted. Finally, the first draft of the English second language and English language arts first language have all been created in the first draft phase.

The ongoing work that's currently happening for curriculum development is math, science, arts education, and Inuktitut second language, which is Inuinnaqtun curricula, that ongoing. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When it comes to language of instruction, do they instructors come from each region? Like say for example, Qikiqtaaluk, Kivalliq, Netsilik region and the far west meaning Inuinnaqtun, Cambridge Bay. Are they coming from all the communities in Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. There is I guess two answers. It's a standardizes use of Inuktitut without one specific dialect, however if there are people out there who would like to create resources in a specific dialect we use our contractor, Inhabit Education, to go through and write books and curriculum. So depending on the availability and the aptitude of an individual, if they would like to create that resource, they're there to help support that and we do encourage people if there are people for this specific dialect of Netsilingmiut, where our member's constituency. If there are Netsilingmiut who do want to help support and create those resources, we're always open for that information to be shared and created for the particulars.

I would like to add that our teachers, it doesn't matter what resources are out there. There are many dialects across Nunavut. It's great that we have so many resources coming available and our teachers if the dialect is written one than where the teacher is from, we have teachers who are adapting the resource to suit the community and the dialect changes for the [articular school or community].

Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a correction to the member's previous question he asked on what models are there. I would to make a slight correction that we have 4 communities that are on the Immersion Model, 2 on the Dual Model, and 20 Qulliq Model and 1 on the French model. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister, for clarifying answer and thank you for a response on language of instruction and asking for more language of instruction developers. The reason I'm happy I asked this question, Mr. Chairman, is yeah, we do have language dialect difference within Qikiqtaaluk and Netsilik and Kivalliq.

It's a known fact that a lot of the information GN, it's all Qikiqtaaluk dialect and I notice a lot of my constituents are having a hard time, difficulty, when they're reading the syllabics (interpretation) I appreciate the fact that you are training dialects and I do appreciate you for asking the question and your response (interpretation ends) Mr. Chairman, I think I got my answer so I'm going to end it from here. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I'll go to the next person on my list. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I realize that human resources are under the review of corporate services, however on the discussion earlier about letters of authority, I just had one more question that I couldn't slip in there and that's whether or not the Department of Education's human resources team and the principals who are tasked with hiring, or putting people on letters of authority, whether or not they are doing exit surveys with those individuals who are on letters of authority at the end of their term. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na*. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman, and *Quana* to the member for the question. They are on a one-year term so no; we don't do an exit survey with the letters of authority. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na*. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you Mr. Chairman and the minister. You know, I think its...again I'll say that its really, really important that we take the opportunity to gain any information on how we can improve our education system that we can, and certainly, doing exit surveys for outgoing individuals who are a part of our education system can provide a wealth of knowledge about what the gaps and area of concerns are, which areas we can celebrate, which areas we need to improve, and of course how we can work harder to retain our educators.

Sometimes, especially for those that are here for short terms, they feel like they have less to lose by being honest and telling the truth about what areas of concern they have in terms of being employees of the Department of Education, and working within our schools and with our students,

I would ask through the Chairman whether or not the minister can go back and talk to the team at education to make that happen so that the department can learn from these very important people that we put on letters of authority. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana,* Mr. Chairman, and *Quana* to the member for the question. The Nunavut Teachers Association does do an exit survey, and we can request for that to be included; for the letters of authority to be surveyed after their term is up and get the information from them.

However, even though it is a one-year contract, everyone differs and some letters of authority get hired on again, and some of them have been with us for a number of years, each being different, different amounts of time as is with any employee but, being the one here, we can talk to the Nunavut Teachers Association and see if we can get those letters of authority to do that exit survey that they have with them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you Mr. Chairman I don't want to get mired in semantics, the minister used the word "can" and I wonder if through the Chairman, the minister can...will...will confirm that the minister will work with the appropriate partners to get those exit surveys done? Thank you, Mr. Chairman

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana,* Mr. Chairman, and *Quana* to the member for the question. We do work with The Nunavut Teachers Association to get that information from the outgoing teachers, and we can work with them to get the particulars or letters of authority, *Quana* Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Minister, on page 128 of the departments business plan, the fifth bullet states under Objectives states "To support the development of safe schools and communities that foster learning as well as physical and emotional well-being." Mr. Chairman, I don't see any specific priorities to this effect in this section of the business plan and I would like, through you Mr. Chairman, for the minister to explain why there aren't any specific priorities to this effect on this portion of the business plan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana,* Mr. Chairman. *Quana* to the member for the question. Under that priority we have "To support the development of safe schools and

communities that foster learning as well as physical and emotional well-being.” *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe the minister just read out the same bullet I just read on page 128 under “Objectives” and my questions was why there aren’t specific priorities with goals laid out in this section of the business plan. I might be missing it, however, in looking at page 129 and 130, I don’t see any specific priorities relating to meeting this objective. Through the Chair, can the minister please explain this to me? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman and *quana* to the member for that. We do continue to support and monitor and advise, but we also have it covered under day-to-day operations. So we have the “Implement procedures and instructions for the maintenance and upkeep of internet ready devices in Nunavut schools.” That is done with the support of Corporate Services to make up of all internet ready devices that are managed on a regular basis to ensure their readiness as needed. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I may be lost here, but I’m not sure how maintenance and upkeep of internet ready devices in Nunavut schools impact physical and emotional wellbeing. However, I’ll just move on because I see a section in curriculum development where I can continue that line of questioning.

Mr. Chairman, priorities set out on page 129 “...to support, monitor, and advise on effective school leadership practices and standards...”. The status: “*A standardized principal’s report has been developed and will begin the implementation stage across all schools in the 2023-24 school year.*” I’m wondering what is included in this standardized principal’s report and, for example, whether or not there will be reporting on the impacts of developing safe schools in communities that foster learning as well as physical and emotional wellbeing, for example, are included in that report? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman and *quana* to the member for the question. Sorry, maybe just to clarify my answer for the previous question, the work that the department does have is to “Continue to support, monitor and advise on the effective school leadership practices and standards within Nunavut schools, with a focus on instruction, assessment, and student support.” So all of those areas are there for that reason.

In terms of the principal's report and the report that is there for them, the first part is on school success and information on class-specific accomplishments or staff schoolwide community success, and following the *Inuit Qaujimaqatuqangit* principles, part 2 is on school challenges where the principals share challenges that particular month, which may include specific class challenges, staff challenges, school-wide challenges or a school community challenge.

We also have part 3, which is our elder and culture language expert involvement. How many elders are there, current language experts that have been involved within the school community that month, what type of instruction, cultural programs, counselling, additional support for special events, and what category they were hired in. We also have part 4, which is consultations, parents and partnership building events, and those are to find out any information on consultations that have happened, or parental involvement or initiatives, and also partnership building initiatives that took place over the month.

We also have extracurricular activities and gathering information on the activities that have happened that month in the school for the number of students they also include the number for the average monthly attendance for the extracurricular activities.

We have another section on emergency procedures where the safety procedures that happen, so fire drills, lockdowns, procedures, bus evacuations and so forth. Those are all captured there if any of those have happened. In that month we have a few more.

We also have budget and if the school has received a budget status update from the district education authority. We have a section on the school team activities. What are the major responsibilities carried out by the school team as defined under the *Education Act*.

We have promoting attendance, developing and implementing re-entry assistance plans and promotional decisions, as well as use of non-instructional hours, which are 45 hours. How did our school, or their school use the non-instructional hours, the 45 hours to further enhance school improvement and further yet, how did they further the schools goals?

A few more, Mr. Chairman, please bear with me. The next part of the reporting is on "Other." So is there anything else that they want as a principal to report for that month. We also collect information on upcoming events. What would you like to comment or announce for the school if there are any upcoming activities or events.

Part 12, which is Operations, Infrastructure, and Human Resources. Are there at times any issue or incident that requires submission of service request from Community and Government Services to address an issue or incident and building maintenance. So we can capture that there.

All of that information is supplemented with the Inuuqatigiitsiarniq. If there are any suspensions or expulsions, that information is also captured there and other reporting concerns, if there is operational or administrative concerns such as IT, busing,

communications or translations. All of that information through the use of this new principal's report that we have captures a wide range of information for our schools and for the improvement of our school community through this report. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The principals are very busy then. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Through you, can the minister confirm how much of these reports are meant to be kept internal and whether or not they're shared with all principals? Whether or not they will be somehow consolidated, some of the information consolidated for a public report to go out into individual communities or as a whole? So are there any components of this report that are really for public consumption and any for internal, I'd appreciate that.

I'm just wondering as well how this reporting ties into things like the proposed family engagement initiative. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* to the member for that question. I'll do my best to elaborate.

There is one area that I forgot to mention which is important for the principal's report, which is on the last page and that's attendance. So the principals capture the grades that apply to the school and the number of days that they're in session, enrollment, attendance, excused absence, truancy, number of late in the morning and afternoon and number of non-attenders and the number of 100 percent attenders.

All of that information is captured along with the school closures as well that may be due to weather or other occurrences.

In terms of collecting the data, we're able to use this data now, and as it's our first rollout, a soft implementation of this principal's report, for this school year, it will be assessed to inform the report of what should look like next year, and within that we can put that in our annual report, Mr. Chairman, and include information like graduation rates, the utilization of cultural programs, the hiring of our elders and attendance rates all included in the monthly report and gathering some of that information through the seams to better support our schools through the annual reporting process. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Ms. Brewster. Sorry. I have no more names on my list for K to 12 School Operations. I just have a couple here.

You could have the best school system, the best education system in the world and unless the student steps through that door and goes into the school, they can't take advantage of that, so just so we can see the big picture without specifying which school or which

community, what is the lowest attendance rate and what is the highest within Nunavut?
Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana* for bearing with me, Mr. Chairman. So our attendance in schools for January 2023, our average attendance across the territory was 75.3 percent, and this is an increase since September 2022, the average of 67.2 percent. In the spring, attendance of 2022, attendance rates were in the 30 and 40 percent range as COVID significantly impacted student attendance.

So for January based on region of 2023, the Kitikmeot had an average of 72.28 percent attendance. The Kivalliq had 75.29 percent, and the Qikiqtani had 78.42 percent.

Our numbers have increased since coming out of the... . We're still living with COVID-19, however we have things such as vaccines and other means to support our communities and we're seeing a rise since last year. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Thank you for the good news. Education. K to 12 School Operations. Total Operations and Maintenance to be voted. \$214,359,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Alright. Members go to G-11. Curriculum, Resources and French Education. Sorry. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask for a new witness to come to the table. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Does the committee agree for a different witness for the minister?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: The committee is agreed. Exchange witnesses. Minister Gross, for the record, can you please reintroduce your guests to the committee members. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana*, for allowing a new witness. To my left we have Deputy Minister Rebecca Hainnu and to my right we have Assistant Deputy Minister Martine St-Louis. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I'll start again. Curriculum, Resources and French Education Branch on Education. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to make a comment but I would appreciate some feedback from the minister or her officials it's probably only really relevant to here in Iqaluit.

When we look at French language training or through the other schools in the city and English teaching for students in the French programming, it's always boggled my mind that we have, and I'm not begrudging any of the qualifications or the abilities of any of the teachers involved, but it's always boggled my mind that we have French first-language teachers teaching English and we have English first-language speaking teachers teaching French, when we have both in the same community.

When we look at CTS courses, I can't remember the actual term for it, hopefully the minister will help me out with the acronym. I do apologize, Mr. Chairman, when we look at students in the French system accessing the CTS, like the supplemental courses you can take at the high school in anticipation of the École des Trois-Soleils coming into action in the full scope next year, why there isn't more collaboration with the Iqaluit District Education Authority and the Commission Scolaire Francophone du Nunavut, into collaborating more to assist the students.

I know I've been party to some meetings where there seems to be some clashing between the two entities on occasion, but one of the few things that I hear in those discussions is what's best for the students. I'd just like to get some feedback from the minister on any ideas that the minister or the department may have so that our students can get the fulsome access to language training to benefit them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman, and *quana* for that question. I would like Assistant Deputy Minister Ms. St-Louis to answer the question. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. St. Louis.

Ms. St. Louis: *Qujannamiik*, Mr. Chairman.. *Qujannamiik* to the member for his question. I think that the wall that the member was talking about, has been put down over the years, because in the Inukshuk High School here in Iqaluit, most of the French program for the last couple of years. There has been a lot of collaboration established between both parties, IDEA and the Scolaire, the francophone school board.

Now that the francophone school will be expanded, and is scheduled to open next September, we're hoping that the collaboration will continue and that the francophone school board will be able to give back what they receive by sharing their gym, and sharing the expertise in teaching French to the students in Inukshuk High School, and also at the middle school here in Iqaluit.

I hope it answers the question. *Qujannamiik*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the response. I do look forward to more improvements of that nature, and in the response you brought up. My next question

is when we look at, now that there is a gymnasium there, due to the school population, it's still not large enough, to my knowledge, not large enough yet, to put in sports teams, basketball team, volleyball team, different team events.

I know that a lot of the students that have been in collaboration with the IDEA, the Iqaluit District Education Authority, and the Commission Scolaire du Nunavut, the students at the Inukshuk High School have been participating in a lot of the team sporting events, that they may not have access to as readily without true collaboration and recognition. It's still part of the learning experience of participating in team activities. It networks people around the community. It eliminates some of the isolation that some demographics may experience here in the city. We want all our kids to get exposed to as many different people, and culture, and activities as possible.

Is that partnership anticipated to carryover into the sporting activities as well? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. In regard to Ecole des Trois Solaire, the school is currently partnered with the neighbouring school, the Aqsarniit Middle School, for the use of their physical education classes, and does utilize the gymnasium there. I think it's been a shared agreement for the Iqaluit District Education Authority and the French school board to work together to meet the needs of the students. There has been a really nice arrangement for the students to use the facilities, in particular the Aqsarniit Middle School.

I do know that the Ecole des Trois Solaire does have additional programming that they utilize other activities outside of the school, to use outdoor physical activity, like skiing, and other types of activities that are in the community, some of our schools also with the use of the school, et cetera, are great areas for our schools to utilize for extra curricular physical education.

In terms of that continued dialogue, I know that this area is, I think, an area that dialogue will continue between the Iqaluit Education Authority and the French school board to ensure that that reciprocity is given back to Iqaluit and the other schools for their generous use of their facilities, and we look forward that collaboration continuing and look forward the Ecole des Trois-Soleils being able to have bigger gym with the expansion of the new school, and being able to utilize and having their own sports team in the future. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm not sure if the minister understood my question. So currently the French programming for the high school students is delivered at Inuksuk High School, where the students there are able to participate in extracurricular activities alongside with their English IDEA student peers. When the Ecole des Trois-

Soleils expansion is completed and those students up to grade 12 is anticipated to be attending that school, my question is how are we able to make sure that those students will still have access to extracurricular team activities with their high school peers?
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. So if the Iqaluit District Authority and the school principals agree, then the students will be able to utilize that. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll just end with a comment. I hope very much that if there is any need for the department to assist in making sure that that happens, I truly hope that the department steps up.

I just wanted to take a moment, I attended the graduation class at Ecole des Trois-Soleils last year, and I missed one before that, I think, but I was at the one before that, and there was only one grad at that point. Last year there were six grads and four were Inuit. I think that's something worth acknowledging and recognizing that.

When we look at different languages that are available in the territory, and like I said earlier in one of my earlier comments that the Inuktitut language training is kind of a hit and miss thing, dependant on the instructor. I think it's a very positive message that we can send to our youth that there are other education opportunities here in Iqaluit to really expand the horizon and the potential that are multilingual, not just English/Inuktitut but French as well. I would just like to leave that as a comment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) That was just a comment, so I'll go next name on my list. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) One of the priorities for 2022-23 listed in the business plan was to continue development of career and program planning curriculum on page 133 of the 2023-26 plan indicates that the transition has been formed to review curriculum and resources to career and technology courses and locally developed programs.

Is any work being done to reintroduce pre-trades training and providing options for trades related careers and work pathway? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. So our hope is with the dual credit program that we will be able to have students enter the trades sector through attaining credits in high school through that program. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Is there a way to make culture relevant, for instance, to make a curriculum of survival skills on the land in Nunavut for government? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* to the member for that question. That is course that is currently within Nunavut in our curriculum. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Where is it being delivered? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. Through letter, Mr. Chairman, we can get back to the committee in terms of the particulars of where that program is being delivered, as we don't have that information on hand right now. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) We will be expecting that information then. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On-the-land programs can have a lot of benefits and you can learn skills and it can really focus you on future benefits. If you're hunting, your catch can have a lot of benefits in the community.

(interpretation ends) The department has been working to develop a made-in-Nunavut curriculum. In November 2022 the minister tabled a progress report, language of instruction regulations and curriculum. The report listed a number of areas of progress to date but does not indicate whether curriculum development is meeting the department's projected timeline to meet language of instruction requirements.

Will future reports include timelines and indicate whether curriculum is being developed on time, accelerated, or delayed? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. Yes, the department is on schedule with the curriculum development and yes, we can provide the timeline, as we have that information and we can provide that through the letter as well through you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the minister. We will be expecting that letter.

(interpretation ends) What curriculum materials are being developed to specifically address bullying and violence within Nunavut schools? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. There are a number of different types of bullying and we do work with our partner, the Canadian Red Cross, to work towards anti-bullying in our schools and working to teach positive classroom behaviour. It's one of the guides that we have for our teachers. We have the Makittatiarniq, safe and caring schools action planning, which is resources for our school team.

We do training through the Canadian Red Cross and bullying prevention training for our staff and our youth. On Pink Shirt Day, we had provided the bullying prevention pocketbook guide, available, and we have an annual Nipivut Conference, which is a regional conference for youth on leadership and that focuses on resiliency, healthy relationships, suicide prevention, positive coping skills, self-care, and youth advocacy.

There are a number of different resources and areas that the department does work with to work on anti-bullying and it's a collaborative approach. Bullying isn't just in our schools; it's in our communities and sometimes issues arise from outside of school and are brought into school. Each instance is different, but we want our schools to be a safe and caring environment and for no bullying to be happening.

We look forward to continuing to create more additional resources to support anti-bullying and ensure that people are aware of the effects and harms that bullying can do to our people if they are bullying and for ways for people who are bullied to feel safe and to share and be able to share that it's happening. We look forward to the ongoing efforts to ease anti-bullying. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister, I think we can all agree that bullying as an action is really a symptom of negative experience and, really, one could say that it's a symptom of the cycle of violence and abuse that many Nunavummiut are undergoing, are living today, which for many reasons, we know is an intergenerational impact of the Indian residential school system. It's an impact of missing and murdered indigenous women.

I don't know if the minister recalls that last year, I asked questions about developing curriculum that is trauma informed with the knowledge that so many of our children,

youth, and families are experiencing these intergenerational impacts and that this cycle of violence can't be stopped until we actively make changes and build up children and families so that they can be a part of the solution.

Through the Chair, I would like the minister to talk to us about all of these programs that were just shared with us or listed out to us and just explain to us how they are developed and how they are trauma informed, and how they are developed and informed by what the true northern experience is here.

Sorry; I have highlighted a note here, but I can't seem to find it. There is an objective to meet the actual needs and northern experience through the development of programming. I'm wondering if the minister can, through the Chair, talk to us about how these programs are informed by what our true and lived reality is. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* to the member. That was a lot of information to try to answer, but we will do our best. I will answer but ask Assistant Deputy Minister Martine St-Louis to further elaborate.

With bullying prevention, we've had the creation of Student Achievement since 2017 and I would like to note the particular enhancement of that division. We went from one staff member to, I believe, seven staff in that division and the incredible work that is being done by that incredible division within our department.

There are a number of different resources that have been done and in collaboration with various partners, as I mentioned, the Canadian Red Cross, who is I think our number one support when it comes to student achievement and working with our school community on student supports and working to have trauma-informed schools that create safe, caring and respectful environments that enable our students to build positive relationships and also to self-regulate emotions and behaviours to be able to succeed academically, while supporting the health and well-being of our students. There are a number of different resources that have been created within the department.

I would like to ask Assistant Deputy Minister Martine St-Louis to elaborate further on the member's question. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. St-Louis.

Ms. St-Louis (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The department, in the last year, worked towards developing the Makittatiarniq planning guide. It's a resource that describes the key elements for safe and caring schools and provides a planning framework for school staff. We also developed a teaching for positive behaviour handbook and it's going to be implemented in the next school year, followed by training.

Finally, we developed an Inuglugijaittuq model for inclusive education and in relationship with occupational therapists. They work with the teacher; they train the teacher and all school staff to assist the school in becoming a trauma-informed environment. *Qujannamiik*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you very much for that response. I have just lost the question that I had in mind in relation to that response. It's getting late.

I suppose that what I'm interested in knowing right now about all of that is how this curriculum development and implementation ties back into the family engagement initiative. We know that it's going to take families to help us to break these cycles and specifically around bullying in schools, but also in the cycle of sexual abuse and addictions that are a result of those experiences. How are families and our communities being engaged in this area? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. We have the family engagement strategy as well as we have "Being Trauma Informed" as both a practice and a lens, and that's additional information that can be included in information on our new residential school curriculum.

Currently the students are taught about residential schools in a grade 10 Social Studies module. However, we have created a new residential school curriculum module that was launched this past school year in anticipation of national Truth and Reconciliation Month.

We have a number of resources for our earlier year learners to learn about residential schools and about what happened within Canada's history, but specifically within Nunavut's history and sharing traditional oral knowledge on that time and how it impacted our community and our territory, and how that we're healing from that, all Nunavummiut have been touched by the intergenerational trauma, and I know there's a saying out there from our First Nations cousins that it takes seven generations to overcome those types of intergenerational trauma that has happened and intergenerational trauma will be there, you know it's hard to put a number on how many more years, but seven generations can take a long time.

Ensuring that we're able to teach not just our school community but also encourage our parents and everyone that attending school and going to school is a safe place, a caring place and a place where our children need to be if there's ever any hesitancy because of the colonial impacts from residential school.

I think it's a collaborative approach, it's a multipronged approach from several different avenues, and we're hoping that with the creation of more resources and more education material that we can overcome one process at a time from those effects of trauma that our

territory and indigenous peoples went through and the colonial impacts of what happened. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think it's really important to use the right language when we're discussing the ongoing impacts of the intergenerational trauma, specifically of residential schools, and what we know about that information that the minister just quoted about it taking seven generations to heal from the impacts of trauma. What epigenetics tells us is that even if that physical, sexual, emotional, cultural abuse was never disclosed by those children who were experiencing it, that the body remembers and that there is evidence that genomes have been impacted and that generations born to those survivors have impacts, and I think that's really important to note, and it's also really important to note that these things are still happening, and that's why it's so important for us to ensure that we are having an impact on children in early childhood.

Mr. Chairman, as I look at this business plan regarding the curriculum development that is incorporating life skills and fostering self-reliance and self-esteem, the status updates say that these are including magazines and books in grade 4 and 5, the minister talked about high school level curriculum that's being implemented or about to be implemented to address these issues or to share information about these issues for our students.

I do agree that that's important, however I also agree that it's really important that at age appropriate and as early ages as possible that we engage children in knowledge of the true history as well as the true with lives today of the impacts of those histories.

In doing so, building tools for children to break the cycle of abuse and to be able to personally be aware of what that cycle is, in a protective factor.

I would like to hear, Mr. Chairman, from the minister, and the officials what self-reliance, and self-esteem and life skills curriculum is under developed, or has been developed to introduce from kindergarten to Grade three? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Matna*. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. I think there are multiple different areas. I'll answer some, and ask assistance from the Deputy Minister to answer as well.

I can say that the early learning and childcare training workshop does, include trauma informed practises. In our business plan, we do have that understanding to incorporate more life skills and career counselling throughout the K to 12 curriculum to foster self-reliance, self-esteem, and early career direction. Right in our business plan, that is one of our targets and one of our areas of focus for that type of work.

We do have the *Aliaqtut* curriculum for Grades 10 to 12, which deals with the understanding and developing healthy relationships, also self-esteem tolerance and understanding for others incorporated into that.

I would like to ask Assistant Deputy Minister Martine St. Louie to further collaborate, if I have missed anything. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Matna*. Ms. St. Louie.

Ms. St. Louie: *Qujannamii, Iksivautaq*. Thank you to the member for her questions. Thank you, minister.

Yes, it is part of the phys-ed health and wellness curriculum that we are currently developing. The curriculum is done. I have the progression of learning in front of me, but it is something that we can certainly provide at a later moment. It's been developed with educators and will community members, and Elders that brought their experience to the table, and shared what they wanted the students to learn to make sure that they will recognize the trauma, that they would learn how to deal with it. How to go through life without carrying that heavy load.

That's all I can say for now. *Qujannamii, Iksivautaq*. I'm going to let the minister finish.

Chairman: *Matna*. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. There is one more area that we have. It's completing the *Ajunngittugut* K to one, and two to three social, emotional learning programs for the *Illiniavimmi Inuusilirijiit*, which began by using with small groups of students this coming school year, for 2023-2024. We look forward to that enhanced work to help the *Illiniavimmi Inuusilirijiit* in their work, while working with our students. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Matna*. I have no more names on this branch. Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) When my colleagues were talking about bullying, I kept hearing Red Cross. If you guys are using Red Cross to tackle bullying, which schools are they being used at? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Matna*. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. The Canadian Red Cross does support all of our schools when they are needed. So we utilize the Canadian Red Cross for counselling services when there are tragedies or events in our schools or in the community that impact that our schools. We ask upon them to provide services for emotional counselling and working, if it's an individual or a larger group within the school or within the community, we send them into our communities, into our schools, like a taskforce to

support stabilization of our school, to support the mental health and the wellbeing of our students, through the services that they have and provide.

Right now, in 2022-23 there are 12 schools that provide both in-person and virtual mental health supports. They are Gjoa Haven, Kugluktuk, Cambridge Bay, Kinngait, Pond Inlet, Igloodik, Clyde River, Sanirajak, Arviat, Whale Cove, Coral Harbour, and Naujaat.

With our ask with this business plan, we have the additional ask for increasing our mental health supports. So it is our hope, if this business plan is approved, that we will be able to deliver more mental health supports to all of our communities for everyone in Nunavut to be able to access these great supports that are there through partnership. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) We are on the Education Branch Summary. Curriculum, Resource and French Education. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$8,868,000. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed

Chairman: Okay. Members, move onto G-12. Student Achievements. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm getting to that page here. Minister, how does the department ensure that student achievement results are comparable from school to school across Nunavut communities? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. I would like Assistant Deputy Minister Martine St-Louis to answer that question. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. St-Louis.

Ms. St-Louis (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thank you to the member for her question.

We are tracking this information because we do have a team working on a regular basis with the community school counsellor, the Inuusilirijii, and also with the student support assistant and also with the student support teachers. We do have generic emails. We receive information on a regular basis from them. They counsel our team to receive guidance, to get some support and they do track the student's needs. It's kept internally at the department and we are working towards integrating this information into the student information system in the next school year.

So when it is going to be consolidated, it's going to be easier for us to inform the next step. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) We'll just take a 10-minute break.

>>*Committee recessed at 17:50 and resumed at 18:01*

Chairman: I would like to resume our committee meeting. We're here to deal with education. Student Achievement Branch. G-12. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wonder if the minister, through you, can just elaborate a little bit on how student achievement is actually assessed? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman, and *quana* for that question. I'll answer some and then ask Assistant Deputy Minister Martine St-Louis to further respond. Under the [Ilitaunnikuliriniq] Assessment in Nunavut schools, our department is working to strengthen the capacity of our educators to assess students effectively.

This work is aligned with the government's mandate of reinvesting in Education and will strengthen the K to 12 education system. This legislation is obligated to ensure that students are support succeed in schools based on their unique strengths and challenges. As learners we have the Inclusive Education Policy and that provides direction to ensure schools are implementing inclusive education as defined in the policy as mandated under section 6 of the *Education Act*.

We have a number of different areas that the department is prioritizing for the development of resources and tools under Inuktitut [Ilitaunnikuliriniq] and we have the 2022-2023 education has finalized that assessment policy under the [Ilitaunnikuliriniq] procedural guide to clarify the guide that is there to support assessment, recording and reporting procedures for our schools and using the student information system to better record and monitor progression and placement and retention of data such as the percentage of students and I will like to ask Martine St-Louis to further elaborate on assessment. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. St-Louis.

Ms. St-Louis (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thank you to the member for her question. I want to start by apologizing because I realize during the break that I did not really quite answer the member's question, so I'm going to further elaborate a little bit here and supplement the minister's information.

So right now, we do not have anything comparable from school to school on how assessment is done. Every teacher has a curriculum to follow with the learning outcomes to meet at the end of the school year. Each teacher, depending on the level, assess the students on the way they feel it is best for them to get what the students learn. They could

create their own testing, it could be by talking to the student, it could be by work the students will submit, it could be teamwork, it can take many forms, so it is hard to compare from school to school how the assessment is done.

With the new curriculum that we are currently developing, we are also developing the assessment component that goes with every curriculum in every subject matter at every level. All schools will have the same tools to assess the students, all teachers will receive the same training so it's going to be way easier to see how students go because they're going to be assessed on the same tools. *Qujannamiik, Iksivautaaq.*

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that response. You hit my bingo card when you spoke about curriculum because I would think that that would be at the forefront of any assessment tools, which is a standardized curriculum that all teachers across Nunavut can follow. That brings me back to the conversation earlier about letters of authority and the questions earlier about teaching Inuktitut in the classroom when we have educators who may not be trained in the curriculum that they're implementing, then we have varying degrees of abilities in teaching and assessing that curriculum.

I'm just wondering if, Mr. Chairman, through you the minister can tell us how the Department of Education plans to address that issue with the development of the new standardized curriculum. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na.* If you can answer that in terms of student achievements, if it is related there. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana,* Mr. Chairman. *Quana* to the member for the question. Under educator development, we have the Nunavut-developed resources to support our curriculum in Inuktitut language arts across all subjects and Nunavut-developed resources to support Inuinnaqtun language arts instruction in both Inuinnaqtun language arts across all subjects. This also includes policy training and assessment for our educators, and I would like to ask Martine St-Louis again to further elaborate on that question. *Quana,* Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Ms. St-Louis.

Ms. St-Louis (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thank you to the member for her question. So if I understood the question correctly, how do we address the letter of authority and making sure they are meeting the learning outcomes and they are teaching what needs to be taught and assessing the students the way they are supposed to be assessed.

We are ensuring that the teachers, all letters of authority are mentored and followed by the school leaders, being the principal and the student support teacher and of course the learning coaches. We try to get the language of authority teacher paired with an

experienced teacher so to make sure that they receive the proper orientation and they are not left alone teaching in their classroom. When they assess students then they receive some guidance and support to make sure that all students are assessed on their learning outcomes at their level that they are supposed to be assessed on. *Qujannamiik, Iksivautaaq.*

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the minister and team talk to us about what is known about the impact of having educators who are not formally trained as educators, for example these educators who are working under letters of authority. What is the overall and long-term impact on children's education if they are not being taught by teachers who are specifically schooled with Bachelor's and Master's of Education and so forth? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman, and *quana* for that question. In regard to letters of authority and working with them to ensure that they are capable, we do want the most qualified and capable people working in our schools, so it is taken in careful consideration to who is hired for those specific positions.

They do have to meet some of the requirements as mentioned in terms of having specific attributes, like being proficient and fluent in Inuktitut and being able to meet the needs to teach and be there in the school to be instructors and educators on a specific subject or for a particular grade. Each one is different and the pathing of those letters of authority look different depending on who's hired, what subject area or grade they're teaching and their plans are all different.

We do encourage them, as I said also earlier, for our educators this includes our letters of authority to avail of our education leave. That's out there so that they can become trained educators holding a Bachelor Nunavut Teacher Education Program degree or masters program. We do want to see Nunavummiut go through that and do encourage; however they are on a one-year contract and I would like to ask Martine St-Louis to further elaborate on that question. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. St-Louis.

Ms. St-Louis (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thank you, minister, for the answer. I can supplement here a little bit by answering that the impacts are not known as we speak. This is a national shortage of teachers, as you know, so all over Canada we are facing the same situation hiring people that are interested to be in school that are motivated and with the mentoring we can offer our students an adult in the classroom that is caring, that want to support the learning, that is willing to work as a part of a team to offer the educational program, so we are grateful that we have these individuals interested to come and join the school team to teach our students instead of

being forced to close the classroom because we do not have teachers. (interpretation)
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, minister, and team for that response. I am really not convinced that the impacts are not known because we know that this practice is not new to Nunavut, though it may be becoming new in other jurisdictions. I would hope that as the department is responsible for advocating especially at federal, provincial, and territorial tables for the needs of our students in Nunavut that the department would be well aware of what those impacts are.

However, I will move on, and just in that same line of questioning, how does the department ensure that student achievement results in Nunavut are comparable to student achievement levels in other jurisdictions? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana,* Mr. Chairman. The department utilizes the departmental exam from Alberta, and that is one indicator of achievement from a southern jurisdiction and utilizing their curriculum and the students going through that exam process. *Quana,* Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How are the student achievement results by Nunavut students comparable to those students in Alberta that they are writing the same exams as those students? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana,* Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. The comparable weight of the departmental exam is not our area of focus, but I can say that we do utilize the standard exam as a way to ensure that this content that we have in Nunavut schools is taught consistently and that Nunavut does use the Alberta grade 12 courses, including those with the departmental exams, and under usual circumstances, Nunavut uses the 70 to 30 percent weight distribution for courses with diploma exams. *Quana,* Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Pretty sure the members have a following up question after that response. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't know what that weight response means, however what I want to focus on is the question of why aren't we comparing Nunavut students' achievements to those Alberta students' achievements given that we are using the same metrics. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana,* Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. Nunavut has the three models for our schools, and as I said earlier, there are a number of our schools and communities that utilize the qulliq model, so it is a little bit of a complex situation for Nunavut as we have varying degrees and differences with that curriculum form different jurisdictions. We are working to streamline that so that we have the made in Nunavut curriculum where we can work to improve and have a standard curriculum. I would like to ask Assistant Deputy Minister Martine St-Louis to further expand on that question. *Quana,* Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Ms. St-Louis.

Ms. St-Louis: *Qujannamiik, Iksivautaaq.* Thank you minister for the answer to this question. What I can add is that it's difficult to compare and there is a reason. As a former teacher and principal, there was a reason why I was always against why we should not compare, and I believe that the decision that we are taking at the department level, most of our students are learning in their second language. To compare their result with a result of students in Alberta learning in their first language would be unfair to our students. They learn the same thing, they met the learning outcomes, they are ready to move to the next level, but when the time comes to do the exams or to go through the standardized assessment, sometimes they have a harder time because it's their second language, like me today speaking to you. It's why we are not comparing because it would be very unfair to the Nunavut students. *Qujannamiik, Iksivautaaq.*

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think everybody here knows that some students are focused on academic streams, especially here in Iqaluit, with the goal towards attending post-secondary institutions, which is why it's so important to ask the question about how the student achievement of Nunavut's students compare to other jurisdictions. I suppose I'll ask specifically for those students who are in those education streams that are A levels or B levels focused towards moving on to a post-secondary institution. Are those achievement levels compared with other jurisdictions? If so, how do they compare, and if not, why not? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana,* Mr. Chairman. *Quana* to the member for the question. Those rates are not compared with the reasoning of what our assistant deputy minister explained, and I think that Nunavut has had changes in the past, and we do follow the Alberta curriculum. We are looking to see if we can possibly explore using the B.C. curriculum, which is totally different and uses exams in a totally different manner. For now, as explained earlier, we do not collect that or share that information to ensure that... I will ask maybe assistant deputy minister to explain if there's anything else that I might have missed. *Quana,* Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Ms. St-Louis.

Ms. St-Louis: Qujannamiik, Iksivautaaq. Thank you for giving me the floor. No, we don't track it right now because it would have to be like a territorial tracking system that we would put in place and it's not done, but we know that we have students accessing post-secondary institutions and they are at level. That would be very interesting to compare their result with the students in Alberta. I'm 100 percent sure they would be comparable, but unfortunately the system is not in place. Qujannamiik, Iksivautaaq.

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you Mr. Chairman. I am going to move on from that. The business plan notes that education support services will continue to be expanded, including the expansion of school-based mental health services. On page 137 it indicates that there are school-based health supports in 12 communities, serving 22 schools. Mr. Chairman, if through you the minister could tell us which communities have these services and when will they be made available for other communities? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana,* Mr. Chairman, and *Quana* to the member. I believe when we are on a different division, I had stated that the communities of: Gjoa Haven, Kugluktuk, Cambridge Bay, Kinngait, Pond Inlet, Arviat, Whale Cover, Coral Harbour, Naujaat were all the communities that were receiving the additional in person or remote school based mental-health support services, and with our new business plan, we would like to have these services provided in all of our schools. *Quana,* Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you Mr. Chairman. If the minister could share with us how these mental-health services and workers and programs are connected with the Department of Health's mental health team, I would appreciate that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana,* Mr. Chairman, and *Quana* for the question. So, right now the mental-health services along a continuum of school-based service, which is focused primarily on prevention, early intervention, and targeted, individualized services. These early identification of mental health needs of our students for those at risk, development of exasperation of mental health problems is crucial step to preventing more chronic or acute mental health challenges, and the risks that require more intensive treatment provided by the Department of Health. We work with them in collaboration, and are there to support our students through the Department of Health. *Quana,* Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you Mr. Chairman. I am just going to circle back to the family engagement initiative again, and just ask how these mental-health supports and the work being put into that, how are they tied into the family engagement initiative to help students stay in school and come to school? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana,* Mr. Chairman, and *Quana* for the question. Those supports and services are there to improve the whole family well being, and to support the students and the families. The government of Nunavut has great counselling services online, and through telephone, and those are accessible.

We promote all of the different resources that are out there to our school communities, to ensure that the students are aware of additional mental-health resources and supports through the Department of Health that are offered to helplines and other means such as counselling services and online supports. *Quana,* Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na.* Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Just really, really quickly; I know that there are a lot of privacy issues related to peoples' mental health, and I am wondering if the minister could, through the Chairman, elaborate on how whether or not there are protocols in place that actually do allow reporting of mental-health kit issues that are of serious concern, such as suicidal ideation and the likes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana,* Mr. Chairman, and *quana* for that question. The Department of Education works on a consent basis, so everything that is undertaken for mental-health support services is done through a signatory of a parent or guardian for the support that will be given for the student.

We work with mental health support services to ensure that we do have school-based positive mental health support and I am really hopeful that if this committee approves our budget that we'll be able to enhance our additional resources to expand education support services and to ensure that we can expand that support.

In terms of sharing protocols as well, and to have that with other departments such as the Department of Health that we can collaborate if there are any instances where we do have to share that information, we are.

If there is any instance where child is in danger and it is reported to the teacher or principal or anyone in our schools, there is the duty to report *Act* for our educators or anyone to give non-consent even as this person who hears the first-hand information to go directly to the RCMP and report any instance if that is occurring and if it has happened the teacher or educator who is informed of that information holds the privacy

of the student and does not report to it to anyone, but directly to the immediate authorities such as the RCMP to resolve any issues. That support is there as well. I just wanted to mention that. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you for that. That is what I want to hear. The Educational Support Services Program provides occupational, speech, language, physiotherapy, deaf and hard of hearing support services. Are those specialists available in school and in every school? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman, and *quana* for that question. We do have contract with supports. We have the support, if it's not directly in the school then we do use the contractor to provide the service virtually. If the service is provided virtually, the student that is receiving the support will have an educator available but they remain confidentiality purposes and the student will work directly with the person that is supporting their occupational...if they are getting occupational therapy. For example, the student will work directly with that occupational therapist distantly and have an educator, not in the same room, but at arms length to support the needs of the child or youth. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman,

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How are our students referred to these additional supports? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. A student is referred through the referral process with the school team who goes through that and makes the referral. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To the minister's knowledge, is there a long waiting list or even access to that team? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. No, to my knowledge there is not a long waiting list for that referral as there is a school team there ready to support the student for those additional supports. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The business plan indicates on page 137 that the department will in-service a social, emotional, learning and resiliency program for K-1 and 2-3 groups. Are there similar programs for the higher grade level? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. Yes, we are working on the grade 4 level and going further as the years go on. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, that other question, is it moved back into the family engagement initiative, engaging families in this program? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. Yes, they are a part of the family so that work is part of the family engagement strategy. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Bastard.

>>*Laughter*

Sorry about that. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: I've been called worse, I can assure you, Mr. Chairman. The budget for inclusive education across Nunavut's schools is projected to increase by over \$4 million in 2023-2024. What will the funding be used for specifically? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. Under our business case, we have a number of different areas, and the school-based mental-health services for students and expanding to all of our communities to increase those mental health supports is where that money will be allocated to if it is approved. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that sums up my questions, but I will reassure you that my parents were married on January 21, 1970 and I was born in September of 1970. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Noted and bad Chairman. Next person on my list, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Sorry Chair, I don't have any questions under this page. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Sorry about that then. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the minister's response earlier about the school-based mental-health services, and I have noticed that my two constituent communities were not one of them in the Kitikmeot community, which I find pretty... I am not happy about it because my two constituent communities are decentralized communities compared to the other three communities selected, and how were these other three communities picked out to have the school based mental health services? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. So the 12 communities were selected based on pre-existing services and utilizing what is available in the communities in further enhancing. However, with our business case moving forward, we're requesting school-based mental health support for all of our schools in all of our communities across Nunavut this coming fiscal year of 2023-2024 so that we can expand the services, the education support services to all our schools. As this was a pilot project in the past, funded from within the department, we are coming to the Committee of the Whole to ask for core funding to support this much needed area for mental health support services in our schools

Chairman: *Ma'na*. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With the recent school fire that they had in Kugaaruk, I don't understand why they didn't receive the school-based mental health services instead of the other three communities that were identified. At my other constituent community of Taloyoak, right now in these trying times, we could use those mental health services for our school.

So, instead of waiting until the fall time, can we have those school-based mental health services as soon as possible? Even before the fulfillment by fall of 2023? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na*. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman, and *Quana* for the question. So, we do have mental health support services for our students. Our educators have a wide range of supports, not currently at the members two constituent communities, but the department always has mental health support services, and are there for the students when in need and will work directly with the student to support them.

However, with this new funding, I look forward to the constituents two communities receiving the additional support, along with all the other Nunavut communities. To support four different areas: the first one being school-based positive mental health support, the second being educational psychology, the third being for the deaf and hard of hearing support and sign language instruction, and the fourth being education support services programming evaluation framework, which is included but not limited to the developing an electronic records framework.

So, this will further enhance our communities, and I hear the member stating that he would like extra support, however if there is currently any students that require mental health support services, our educators are there for our students, to help support them through that process and get them the required mental health support services that they need through the school. I can provide that information for the member's two communities. If there is ever any student who does need particular help, they can reach out to the principal or somebody that they trust that works at the school to help them receive that support through various means; through the Department of Health, or through our online virtual support that is out there currently. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Ma'na*. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you minister for your response. With the recent suicides in my constituent communities, I highly recommend that the department give the mental health services as soon as possible to the schools, and yes, we are in trying times and we need support. Bullying is always going to be an issue in every community, and I feel that my constituent communities need these mental health services support as soon as possible, whenever possible. So, I highly recommend that the Department of Education make it as soon as possible. More just of a comment Mr. Chairman, and that's it now.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I have no more names on my student achievements. Student achievements. Total operations and maintenance. To be voted. \$11,338,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Okay. Members go to page G-13. Educator development. Let's give members a few minutes, this is the last branch. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The departments provide funding for teacher professional development as a part of contract agreements with the Nunavut Teacher Association. What type of training professional development opportunities will be offered in 2023-2024? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. There are a number of different supports out there for our teachers to avail of teaching, whether it be through the education leave to become a teacher or recertification in various areas that our educators need certification.

We have the teacher and principal certification, and we have the Nunavut teacher orientation and membership from the beginning of the school year for our educators to learn from. We also have child sexual abuse prevention training, we have trauma inform training, we have indigenous cultural competency training, we have a certificate of educational leadership in Nunavut, and I believe that might be all of them.

Quana, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the minister. (interpretation ends) Priorities in 2023-2026 business plan indicate developing a former mentorship plan for educators in ensuring the staff complete mandatory training.

How does the department currently monitor mentorship and training provided to Nunavut educators? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* for the question. Under mentorship resources, they are there to develop a shared commitment to the excellence in understanding of effective teaching under for among our educators. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Madam Minister. My last question; the Inuit counselor SSA student support teachers and student assistant support teachers, are they allocated funding for their training and everything else? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* to the member for the question. Our student support assistants have training during the professional development week.

Each school calendar year, there are five professional development dates, and the Nunavut Teachers Association members can access funding through the professional development council to participate in self-directed professional development opportunities, and we, also for the student support assistants, have an important role in

Nunavut classrooms. Their main responsibility is to help the students to access educational programs in classroom, in school and in the community.

In Nunavut there is currently no education program for student support assistants and this can pose to be a significant barrier to professional development. However, the department is working with Nunavut Arctic College on the development of a student support assistant certificate program to be delivered to our student support assistants employed within our K to 12 School Operations. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I have no more names on my list. Branch Summary. Educator Development. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$12,069,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Members, go back to page G-3. Education. Department Summary. Detail of Expenditures. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$273,547,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do members agree that we have concluded with Education?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Minister Gross, do you have any brief closing comments?

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quana* to everyone that's here that asked us great questions. We look forward to getting responses back in the near future in regard to the questions that we said we would get back in letter to everyone.

I would like to thank the Department of Education, all of the staff that are here, but all of the staff that are working with the Department of Education, whether it be with our department level or within our schools. We thank each and every one of the staff that is there to support education and supporting our students. They're our first and foremost priority and we thank them all for the hard work that they do to educate Nunavummiut.

I look forward to the developments and the great input that we have talked about here over the past few days. I know that there is always a lot of work to undergo, but hopefully with some more creation of new positions to support the much-needed statistics that we have heard a lot about, we can work to have qualitative numbers to support the department and Nunavummiut in all areas of education.

Just once again thank you, everyone, for your questions and we look forward to the work ahead. (interpretation) Thank you.

>>Applause

Chairman: Minister, you may return to your seat and the officials may leave.

Bill 18 – Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2023-2024 – Nunavut Housing Corporation – Consideration in Committee

Chairman (Mr. Hicke): Thank you. I would like to call the committee meeting back to order. I will now ask Mr. Kusugak to make his opening remarks for the Nunavut Housing Corporation. Please proceed, Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Legislative Assembly. I am here to present the 2023-24 Main Estimates and Business Plan for the Nunavut Housing Corporation.

The main estimates for the corporation reflect the following spending increases:

- As of March 31, 2022, the Nunavut Housing Corporation had 5,992 public housing units and an additional 1,735 staff housing units. The corporation is requesting \$257,244,000 from the Government of Nunavut for operations and maintenance in fiscal year 2023-24, an increase of \$19,701,000 from the previous fiscal year.
- The public housing budget sees an increase of \$17,313,000 for fiscal 2023-24. Most of the increase, or \$11,067,000 of it, provides for the rise in utility rates from the Qulliq Energy Corporation's rate restructuring, with other monies covering the local housing organization salary increases from the new collective agreement, \$4,676,000, and a projected decrease in rent assessments of \$1,570,000.
- Staff housing expenditures will rise by \$1,229,000. The budget change will cover increased operating costs due to higher utility rates.
- Compensation and benefits across all divisions will see an increase of \$2,275,000 due to updated salaries and benefits in the new collective agreement. Net funding from the GN for compensation and benefits increases is \$1,201,000 in 2023-24. The difference of \$1,074,000 will be funded internally in 2023-24 by the Nunavut Housing Corporation's internal realignment or by the CMHC or CMHC-funded positions.
- The corporation will also see an increase in funding required in the amount of \$55,000 to compensate for the net reduction in funding from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

The \$13,395,000 that the Nunavut Housing Corporation currently receives annually from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation for maintenance and operations of the social housing stock inherited from the CMHC will decline to zero by March 31, 2037. The GN has covered the annual funding reductions to ensure that the existing stock of housing continues to be maintained.

The corporation is conducting independent reviews of all homeownership programs to ensure they support the goals of Nunavut 3000. Additionally the Nunavut Housing Corporation is reviewing the governance structures of the 25 local housing organizations across the territory to prioritize efficient operations. These reviews are currently underway and I look forward to sharing the results of them with you before the end of the fiscal year.

Inuit employment is a priority for the Nunavut Housing Corporation. Local housing organizations account for a significant portion of the corporation's operating budget and are included in the development of its Inuit Employment Plan. We will work to provide opportunities for recruitment, training, and advancement of Inuit. The corporation continues to support cross-training, internships, career broadening, and mentoring and heavily promotes its online training platform. To this end, supervisory-level training and development is ongoing. Our goal is to establish a continuum of Inuit employment.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Assembly, thank you for this opportunity. I look forward to a meaningful discussion tomorrow. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Kusugak. I'll now ask the chair of the standing committee to provide opening comments. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to provide opening comments on behalf of the Standing Committee on Community and Economic Development on its review of the proposed 2023-24 Main Estimates and 2023-26 Business Plan of the Nunavut Housing Corporation. The corporation's proposed 2023-24 operations and maintenance appropriation from the Legislative Assembly is \$257,244,000. This represents an 8.3 percent increase from the 2022-23 main estimates. The number of positions in the corporation is increasing from 121.0 to 124.0, which represents an increase of 2.5 percent.

Members raised a number of issues and concerns during the minister's recent appearance before the standing committee. The Nunavut Housing Corporation's 2021-22 annual report under the *Nunavut Housing Corporation Act* was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on November 7, 2022. The Nunavut Housing Corporation's 2020-21 annual report on contracting, procurement and leasing activities were tabled in the Legislative Assembly on November 7, 2022. The 2021-22 annual report has not yet been tabled.

On October 20, 2016 the *Blueprint for Action on Housing - Implementation Plan for the Government of Nunavut Long-Term Comprehensive Housing and Homelessness Strategy* was tabled in the Legislative Assembly. This document contains 60 specific action items that are intended to address an extremely broad range of housing issues. The standing committee continues to recognize that it is not practicable for the Nunavut Housing Corporation to simultaneously implement all of the blueprint's action items, and continues to encourage the corporation to prioritize its work in a clear and focused manner. The *Status of Housing Report 2022* was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on

November 8, 2022. The standing committee looks forward to the timely tabling of future reports.

On April 13, 2022, the federal Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs announced that the 2022 federal budget will “invest \$300.0 million to co-develop and launch an Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy.” The extent to which the Nunavut Housing Corporation will be involved in the development of this strategy is unclear. The 2022 federal budget also indicated that \$60.0 million will be provided directly to the Government of Nunavut over the next two years for housing. An additional \$845.0 million will be provided over seven years to “support housing in Inuit communities.” The extent to which the Nunavut Housing Corporation will be involved in the allocation of this Inuit-specific funding is unclear.

In May 2022, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated produced its “Nunavut Inuit Housing Action Plan.” The plan indicated that a “new Inuit Housing Entity will ensure funding is used in the best way to improve housing for Inuit. Community members, municipalities, the Government of Nunavut and the Government of Canada are important partners.” The extent to which the new “Inuit Housing Entity” will complement the work of the Nunavut Housing Corporation is unclear.

The issue of housing is critically important to all Nunavummiut, and it is critically important that all Nunavummiut have a clear understanding of the different roles and responsibilities of each entity. At present, that clarity is lacking.

On August 24, 2022 the Nunavut Housing Corporation and Nunavut Construction Company Development Limited announced the signing of an “Agreement in Principle to pursue a strategic partnership in relation to the delivery of much-needed transitional, public, affordable and market housing units across the territory.” On October 18, 2022 the Nunavut Housing Corporation and Nunavut Construction Company Development Limited announced the signing of a formal “Master Partnership Agreement.” This agreement as well as the Nunavut Housing Corporation’s new “Nunavut 3000” strategy were publicly released on the same day. The standing committee looks forward to ongoing updates on the status of implementing this agreement and the new strategy. The extent to which the new Nunavut 3000 Strategy will complement the Nunavut Housing Corporation’s existing “Blueprint for Action” strategy is unclear.

The Nunavut Housing Corporation’s 2021-24 business plan indicated that “new management agreements were signed as of June 2020 and help clarify and define the relationship between the Nunavut Housing Corporation and the Local Housing Organizations, ensuring that the Nunavut Housing Corporation’s programs are delivered consistently across the territory.” The Nunavut Housing Corporation’s draft 2023-26 business plan indicates that it “has engaged a consulting firm to produce a report on Local Housing Organization governance models to see how the public housing allocation process and organizational structure can be improved.” The standing committee looks forward to ongoing updates on the status of this work.

On [January] 24, 2013 the Government of Nunavut announced changes to the public housing rent scale. These changes came into effect on February 1, 2014. A key goal of reforming the public housing rent scale has been to remove disincentives to employment. On June 1, 2020 the Nunavut Housing Corporation issued a request for proposals to undertake a review of the public housing rent scale. The report from the review was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on September 16, 2021. One of the recommendations in the report was that the Nunavut Housing Corporation should “consider moving to a unit-based rent assessment system.” The extent to which the Nunavut Housing Corporation agrees with this recommendation is unclear.

The Nunavut Housing Corporation’s most recently tabled annual report indicates that there were a total of \$43,899,000 in public housing rent receivables as of March 31, 2022. The Nunavut Housing Corporation’s 2022-26 business plan indicated that one of its priorities for the 2022-23 fiscal year was to “monitor and review the impact of collections policy and procedures to reduce Local Housing Organization arrears and continue to develop and implement Local Housing Organization deficit recovery plans.” The standing committee supports measures being taken to assist local housing organizations in these areas.

That concludes my opening comments on the proposed 2023-24 Main Estimates and 2023-26 Business Plan of the Nunavut Housing Corporation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Savikataaq. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that the Chair now rise and report progress.

Chairman: Thank you. There is a motion to report progress on the floor. It’s not subject to debate. All those in favour. Opposed. Motion carried. I will now rise to report progress to the Speaker.

Speaker: Report of the Committee of the Whole. Mr. Hickes.

Item 20: Report of the Committee of the Whole

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 18 and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Report of the Committee of the Whole be agreed to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: There is a motion on the floor. Is there a seconder? Mr. Kusugak. The motion is in order. To the motion.

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Speaker: All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried.

Item 21. Third Reading of Bills. Item 22. *Orders of the Day*. Mr. Ball.

Item 22: Orders of the Day

Mr. Ball: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to remind members that the Full Caucus will be meeting in the Nanuq Room at 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

Orders of the Day for March 7, 2023:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Responses to Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motions
15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 12
 - Bill 14
 - Bill 16
 - Bill 17
 - Bill 18
 - Bill 19

- Bill 20
- Bill 21

20. Report of the Committee of the Whole

21. Third Reading of Bills

22. Orders of the Day

>>*Applause*

Speaker: This House stands adjourned until Tuesday, March 7, at 1:30 p.m.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 19:11*

