

NUNAVUT HANSARD

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

MONDAY, MARCH 3, 2025

IQALUIT, NUNAVUT

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Corrections:

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Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

Speaker

Hon. Tony Akoak
(Gjoa Haven)

Hon. David Akeeagok
(Quttiktuq)

Minister of Justice; Minister for Labour; Minister responsible for the Human Rights Tribunal; Minister of Economic Development and Transportation; Minister responsible for Nunavut Business Credit Corporation; Minister responsible for Nunavut Development Corporation; Minister responsible for Mines; Minister responsible for Trade; Minister responsible for Mines

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

Premier; Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs; Minister of Culture and Heritage; Minister of Indigenous Affairs; Minister responsible for Immigration; Minister responsible for the Utility Rates Review Council; Minister responsible for Seniors; Minister of Languages

Bobby Anavilok
(Kugluktuk)

Janet Brewster
(Iqaluit-Sinaa)

Hon. Pamela Gross
(Cambridge Bay)
Deputy Premier; Minister of Education; Minister of Human Resources; Minister Responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission

George Hikes
(Iqaluit-Tasiluk)

Deputy Speaker; Chair of the Committee of the Whole

Hon. David Joanasié
(South Baffin)

Government House Leader; Minister of Community and Government Services; Minister of Environment; Minister of Energy

Joelie Kaernerik
(Amittuq)

Mary Killiktee
(Uqqummiut)

Hon. Lorne Kusugak
(Rankin Inlet South)

Minister of Finance; Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation; Minister responsible for Liquor and Cannabis Commission; Minister responsible for Liquor and Cannabis Board

Adam Lightstone
(Iqaluit-Manirajak)

Hon. John Main
(Arviat North-Whale Cove)

Minister of Health; Minister responsible for Suicide Prevention; Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation

Solomon Malliki
(Aivilik)

Deputy Chair, Committee of the Whole

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk
(Pangnirtung)

Minister of Family Services; Minister responsible for the Status of Women; Minister responsible for Homelessness; Minister Responsible for Poverty Reduction; Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College

Karen Nutarak
(Tununiq)

Daniel Qavvik
(Hudson Bay)

Joanna Quassa
(Aggu)

Inagayuk Quqqiaq
(Netsilik)

Alexander Sammurtok
(Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet)

Joe Savikataaq
(Arviat South)

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Iqaluit, Nunavut
Monday, March 3, 2025

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 Kaernerck, Ms. Mary Killiktee, Hon. Lorne Kusugak, Mr. Adam Lightstone, Hon. John Main, Mr. Solomon Malliki, Hon. Margaret Nakashuk, Ms. Karen Nutarak, Hon. Joanna Quassa, Mr. Inagayuk Quqqiaq, Mr. Alexander Sammurtok, Mr. Joe Savikataaq, Hon. Craig Simailak.

>>*House commenced at 13:30*

Item 1: Opening Prayer

Speaker (Hon. Tony Akoak) (interpretation): (no interpretation)

>>*Prayer*

Speaker's Statement

Speaker (interpretation): Welcome back. I hope you had an enjoyable weekend.

(interpretation ends) Item 2, Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

Item 2: Ministers' Statements

Minister's Statement 542 – 6(2): Social Work Month

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the invaluable contributions of Nunavut's social workers as we celebrate National Social Work Month in March.

The theme this year is Social Work is Everywhere. This theme highlights the diverse and vital roles social workers play across so many different sectors, including in our homes, schools, hospitals, community centres, and policy-making bodies. This theme highlights how social work practice aligns with Inuit Societal Values, including Inuuqatigiitsiarniq: Respecting others, relations and caring for people.

Mr. Speaker, social workers are called upon during moments of crisis and vulnerability. Their presence makes a difference, often in ways that are not immediately visible but have a lasting impact. Even on the toughest days, the work social workers do changes lives, strengthens families, and builds a better future for our communities. It is important

for all of us to be conscious of the role we play in supporting the good work social workers do, and commit to providing them with the resources needed to carry out their duties.

In my other role as Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College, I will take advantage of this opportunity to mention the 21 students currently enrolled in the College's Social Service Worker Programs in Cambridge Bay, Rankin Inlet, and Arviat. There are an additional 10 students enrolled in the Bachelor of Social Work program in Cambridge Bay. These students and the graduates from these programs represent the territorial efforts to add Inuit and Nunavummiut to the pool of social workers. I am so proud of each one of them.

Mr. Speaker, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to social workers for their dedication and commitment to improving the lives of others. They are instrumental in shaping a brighter and more compassionate future.

Qujannamiik, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Minister's Statement 543 – 6(2): Chief Justice Cooper

Speaker: Minister's Statement. Hon. Minister of Justice, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the appointment of the Hon. Susan Cooper as Chief Justice of the Nunavut Court of Justice.

The Hon. Justice Cooper was appointed as Chief Justice by the Prime Minister of Canada on November 30, 2024, and on January 24, 2025, she was officially sworn into her new role during an impactful ceremony. Nunavut's legal community gathered to pay tribute to the territory's new chief justice and to celebrate this milestone.

Chief Justice Cooper's appointment reflects her dedication, integrity, and unwavering commitment to justice in Nunavut. Her distinguished career spans private legal practice, her role as the first law clerk to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, and her service as a judge on the Nunavut Court of Justice since 2009. Her journey showcases both professional excellence and a deep passion for serving our territory.

Throughout her career, Chief Justice Cooper has shown a profound understanding of and appreciation for Inuit culture and the importance of incorporating Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit into legal processes. Combined with her commitment to restorative justice, she is well-positioned to provide thoughtful leadership to her colleagues on the bench and lawyers who appear before her.

Chief Justice Cooper has championed access to justice and inclusivity, earning the respect of colleagues, community leaders, and Nunavummiut. She skillfully balances the rule of law with the unique cultural, social, and geographical realities of Nunavut.

Once again, congratulations to Chief Justice Cooper. With her knowledge and experience, I am confident in her ability to lead the Nunavut Court of Justice and respond to the unique challenges of delivering justice in our territory. I look forward to working closely with the new Chief Justice to advance the administration of justice and uphold the rule of law for all Nunavummiut.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Congratulations, Ms. Cooper. Minister's Statement. Hon. Minister of Culture and Heritage, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Minister's Statement 544 – 6(2): Qilaut Songwriting Contest 2025

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good afternoon to my colleagues and to the people of Nunavut, and to the visitors in the gallery and welcome to your House.

Mr. Speaker, I am excited to announce that our annual songwriting contest, *Qilaut*, is back.

This year marks a special milestone, as *Qilaut* celebrates its tenth-year anniversary. It is an opportunity to reflect on how *Qilaut* has helped amplify the voices of Nunavut artists while strengthening the use of Inuktitut in music.

Mr. Speaker, since its inception, *Qilaut* has provided a platform for Nunavummiut to express their creativity, showcase their musical talents, and preserve our language. This contest allows emerging and established artists to celebrate and connect with our culture through song and language. Through the years, *Qilaut* has directly contributed to the revitalization and continued use of Inuktitut across our communities.

In marking this milestone anniversary, we are centering this year's contest around these themes for 2025: Pirursatillunga and Inuit Sanasimajangit. These themes invite participants to reflect on the importance of our language and culture, and we look forward to hearing the diverse interpretations and creative expressions they inspire. To celebrate the tenth-year anniversary, our department is also organizing three concerts across the territory for the winners.

Mr. Speaker, the deadline for submissions is May 5, 2025, and I encourage all aspiring Nunavut songwriters to participate. Detailed information on how to enter and the full contest rules are available on the Government of Nunavut website.

Qujannamiik, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Minister's Statement. Hon. Minister for the Status of Women, Ms. Nakashuk.

Minister's Statement 545 – 6(2): Women in Leadership Video Series

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me again.

Mr. Speaker, the Qullit Nunavut Status of Women Council encourages women, girls, and gender-diverse Nunavummiut to succeed, thrive, and learn. With funding from Women and Gender Equality Canada, Qullit is developing a series of videos about women succeeding in business, culture, politics, not-for-profit organizations, entertainment, and languages.

Qullit recently completed filming and production of the first two videos in this series. One features Iqaluit's Bernice Kootoo-Clarke, founder and owner of Uasau Soap. Her enthusiasm and knowledge about starting a business are infectious and inspiring.

The other features Adriana Kusugak from Rankin Inlet, who is the Executive Director of Iitaqsiniq. She speaks with heart and kindness about the importance of leading with compassion.

Mr. Speaker, as we continue with this work, Qullit will also develop accompanying resources and toolkits for future leaders and innovators in Nunavut.

While there are multiple videos in production, Qullit is still looking for Nunavut women who want to share their knowledge, stories, and life lessons. If you know someone interested in participating in this project, please let Qullit know.

Qujannamiik, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

Minister's Statement 546 – 6(2): Memorandum of Understanding Between the Government of Nunavut, B2Gold Corp., and the Kitikmeot Inuit Association

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you for recognizing me again.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to announce that on February 6, at the Kitikmeot Trade Show in Cambridge Bay, the Government of Nunavut signed a Memorandum of Understanding with B2Gold Corporation and the Kitikmeot Inuit Association. This milestone agreement strengthens our commitment to responsible resource development, economic opportunity, and lasting benefits for Nunavummiut.

At its core, this agreement is built on the principles of responsibility, inclusion, and equity. Through a dedicated Oversight Committee, made up of all partners, we will focus on education and training, economic development, and direct support for the communities most impacted by mining activities.

This is about more than just development—it's about ensuring that Nunavummiut share in the prosperity that comes from our land.

Mr. Speaker, responsible resource development is about striking the right balance—honouring our land and traditions while creating economic opportunities for future generations. The Back River Project builds on the foundation set by the Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement between B2Gold and the Kitikmeot Inuit Association, reinforcing our shared vision for a sustainable and prosperous Nunavut.

This agreement is a powerful example of what is possible when industry, government, and Inuit organizations work together. I want to thank B2Gold and the Kitikmeot Inuit Association for their leadership and collaboration. Together, we are paving the way for a stronger, more self-reliant Nunavut—one where economic growth and Inuit values are woven together, creating lasting opportunities for future generations.

Quana, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Minister's Statement. Hon. Minister of Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. David Joanasié.

Minister's Statement 547 – 6(2): Advancing Connectivity Next Steps for the Kivalliq-Baffin Connector Fibre Project

Hon. David Joanasié: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share an important milestone in Nunavut's digital future. With the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications

Commission's acceptance of the Government of Nunavut's Kivalliq Baffin Connectors funding proposal our government moves into the early stages of the infrastructure development process.

Bringing fibre-optic cabling to Coral Harbour, Iqaluit, Kimmirut, and Kinngait will connect over 80 public institutions to modern high-speed internet. This work supports our common goal of delivering internet accessibility to all Nunavummiut as an essential service while also enhancing territorial security in the delivery of critical government services.

Collaboratively through this work and the work of our mandate, our government is setting the stage for enhanced digital services, improved access to education and health services, job creation, greater economic participation for our communities and access to greater opportunity we have yet to imagine. This work will ensure Nunavummiut have the connectivity they need to thrive in a digital world.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the continuing to provide updates to my colleagues and Nunavummiut as we work to solidify the next steps in bringing this major infrastructure project to fruition.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Item 3: Members' Statements

Member's Statement 746 – 6(2): Aanirajaq Arnaqjuaq School

Mr. Kaernerck: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) Mr. Speaker, I rise today again in Hall Beach Arnaqjuaq school is my concern. This is one of the oldest schools in Nunavut. In fact, Mr. Speaker, before the advent of Nunavut this building was built.

In the oral questions the minister mentions concern and the Arnaqjuaq school is old, and I often say Hall Beach population has been increasing and the school is overcrowded with students, as I often say, Mr. Speaker. On daily basis the elementary school students attend school in crowded rooms because you have to share classes.

Again, Mr. Speaker, on October 30, 2024 it was mentioned that although the school is one of the oldest schools and it was mentioned on October 30 the Minister of Education that the team for capital projects will be reviewing the school.

During the oral question period, the minister stated that in 2025-2026 this was not approved, but did mention that perhaps in 2026-2027 it will be approved.

Mr. Speaker, one school is taken as a very important component. My constituents want to see a new school built, and high school students have reasons for dropping out of high school, which is very unfortunate, due to the aging of the school, Mr. Speaker.

With increased population and an old school and when I asked the minister on February 25, the minister mentioned that 13 to 8 and later on did mention 13.8, as it was in a judgement made. I think more diligence should be taken as this very important issue, and in fact perhaps contributing to dropout rate.

Perhaps that's the reason why there's no approval for capital project, or what? During the question period I will be asking about Arnajuaq school in Hall Beach. Thank you for giving me time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Member's Statement. Member for Netsilik, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Member's Statement 747 – 6(2): Nunavut Housing Corporation Meeting

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker I rise today that on the date of February 4, 2025 to acknowledge and to say thank you to the Minister responsible for Nunavut Housing Corporation. He did complete his invitation visit to Taloyoak, and I wanted to thank the Taloyoak housing board of directors for their invitation.

Mr. Speaker, it was a successful meeting with the Nunavut Housing board of directors, with the Nunavut Housing Corporation and his officials, I rise today to say thank you to the minister responsible, Hon. Lorne Kusugak. Thank you greatly, Lorne. It means a lot to me as MLA for the constituency of Netsilik, and to have these meetings with the minister is a step forward. It's progress, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the minister greatly. It allows the Taloyoak housing board for them to receive the answers that they needed.

And as their MLA, I thank the Minister responsible For Nunavut Housing greatly in this House, and I feel I have to acknowledge him greatly for my constituents because it's a step forward of understanding of which way this government is going, as well as the Nunavut Housing Corporation.

So once again, thank you, Hon. Lorne Kusugak. Thank you. And thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let's all have a great day. Thank you.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Member's Statement. Member for Baker Lake, Mr. Simailak.

Member's Statement 748 – 6(2): Baker Lake Mayor

Mr. Simailak: (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In Baker Lake we recently, James Taipana was recently elected as mayor. Great that you are now mayor. He was given support for mayorship and he had been an HCO member, and education authority and local Kataguqatigiit organization and it's great we will be working together.

We have many issues to tackle if Baker Lake, for example, Agnico Eagle. They will be closing up by 2028 and we have to be getting prepared for that. And Kevin Iksiktaaryuk, previous mayor, I thank you for previous work we have done together. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Member's Statement. Member for Uqqummiut, Ms. Killiktee.

Member's Statement 749 – 6(2): Clyde River Visit

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, Nunavummiut, and Iqalummiut.

I rise today to mention my recent visit to Clyde River. For your hospitality, I thank you. We had the opportunity to visit for one day, and again thank you for the hospitality shown to myself and comments made concerning the government that I will ensure I ask some questions to various departments. I rise in acknowledging this.

Right now the two hamlets have a lot of snow accumulated this year, and they constantly are working to ensure roads are open during the week. I'm very proud of the community of Clyde River for their unwavering effort in the community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Member's Statement. Member for Quttiktuq, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Member's Statement 750 – 6(2): Relocation Apology

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in 1934 Iyaut (ph) and family Kiguttak (ph), Sapa Kakavau Napatsiala and Itidloi (ph) were relocated from Kinngait to North Baffin, to four different locations, and this past week the federal government Northern Affairs Minister Gary Anandasangaree went to make an official apology on behalf of the Canadian government.

I was very proud: After 91 years they finally received an apology. We remember the individuals who are no longer with us, and I remember my father-in-law who did mention before he died he wanted an apology, but I was very proud that while Shooyook was still alive, apology was given directly to him, and it was a heartfelt moment with the elders participating with the apology given.

One individual couldn't make it to the event and I remember the community event when the community was asked to stand, there were many individuals who stood in the community of Arctic Bay. And you always remember those who were relocated, and when people rose it was very touching.

Shooyook, who was one of the speakers, mentioned how long he had worked hard to get an apology during one term as MLA and after serving as MLA and he had been seeking that apology for 25 years.

I thank those who participated towards an apology. As Mr. Shooyook emphasized, we have an apology now. Let us start moving forward and many obstacles, we put them aside and let's start working together.

These were very strong and deep words, and I felt his words as he spoke to everyone and his family. And I thank those who were involved. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Member's Statement. Member for Iqaluit-Niaqunnguu, Mr. Pauloosie Akeegok.

Member's Statement 751 – 6(2): Chief Justice Cooper

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alongside our colleague we remember those who were given apology.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today concerning the recognition given to Chief Justice Cooper. She's no stranger to Apex and Iqaluit with her hard work she has done to date in our community, and she's no stranger we all know they will be out on the roads, also cleaning on the side of the roads.

Mr. Speaker I rise to acknowledge her. Since 1998 when we were still under NWT, she started as a lawyer under Cooper and Johnson. She started from there and continued to work as a lawyer and was appointed as judge of Nunavut Court of Justice in 2009. As we always say, those who know our community, the Arctic, when they are in a position of authority, we know Justice Cooper will do her diligent work. As an MLA for Iqaluit Iqaluit-Niaqunnguu, I want to acknowledge her. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Member's Statement. Member for Cambridge Bay, Ms. Gross.

Member's Statement 752 – 6(2): Kitikmeot Trade Show

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker, and good afternoon to everyone in the House with us today and those across the territory.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to say a thank you to our colleagues, Minister Akeegok and Minister Kusugak for travelling to Cambridge Bay for the Kitikmeot Trade Show that happened earlier, about a month ago now in the community. And along with that there were several staff members that also attended, so thank you to their teams for the presence in the community.

I also wanted to thank the hamlet of Cambridge Bay and the Kitikmeot Chamber of Commerce for their organization, for the wonderful trade show as I know it's held annually and a lot of people look forward to attending the event. So thank you to all those who put hours into creating the event for the community.

I also wanted to say thank you to our colleague for establishing the memorandum of understanding with B2Gold and the Kitikmeot Inuit Association and the work that's going to go on with the committee in terms of mining and the work that they're going to do at that level. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>*Applause*

Speaker: Item 4, Returns to Oral Questions. Hon. Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission, Ms. Gross.

Item 4: Return to Oral Questions

Oral Question 1096 – 6(2): Workplace Injuries

Hon. Pamela Gross: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to clarify a response I provided to the Member for Iqaluit-Tasiluk during our February 25, 2025, question period regarding recent media coverage of workplace injury rates in Nunavut.

The Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission has confirmed that Nunavut and the Northwest Territories do not have the highest rates of workplace injuries in Canada. Nunavut and the NWT are in the middle of the pack and improving.

In 2022, Nunavut and NWT ranked 6th for time loss injury frequency with 1.89 per 100 workers. In 2023, time loss injury frequency was 1.59 per 100 workers, and last year, we had an even lower value of 1.54 per 100 workers. This is primarily because the number of claims with time lost from work due to injury is decreasing.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to outline some of the work the commission is doing to help employers prevent workplace injuries. The Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission safety officers conduct over 1,000 worksite inspections yearly, to ensure employers follow the health and safety standards set by the *Safety Act* and the *Mine Health and Safety Act*. Inspections can result in directions or orders that list corrective actions an employer needs to complete by an agreed-upon date to protect the health and safety of workers. Inspections can also provide positive observations and feedback to employers.

In addition to inspections, the commission has also introduced a safety outreach team to work directly with employers, to help them build or improve their safety programs and identify ways to reduce risks for workplace injuries. I am pleased to share the upcoming release of a new Safety Planning Guide for employers, set to launch during Safety & Health Week this May. While each workplace has unique needs and challenges when it comes to safety planning, there are key elements that every workplace safety program must include by law. This guide will provide clear, practical tools and resources to assist employers.

Mr. Speaker, the Workers Safety and Compensation Commission is working directly with several departments of the Government of Nunavut to ensure compliance with safety legislation and improve the implementation of safety programs to reduce incidents.

Quana, Mr. Speaker.

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

Item 5: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to acknowledge and recognize Ms. Bernice Kootoo-Clarke. She has been selected for Iqaluit Inuit Women's Committee, especially for women and also women who are doing a movie.

As I stated before, Ms. Kootoo-Clarke has also taken part in North of North. She was the mother of Ting. Ms. Kootoo-Clarke is here today with her husband, Justin, and her daughter, and they're from Iqaluit. Also they own a business called Uasau Soap. They use material from plants and as well using the soap, making the soap using traditional ways. And they have utilized the plants from the north and also used the northern culture. Ms. Kootoo-Clarke is very well known as she's the main voice to protect Inuit languages.

I would like to welcome her to the house, the whole family of Ms. Kootoo to the House. 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. I'm so happy to be able to recognize some of my constituents today. Alethia Akuliksee Clarke (ph), who is a very lovely young woman that lives in my neighbourhood. Her father Justin Clarke, of course, and the Queen of Iqaluit-Sinaa, Bernice Kootoo-Clarke. You're a very inspiring family, and I'm so happy to see you here today where you belong, in your House. Welcome. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Welcome to your House. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Item 6, Oral Questions. Member for Tununiq, Ms. Nutarak.

Item 6: Oral Questions

Oral Question 1131 – 6(2): Opportunities for Adult Education in Pond Inlet

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon. I send my greetings to the people of Pond Inlet and to the people of Nunavut. This afternoon I would like to direct reply question to the Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister is aware the community of Pond Inlet does not currently have an adult educator. A number of my constituents have raised this concern with me, and I understand their frustration.

Can the minister provide an explanation why there is no adult educator in Pond Inlet, and what steps are being taken to ensure that this position is filled with no further delay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College, Ms. Nunavut Arctic College.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for asking the question.

In regards to Pond Inlet, there is no adult educator in Pond Inlet. That community is not the only community with no adult educator. There are quite a few communities in Nunavut that don't have adult educators.

We're trying to hire educators and we're now reviewing applicants for Pond Inlet adult educator. Once I get that information what level it's at, I'll be able to provide that information to you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Ms. Minister. Thank you for looking at it.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I recognize that Nunavut Arctic college conducts regular assessments in their communities to determine what courses may be offered and what courses may be offered. However, it often seems that what the community requests and what the college can provide do not coincide.

A number of Pond Inlet residents have come together to ask that the environmental technology program be offered again in the community. It was very successful in the past. Can the minister confirm whether she has received a request for the environmental technology program to be delivered in Pond Inlet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for your question as well. We know that environmental tech program in the adult education has been the most popular program in all the communities, and I'm very pleased that this program has been taken in Pond Inlet so therefore we have to reapply for funding. Every time we're going to be doing our training program at the community we have to apply for funding, so that's where the barrier is.

We're now reviewing at this time whether this program will be done in Pond Inlet, but it's not clear whether it will be held or not. But at this time it's being reviewed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I believe it is important to support and encourage adult learners when they are keen and enthusiastic stick about advancing their learning and increasing their opportunities for employment. Will the minister commit to working with the staff at Nunavut Arctic College to fill that adult educator position to deliver the environmental technology program in the community of Pond Inlet at the earliest opportunity. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for asking that question. And to remind me especially of the adult educator position. We're trying to inform the communities where there are no adult educators, including Pond Inlet, and also environmental tech program is now being reviewed at this time. Although we had received an application form from Pond Inlet. I'm just reiterating that they're being reviewed at this time. Thank you.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Aggu, Ms. Quassa.

Oral Question 1132 – 6(2): Water Infrastructure

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Community and Government Services.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I would like to revisit the issue of water infrastructure. As the minister is aware, Igloolik has experienced a number of boil water advisories in recent years. This continues to be a concern to the community.

Mr. Speaker, I was pleased that the department issued a request for proposals in July 2024 to develop a business case for new water treatment infrastructure for Igloolik. The department awarded a contract for this work in September 2024. Can the minister provide an update today on the status of this work. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I thank the member for the question. Mr. Speaker, my department are working on several water treatment plant updates or renewals, including for Igloolik. We were fortunate to have announced \$2 million for the planning of Clyde River, Coral Harbour, and Igloolik's water treatment upgrades.

The request for proposal that my colleague referenced, the work is ongoing and once the planning for these are completed, we will try to advance to the next stage, which would be to provide design and/or construction of these upgrades or new facilities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's great to hear that the work is progressing.

(interpretation ends) The request for proposals indicates that a final business case will be submitted in October 2025, a little over six months from now. Can the minister describe what actions will need to be taken to ensure that the construction of a new water treatment plant for Igloolik is added to the government's five-year capital plan.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I appreciate the question, Mr. Speaker. As we do have multiple capital needs across our department, our department tries to push forward their priorities and we do look at these on an annual basis and also in consultation with our, looking at the municipal integrated community sustainability plans, but we do go through a process of identifying funding towards the highest need capital needs, and this is coordinated with our different departmental committees and going through that process, the capital process of getting it into the binders that we vote here in front of us each fall, typically. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe all of the communities have needs, and they're all our priority. It would be good if the work can be done sooner.

(interpretation ends) In a recent letter to me the minister indicated that his department is "proactively ensuring that all new water plants will be designed and constructed to meet the guidelines for Canadian drinking water quality, anticipating the new regulations."

Can the minister state how much funding the federal government is providing us to help ensure that the new requirements are being met. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My department through our federal contributions division we do try to tap into as many federal funding programs that would benefit our communities, and we'll continue doing that.

Mr. Speaker, we are looking at also, of course with many communities, plan for new housing construction that we also have enough sufficient water for all of our communities that are continuing to grow. We're trying to address the highest needs at this time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Oral Question 1133 – 6(2): Water Infrastructure

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Community and Government Services. It's basically about the same thing, about water infrastructure in my community. I want to revisit the issue, and I know that there are many other issues, but the Uqqummiut constituency want to know this information so that's why I'm revisiting the issue.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that all Nunavummiut have a right to clean and safe drinking water. And Mr. Speaker, as the minister will recall, the Department of Community and Government Services issued a request for proposals in June 2024 for the development of business case for new water treatment infrastructure in Clyde River, and information published by the department indicates that the contract for this project was awarded to Dillon Consulting in September 2024.

Can the minister provide an update today in the House on the status of this work. We would like to understand. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the contract was given to Dillon Consulting and they have been doing the work since then. Once we get an update from the contractor I will convey the information to my colleagues here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for responding to my question.

Because of that, the request for proposal indicates that the final business case will be submitted in October 2025, this fall, a little over six months from now. And because of that can the minister indicate the approximate cost of designing and constructing a new water treatment plant for a community the size of Clyde River. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The firm that is doing the work under contract, they're putting together a plan as to what kind of water treatment plant the community of Clyde River will get so that they can have clean drinking water. During the design process, we will find out or get more information as to what the new plant would look like and they would probably show the design to the hamlet as it's being done and the land lock will have to be identified as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for clarifying that very properly. And as the minister is probably aware, the premier recently issued a public statement confirming the government support for a new deep water port in Qikiqtarjuaq, and because of that this project will have significant impacts on the community in respect to increased economic activity and experience more visitors.

Can the minister indicate how his department is working to ensure that the community's water treatment infrastructure is able to accommodate this population growth. It will be easy for the minister just to describe this to us, if he has seen it before. Thank you.

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

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So maybe I can respond by saying the budgets that are given to the hamlets and they look at the population growth and the community growth and also try to set things up and follow all the standards to get the best quality product. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Oral Question 1134 – 6(2): Family Wellness Progress Report

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Family Services. Mr. Speaker, on February 25, 2025, the minister tabled her second progress update report on the Ilagiitsiarniq Family Wellness Strategic Framework.

First of all, I really do appreciate the work that has been done in attempts to keep on top of this issue. As the Auditor General of Canada has stated, the system to protect Nunavut's vulnerable children and youth is in crisis, and we all need to keep on top of it.

I would like some clarification. The Family Wellness Strategic Framework was tabled in February 2024, and listed seven priority action areas with 101 action items. The Family Wellness Strategic Action Plan was tabled on October 28, 2024, and listed seven priority areas with 37 specific objectives.

On page 10 of the action plan it indicates that the priority areas were originally developed in the strategic framework and have been refined based on engagement.

Mr. Speaker can the minister clarify why she tabled a progress report last week on the strategic framework and not on the action plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for that question.

(interpretation ends) I am really happy to table both documents, the strategic plan as well as the report stating where we're at and what we still need to do. There's a lot of information, I do agree, and I really am very proud of the staff for putting together the strategic plan as well as the expectations from the department to the OAG.

In terms of your question, we have been trying to work with all of the priorities listed but also trying to work on the areas where OAG stated we need to do more of.

In terms of how we want to see the report, I think it really just outlines what actions need to be done and what we need to prioritize, but overall the plan pretty well flows to the framework so I think everything just combines together in that. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The words in the title of the report may seem to be a trivial issue. What I'm concerned about is what this tells us regarding the way Family Services is addressing this issue.

The progress report that was just tabled on February 25, 2025 lists ten outcomes, but it's not at all clear how those outcomes match the action plan. It's also not clear whether the key outcome indicators are to be interpreted as key performance indicators, which I believe are critically important to measuring progress and successes, as the supporting information seems very incomplete.

Can the minister clarify how we are meant to interpret the progress report card included in the progress report when it doesn't have any actual numbers or percentages are activities completed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for asking those questions.

(interpretation ends) I do recognize what you are stating, but also in the strategic plan that we had originally put out there's a lot of information about the priorities we want to outline but also what we want to see coming forward.

I think no matter what timeline we're in, I think we are going to have to continue putting out information as to where we're at, what we need to improve, and how we can move forward.

In terms of the strategic plan I think that was pretty clear on what we need to get done. And if you find the half way report is not as accurate as it should be, I think all the information that we have shared in both documents, I think it pretty well outlines why we need to continue providing information to the public but also the expectation from the OAG to the Family Services department, we need to continue providing as much information as we can. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Later this week the office of the Auditor General of Canada is scheduled to provide the Legislative Assembly with a follow-up report with Child and Family Services in Nunavut, which will be the fourth such report since 2011. The last report on this topic from the Office of the Auditor General, tabled in May 2023, described a crisis within our government system.

The Family Wellness Progress Report tabled last week shows that addressing two key issues related to children at risk have not yet started, and one of them won't be addressed until spring 2028.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister ensure that her officials are prepared to explain this delayed timeline when they appear before members of this Assembly to discuss the Auditor General's report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question.

(interpretation ends) Yes, we will certainly provide that information. Like I had mentioned, the strategic plan that we put together, it does outline all the information or the issues that the department has, and had, and there's a lot of work that the department staff have done to increase the progress of the department.

There were a lot of issues that were mentioned in the report. I think since we've heard from the Auditor General and how this came out, there has been a lot of work that is going through, and it's not just one thing, it's a lot of things that are trying to move forward. But I will certainly provide more information on what you're requesting. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Before I go to the next name on my list, I would like to welcome NTI president, Jeremy Tunraluk to our House.

>>*Applause*

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

Oral Question 1135 – 6(2): Hall Beach Arnajuaq School

Mr. Kaernerck: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) Welcome, Jeremy.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, as I was stating in my member statement, I was going direct my question to the Minister of Education in regards to a much needed school in Sanirajak.

Mr. Speaker, let me start off by there were fires across Nunavut that when it comes to infrastructure or other disasters, as we know there have been fires in two communities in our term here.

So Mr. Speaker, if Sanirajak should use the use of school due to fire, and I hope it will never happen, that would rapidly deteriorate the conditions of the facility. What is the plan for the Department of Education for these students to receive their continuous education? Is there a backup plan for the Department of Education to have an adequate space for the students in the community of Sanirajak? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for that question, answering in the fact that we never do want to lose any assets due to fire. Sometimes they do happen, and I know that it puts a lot of strain on the community, particularly when we do lose a school. I know that it is all hands on deck, Mr. Speaker, when those types of instances happen, and the government does what it can with various departments to ensure that those capital projects are moved forward at a higher priority and that there are temporary accommodations to ensure school in the communities. In some instances we do use other types of infrastructure, like the community halls. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernerck: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, when it comes to the infrastructure much needed, yes. The only school we have is the community centre.

In saying that, Mr. Speaker, I do believe I have made a statement in regards to our school October 24, 2024, and these are the questions that I have been raising in the House in regards to Arnaqjuaq school.

Now, in saying that, Mr. Speaker, with the growth of the population, and I have been saying this; we're growing to Sanirajak; and there is a steadily deteriorating condition of the school. And the increased utilization rate of Sanirajak Arnaqjuaq school, as it was mentioned, 105 percent, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister agree that the new school for Sanirajak must be, and I say it again, must be at the highest priority for the department's capital planning? Will the minister agree with me on that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for his active questioning around the school for his constituency of Sanirajak.

We have 45 schools, Mr. Speaker, across the territory. We have a number of schools that do need to be new or renovated or expanded. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the department is planning to put the Arnaqjuaq school on the pre-planning for 2026 to 2027, so not this year but next year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Mr. Kaernek.

Mr. Kaernek: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly hope it will be approved this time around, when it comes to pre-planning.

Now, when it comes to pre-planning stages, I'm pretty sure it comes in the Finance Management Board whether it comes to capital infrastructure planning. Will this be a turned into action plan rather than pre-planning when it comes to much needed infrastructure like a school in Sanirajak?

I would like you to clarify myself or clarify from the minister that it will be approved as the highest priority, because education is the most important. So can it be a priority when it comes to pre-planning stages and make it into action. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. The Department of Education will work to submit that proposal to the pre-planning committee, and it's up to the committee to decide which projects go forward. I have no control over that. It's the committee's decision. Hopefully. We do have other projects that we want to get on the capital plan and Education, we always do submit

projects for pre-planning to go through the different phases of attaining capital assets. Hopefully it can be one of them but I can't guarantee that, Mr. Speaker.

The other communities we also want to put forward are Arviat middle school, Baker Lake elementary school, Kugluktuk elementary, and of course Sanirajak. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Oral Question 1136 – 6(2): Airport Operations

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation. They concern the important issue of airport operations in the communities of Kugaaruk and Taloyoak.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister will recall, I tabled correspondence from the municipality of Kugaaruk in this House during our recent Fall Sitting concerning the need for improvements to airports weather observer function.

Mr. Speaker, the minister subsequently wrote to me on this subject. In his letter he confirmed that although the function of weather observation is managed by a third party with oversight of NAV Canada, the Department of Economic Development and Transportation is actively addressing the challenges impacting Nunavut's community aerodrome radio station program.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister provide an update today on what actions his department has been taking in this area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, during our session the ministers of transportation federal, provincial, territorial meetings took place, I had my assistant deputy minister sit in on my behalf, and that was one of the urgent that needed to be addressed, was an agenda under our northern agenda through those meetings. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity to speak with stakeholders in both Kugaaruk and Taloyoak, and they have told me that it is important to work towards having this function staffed on a 24-7 basis. Mr. Speaker, I have been told that this would improve safety, especially in bad weather, when we could

have a medevac flight at any time. Mr. Speaker, can the minister indicate if he supports this goal. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you, Minister, for your response.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister is aware, his department issued two requests for proposals in early January of this year for the operation and maintenance of Kugaaruk airport and the Taloyoak airport. Mr. Speaker, the requests for proposals closed in early February. Mr. Speaker, can the minister provide an update today on the status of the procurement process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I apologize to my colleague for this, but we're just discussing the observer communicator. This is a completely different request for proposal, and I don't have any update on that. Once I do, I'll provide that to the member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Oral Question 1137 – 6(2): Co-operative Associations

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation.

Mr. Speaker, local co-ops are an important foundation of Nunavut's economy. Member-owned co-ops provide employment for Nunavummiut and put dollars into the pockets of residents.

As the minister is aware, the Territorial Cooperative Association Act is jointly administered by the Department of Economic Development and the Department of Justice. If the Minister of Economic Development cannot answer my questions, I encourage him to consult with the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Speaker, it has come to my attention that a number of local co-ops had been writing letters to members of the Legislative Assembly concerning the financial audit and

reporting requirements that are statutorily required of them. Can the minister confirm if these requirements have been recently changed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Akeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our legislation is a very old legislation, but it's one that we still follow, and this is one that our department identified over three years ago to the Arctic Co-op Limited that the co-ops do need to have financial statements as part of their reporting to the *Societies Act*, and when they do file it, and that requirement we've been trying to work very closely with the Arctic Co-ops Limited, and this is the year that we said that it was going to be implemented.

Now that it's starting to be implemented, there are letters from various co-ops that have been coming to my attention, and if they have been coming to you, I suggest you forward those to me, too, because I want to have a very good working relationship with the Arctic co-ops and the co-ops throughout that are vital to our communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I noted earlier, I recently received correspondence from the Kissarvik Co-Op on this subject. At the appropriate time I'll be tabling a copy of this letter for the benefit of my colleagues, a number of whom may have received similar correspondence.

Will the minister commit to working with the Minister of Justice to formally write to Arctic cooperatives on this subject, in order to clarify what audit and reporting requirements are in place. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Akeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation has been having steady discussions with the Minister of Justice on this file, and we have been very clear to the Arctic Co-ops Limited that there is statutory requirements under this territorial legislation, and if we need to amend it, we will.

But those discussions are still ongoing, but those letters that are being received from Arctic Co-ops Limited, I would like my members, if they are getting it, is that the Minister For Economic Development be given an opportunity to see those letters, and allow me to respond appropriately. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You'll get a copy of it, because I'll be tabling a copy of that letter. Members of the Legislative Assembly are often invited to attend the annual general meetings of our co-ops. These are excellent forums to share experience and ideas. Can the minister indicate if the government is currently reviewing the *Co-operative Association Act*, and can he confirm whether or not the amendments to the Legislative Assembly will be introduced before the end of this current Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Chairman: Minister of Economic Development and Transportation Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not reviewing that legislation at this point and am not seeking any changes, but I have received that same invitation that we all got from Arctic Co-ops Limited to meet, and if I haven't already accepted I will accept, because I think it is critical that the local co-ops understand that the government position is in terms of this, and work closely with each of those co-ops. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Oral Question 1138 – 6(2): Elder Vans

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Premier of Nunavut regarding the five vehicles that were sent, including Coral Harbour. The people of Coral Harbour are anxiously awaiting to use the vehicle in the near future, but we heard when one of our colleagues was asking questions, that those vehicles will not be mobilized this year.

Can the minister indicate to the House whether the people who have the contract, because of course the contract is going to be ending at the end of March, are you looking at renewing that contract? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to thank the member for that question. The agreement indicates that the busses are for the use of the communities. They are waiting for operations and maintenance portion of the dollars, and in our agreement it indicates that they would buy and maintain those vehicles. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to thank the minister. The minister indicated that it was going to be a pilot project and because those vehicles have not been mobilized, what's going to be happening? We don't have any plans, or we have not set aside any monies that would be used for the operations and maintenance, so how is it going to work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to thank you once again. We have indicated that the Northern Future Skills were, we have not been able to do a review, but we look forward to have that review and see where we can make changes at that time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regards to the operations I wrote a letter on January 9 about the operations of those vehicles and how many trainees will be trained to operate those mobile equipment. The hamlet was just informed that they don't have any money, so they won't be providing any training.

In February I received correspondence from the premier's office that they will be giving us a detailed information, and I have yet to receive that letter, which will be a month in two days. I have yet to receive that detailed information on the operation portion of those vehicles.

The elders were very happy that they had access to mobile equipment, but with no operations or maintenance money, we don't know what's going to be happening with those vehicles.

It's election year this year, and we don't see any plans or any money set aside for the usage of those vehicles. So we have a lot of questions about the usage of those vehicles. Can the premier indicate when we're going to be getting that detailed information. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to thank you for that question. He has been very adamant in getting those motor vehicles started.

We have had correspondence going back and forth and at that time, on February 19, the Standing Committee on Oversight and Public Accounts, I wrote a letter to the chair of

that committee and we gave them detailed information from the time that this pilot project was started to date. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Mr. Lightstone.

Oral Question 1139 – 6(2): National Sex Offenders

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to begin by providing a trigger warning; I will be discussing the topic of sexual abuse again. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Justice regarding the National Sex Offender Registry.

Mr. Speaker, in February 2024 the minister had indicated that there was a total of 437 people living in Nunavut that were on the National Sex Offender Registry, and he also indicated of those 437, there were 238 offenders who have been convicted with sexual offences against children. In addition, 25 of these individuals were designated as high-risk offenders. For my first question I would like to ask if the minister can provide an update of those figures as of today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Justice, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker as of December 2024 there are 432 offenders on the National Sex Offender Registry living in Nunavut. Of these, 241 offenders are convicted of sexual offences against minors, and there are currently 22 offenders in Nunavut designated as high-risk offenders. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last year the minister had also indicated that of the 437 registered sex offenders in the territory, 44 were non-compliant, and of the 25 individuals designated as high-risk offenders, six of those were non-compliant. I would like to ask the minister if he would be able to provide an update on the number of registered sex offenders who are non-compliant. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Justice, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't have that exact number, but those stats that were provided should still be within the same amounts. I can get back to the member with an exact amount that are in that list. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker I do appreciate the minister committing to getting that figure back to me, but I would like to ask the minister to provide that response through a return to oral question, so that all Nunavummiut will have access to that figure.

Mr. Speaker there are very strict conditions placed upon these individuals by the court, and those court orders are very strict for good reason, including ensuring that these individuals refrain from public areas such as swimming pools, school grounds, and play grounds. Those same court orders are much more strict for those high-risk sex offenders.

Mr. Speaker. For my last question one of the minister's predecessors had indicated that as of February 2019 no individual in Nunavut that was on the sex offender registered list and who was non-compliant with these explicit court orders had ever been charged with failing to comply.

Again, Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of the public, penalties exist for sex offenders who do not meet the reporting requirements include up to \$10,000 or two years in prison. And again, those are very strict for good reason.

I would like to ask the minister: In all of Nunavut's 25 years has the Department of Justice ever convicted a registered sex offender for not complying with the court orders? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Justice, Mr. David Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for those two questions where he requested for the return to oral, for the benefit of this House what I'll do is I'll take those two and commit myself into having a supplementary return to oral to respond adequately to the very serious questions that are being posed in this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Baker Lake, Mr. Simailak.

Oral Question 1140 – 6(2): Status of New Health Centre for Baker Lake

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Health. Mr. Speaker as the minister will recall from our recent Fall Sitting, I asked a number of questions on the Baker Lake's health centre replacement project. Although the minister confirmed that Baker Lake was next in line to receive a new health centre at Qikiqtarjuaq, the project has not yet appeared on the government's five-year capital plan.

Can the minister provide an update on the current status of the Baker Lake health centre project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Health, Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank my colleague for the question on this issue. The health centre in Baker Lake is a long-standing issue (interpretation ends) Right now the status of that project is that it's currently being studied within the pre-planning envelope. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for the response. Mr. Speaker, whether I asked about the Baker Lake health centre project on November 1, 2024, the minister and his officials indicated that developing plans for the new health centre would begin once the detailed design for renovations at the Martha Talirug centre were finished. That project was expected to be completed by January 2025. Can the minister confirm that the design for the renovations at the Martha Talirug building is now complete, and there have been no delays in beginning the project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Minister Main.

Hon. John Main: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the member's question in terms of the Martha Talirug Centre, the member is correct. To my knowledge the design work has been completed and now that that design work has been completed, that should enable development of a project budget and then it will be a case of seeing whether the project budget can fit within the envelope that we have.

When it comes to small capital projects like the Martha Talirug Centre renovation project, there's a high demand across Nunavut looking at our facilities and many of the health facilities are aging and so there is a priority placed on health and safety related issues, for example emergency generators, anything related to infection control within facilities. But we make use of the available budget as best we can, and we do want to see that project move forward to renovate Martha Talirug Centre in Baker Lake. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker in November the minister stated as part of the development of the new health centre for Baker Lake there would be consultations activities, including the hamlet, residents of Baker Lake, and existing health centre staff. The minister also stated that they would be incorporating local knowledge and Inuit knowledge to address such issues as wind direction and snow buildup.

Can the minister provide an update on when these consultation activities will take place, if they haven't already begun, and will he commit to addressing options for staff housing during the consultation phase. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Again I thank the member. In terms of the community consultations, that would be tied to the building design, that would be contingent upon getting the project into the capital plan, and so the detailed consultations at the community level, those typically happen before design starts or during design.

In terms of the need for housing, that is a factor that has been looked at or an issue that's being looked at in the community of Qikiqtarjuaq, for example, and we have do receive positive feedback from our staff in terms of having housing units attached to health centres. And so we are increasingly interested in going this in that direction.

For a while for a few health centres we got a way from having attached housing, but based on staff feedback and desire to retain our staff, provide them with comfortable working conditions, we're moving back in that direction in a general sense.
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Oral Question 1141 – 6(2): Elder Vans

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation).

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I would like to question the premier again a little bit on these elder vans. Mr. Speaker, in the news article the proponent has stated that the operational costs of these vans is going to be 800 to 900,000 per van, which comes out to four to four-and-a-half million a year to operate these five vans. And the premier did state before when the five vans were purchased that his priority was to get all 25 vans into all 25 communities, which comes out to 100 to \$112 million a year to operate these 25 vans.

I would ask the premier: If there was a business case done before these vans were purchased, is this realistic that 800 to 900,000 per vehicle? Was a business case done for these vans? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I thank my colleague. The article, I haven't read what actual figures are involved. I would like to first of all review the figures before responding. And I did indicate I would envision 25 communities receive vans, but we wanted to start with five vans first. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I did not ask the premier if he read the news article, I asked if there was a business case done to see if it's realistic. The price is for 800 to 900,000 dollars per to operate a van.

I'll ask the premier again: Was the business case done for these vans so that the government will know, okay, these vans are going to cost this much to purchase and they are going to cost this much to operate for elders? Was a business case done before the purchase of these vans were done to make sure it's viable? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and again I thank my colleague for the question. We wanted to do a pilot project with five vans, how operations will be with the communities. We called it a pilot project, because we want to learn and look at what we learn and use that in other communities. For that reason it has been our goal to have to learn from the five communities and what further we may have to take from our experience. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Knowledge.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I understand that the five vans were a pilot project. I understand that. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the premier is very simple: Was there a business case done for these vans? There's market destruction for taxis, and other things. Was there a business case done for the vans? And is 800 to 900,000 dollars reasonable? If a business case was done then you would know roughly what the operational costs should be, could be for these vans for the elders.

I'll try for the last time, Mr. Speaker. Was there a business case done to purchase and operate these elder vans? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, thank you for the question.

Since the start we've asked the elders on the vision and the urgency urged concerning the vans, so we started off with five communities and to learn from that.

With respect to operations, which is part of his question, it's an ongoing project and we want to look at the pilot project, whether we can go ahead or not.

With respect to the communities, we have not completed yet, but we will be considering them upon the review is done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Oral Question 1142 – 6(2): Kugluktuk Power Plan

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) My questions today are for the Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to raise the issue of Kugluktuk's power plant. When I raised this issue at the beginning of our current winter sitting, the minister confirmed that the Qulliq Energy Corporation was still in negotiations with the Kitikmeot Corporation regarding the construction of Kugluktuk's new power plant.

However, on Thursday last week, the Qulliq Energy Corporation issued a new request for proposal for the design and construction of Kugluktuk's new power plant. The request for proposal closes on April 10, 2025. Can the minister clearly explain what procedure and process is now being used by the Qulliq Energy Corporation. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and *quana* to my colleague for raising this question.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, we have taken a turn in approach in term of the Kugluktuk power plant. Kugluktuk badly needs a power plant, as we've discussed quite a few times here in the House, and Qulliq Energy Corporation is committed to seeing that project advance. We have terminated negotiations with Kitikmeot Corporation. We thank them for their work, the time that they invested, in terms of negotiating or looking at options around a new power plant in Kugluktuk. The decision has been made to go back to public procurement process.

Mr. Speaker, with three recent requests for proposals having closed successfully for the communities of Gjoa Haven, Igloolik and Cambridge Bay, Qulliq Energy Corporation is eager to see a similar outcome from the current process. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) As the minister will be aware, the Qulliq Energy Corporation's recently issued request for proposals for the design and construction of Kugluktuk's new power plant indicates "final completion shall be no later than March 31, 2029", and the minimum Inuit labour content requirement for the contract is 20 percent of total labour costs.

Can the minister clearly explain how these provisions were determined. (interpretation)
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) In terms of the timeline for the project, that would be based around the projected time required for design, site preparation, the procurement of necessary supplies and components, one of the major components being the gen sets. There is currently quite a long lead time for generators to be purchased, stretching out to years, so the timeline is based on what is deemed to be achievable and realistic.

In terms of the Inuit labour content, that's based on a community-by-community approach, I believe, and it's based on past procurement activities, not necessarily just through Qulliq Energy Corporation, but looking at other projects in that specific community. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for your response.

(interpretation ends) As the minister will recall, the Qulliq Energy Corporation's original plan was for Kugluktuk's new power plant to have a hybrid solar design-diesel design. That plan was later cancelled due to lack of funding. In recent months the Qulliq Energy Corporation has been engaging with a private company in respect to a potential hydroelectric project near Iqaluit that may cost half a billion dollars.

Can the minister clearly indicate if the Qulliq Energy Corporation's new request for proposals include a requirement for the new power plant to include solar technology.
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends)
Currently the project is focussed on a new power plant. The reason for the solar component being removed from the project was around budgetary concerns and needing to right-size the project to fit the budget.

Since the project was first put out to tender way back in 2019, we have seen considerable inflation, escalation in terms of capital projects in Nunavut. Our focus right now is to see a new power plant built that will be more fuel efficient, that will be quieter, it will be better able to integrate renewable power into the Kugluktuk power grid.

When it comes to renewable energy projects, right now Qulliq Energy Corporation is working through our independent power producer program with proponents that are outside of Qulliq Energy Corporation to see renewable power advanced in Nunavut, and the Iqaluit hydro project is again one of those projects, where it's being led by an outside entity. However Qulliq Energy Corporation is committed to supporting proponents to see more renewable power used in Nunavut. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Tasiluk, Mr. Hickes.

Oral Question – 1143 6(2): Elder Abuse

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my questions today to the Minister responsible for Seniors.

Mr. Speaker, a week ago I had asked for an update on the Nunavut Elders and Seniors Strategy and in the minister's response of the day a week ago today, it was stated:

“I am hoping to provide progress report this coming sitting.”

Upon further clarification the minister was clear that it would be tabled this current sitting.

Mr. Speaker, as you well know, we only have a week left of this sitting to be able to analyze progress of such a thing as an update to a very important strategy, so I'll ask again: When will the minister be tabling the updated strategy? Thank you.

Speaker: Hon. Minister responsible for Seniors, Mr.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank my colleague for his continued push on this important issue. Mr. Speaker, I am looking at tabling the document this coming Wednesday. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the minister for that update. I do look forward to it, but in the meantime I will continue to ask some questions on this update.

As I have mentioned before, Mr. Speaker, without regular updates in a reasonable time frame, us here in the House and members of the public have a lot of difficulty in following what has been accomplished and what hasn't been accomplished.

Mr. Speaker, when the strategy was originally tabled almost a year ago, again the minister had stated that when it comes to elders time is running out, and that sense of urgency is something our government has heard loud and clear from elders, and we need to act now to make the lives of Nunavut's elders better.

Mr. Speaker, what are the three most impactful advancements or initiatives made in the past year since the strategy was tabled? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for Seniors, Mr. Hon. P.J. Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again I want to thank my colleague for his question.

I really don't want to get ahead of myself. I know I've committed to tabling all the action items that every department has taken to date.

Mr. Speaker, the real three things that I would really highlight would be the facilities that are there, the elder care facilities, most recently the one that is being opened in Rankin Inlet. There's safe shelters that has been identified by the elders that we've been working, as well as a training Inuit counsellors around that.

But more importantly, what we heard directly from elders that is that we need to have a central function and as such, I will look forward to my colleague's support of creating the Elder Secretariat within the department of EIA which will then be tasked with providing the support as a whole of government.

Mr. Speaker, to that, I think those would be the three, as well as the support at EIA that I'm hoping to see from my colleagues across. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the information provided by the minister. I'm sure when we see the report we'll be able to have an opportunity to look through hopefully a lot of progress being made.

Mr. Speaker, one of the other main issues that I outlined last week is one of not serious issues raised by elders in the What We Heard document, and that is elder abuse and intimidation.

Mr. Speaker, the minister had stated that he is going to be tabling an update in a couple of days, and at the time he said that he would update when the time is appropriate, so thankfully we do know when the appropriate time is.

But Mr. Speaker, in light of the seriousness of this issue, Mr. Speaker, yesterday is too late for an update, so I'll ask again. What specific initiatives have been brought forward and actioned on addressing elder abuse. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for Seniors, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again I want to thank my colleague for his question. This is, as I mentioned was the shelter that I just referenced is one that we feel we've actioned immediately. Further to that, I look forward to working with the Department of Justice to see what more we have been doing, and I'll make sure in the progress update that we will be tabling, that we highlight the key areas what we are doing, as noted by my colleague. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Members be aware time allotted for question period is now over. Hats off to you; we got everybody in. Item 7, Written Questions. Item 8, Returns to Written Questions. Item 9, Replies to Opening Address. Item 10, Replies to Budget Address. Item 11, Petitions. Item 12, Responses to Petitions. Item 13, Reports of Standing and Special Committee on Bills and Other Matters. I recognize the chair of the Standing Committee on Legislation, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to report that Bill 50, *Fuel Tax Act* as amended; Bill 67, *An Act to Amend The Income Tax Act*, and Bill 68, *An Act to Amend the Tobacco Tax Act* have be reviewed by the Standing Committee on Legislation, and that the bills are ready for the consideration in Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Do members agree that Bills 50, 67, and 68 are reported back to the House?

Some Members: Agreed.

Speaker: Disagreed? Item 14, Tabling of Documents. Member for Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet, Mr. Sammurtok.

Item 14: Tabling of Documents

Tabled Document 365 – 6(2): Correspondence from the Kissarvik Co-operative Association

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table a correspondence that I recently received from Kissarvik Co-operative Association. I encourage all members to read the document. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Tabling of Documents. Item 15, Notices of Motion. Item 16, Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills. Hon. Minister of Health, Minister Main.

Item 16: Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills**Bill 74 – *Pharmacy Professions Act* – Notice**

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I give notice that on Wednesday, March 5, 2025 that Bill 74, *Pharmacy Professions Act*, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Item 17, Motions. Item 18, First Reading of Bills. Hon. Minister of Health, Minister Main.

Item 18: First Reading of Bills

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request consent of this Assembly to waive the two-day notice requirement to allow for First Reading of Bill 74, *Pharmacy Professions Act*. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The minister is seeking consent to allow for the first reading of Bill 74. Do members agree?

Some Members: Agreed.

Speaker: Agreed. Item 19, Second Reading of Bills. Hon. Minister of Health, Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Could I please ask for a clarification. Is this for the First Reading of Bill 74? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: You've got consent for the first reading of bill. Minister Main.

Bill 74 – Pharmacy Professions Act – First Reading

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I MOVE, seconded by Hon. Member for Cambridge Bay, that Bill 74, *Pharmacy Professions Act* be read for the first time. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Item 19, Second Reading of Bills. Hon. Minister of Health, Minister Main.

Item 19: Second Reading of Bills

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek consent to allow for Bill 74, *Pharmacy Professions Act*, be read today for second reading. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The minister is seeking consent to waive the 48-hour notice so that Bill 74 can be read for the second time today. Do members agree?

Some Members: Agreed.

Speaker: Minister Main.

Bill 74 – Pharmacy Professions Act – Second Reading

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I MOVE, seconded by the Hon. Member for Cambridge Bay, that the Bill 74, *Pharmacy Professions Act*, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill repeals and replaces the *Pharmacy Professions Act* to establish a new regulatory framework for all pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, interns and students in Nunavut; establish a pharmacy registration committee; establish an education register and emergency register; update the application and registration process for pharmacists; establish the application and registration process for pharmacy technicians, interns, and students; provide for the establishment of quality assurance mechanisms, a code of ethics, and standards of practice; expand a pharmacist's entitlement to practise pharmacy; provide for the delegation of acts by a pharmacist and pharmacy technicians; provide for the delegation of acts by health care professionals and pharmacy technicians by pharmacists; establish the entitlement to practise pharmacy for pharmacy technicians, interns, and students; provide for emergency registration of a pharmacist or pharmacy technician during a declared urgent situation or state of emergency; provide for the appointment of a review officer; modernize the complaints and disciplinary process, establish a fitness to practice committee appeared an alternative dispute resolution

process; expand the role of the board of inquiry during the complaints and disciplinary process; and modernize language. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: A motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

Some Members: Question.

Speaker: Question has been called. All those in favour? Opposed? Motion is carried and Bill 74 is referred to the Standing Committee on Legislation.

Item 20, Consideration in Committee of Whole on Bills and Other Matters: Bill 43, 64, 70, 71, 72 with Mr. Hickes in the chair. Before we go to Committee of the Whole, we'll take a 20-minute break. Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House recessed at 15:35 at Committee commenced at 16:07*

Item 20: Consideration in Committee of Whole on Bills and Other Matters

Chairman: Good afternoon, everyone. I would like to thank everyone for coming back. Before we proceed I'll call the committee meeting to order. In the Committee of the Whole we have the following items to deal with: Bills 43, 64, 71 and 72. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We wish to continue with the review of Bill 70, *Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2025-2026* and supporting documents of Department of Education, and if time permits, the Nunavut Housing Corporation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Does the committee agree we first deal with Department of Education?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Minister Gross, do you have officials you would like to appear before the committee with you? Minister.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chair, yes, I do. *Quana*.

Chairman: Does the committee agree to have the witnesses appear before the committee?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort them in.

**Bill 70 – Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2025-2026 –
Consideration in Committee**

Chairman: Thank you. When your witnesses get settled, Minister, if you could just introduce your officials and proceed directly to your opening comments.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Ublaatiaq*, Chair. I am happy to appear before you and Committee members today to discuss the Department of Education's proposed 2025-2026 budget.

With me today here at the table, to my left, to your right, is Rebecca Hainnu, Deputy Minister of Education, and to my right, to your left, is Matthew Loosemore, Director of Corporate Services.

Also joining us in the Gallery we have Bill Cooper, Assistant Deputy Minister of Education Programs; we have Charlotte Borge (ph), Acting Assistant Deputy Minister of Support Services; we also have our new Director of Stakeholder Relations, Kathula Machase (ph), a familiar face to most of you; and of course we have Ariel Stockdale (ph), our Director of Policy and a fountain of wisdom.

For the 2025-26 fiscal year, our department is requesting a total of \$289,545,000. This reflects an increase of \$9,840,000 from the 2024-25 Main Estimates.

Of the \$9,840,000 of new funding, \$8,769,000 relates to Nunavut Employee Union, Excluded, and Senior Management employee salary increases resulting from the recent Government of Nunavut compensation review. This salary increase is critical to ensuring we remain a competitive employer and will be valuable in reducing overall vacancies. The Department of Education has 615 positions affected by this salary increase, which includes 410 positions across our 45 schools.

The remaining \$1,071,000 is funding to add new positions to support the roll-out of full-day kindergarten. This school year, the Department of Education was pleased to implement full-day kindergarten in 7 new communities, bringing the total number of communities offering full-day kindergarten to 12. Feedback on our full-day kindergarten program is very positive, and the department created a comprehensive teacher's handbook and continues to ensure that the full-day teachers are well supported throughout the year.

In 2025-26, the Department of Education will re-profile existing funding in the amount of \$849,000 to restructure our Human Resources division, including the creation of a Director of Human Resources and a Manager of Recruitment and Employee Development. These changes will be critical to ensuring the Department of Education

can better support its 1,508.5 employees, decrease vacancies in our schools, and increase Inuit employment.

Chair, the Department of Education is working to ensure that our resources are being used to maximum effect, and that services for students and adult learners are continually improved. I thank this committee for its continued support of the Department of Education, which enables us to carry out our mandate to provide the best education we can to all our students.

I am happy to respond to your questions. *Quana.*

Chairman: Thank you, Minister. Does the Chair of the Standing Committee have opening comments to provide? Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As the Chair of the Standing Committee on Social Wellness, I am pleased to make opening comments as we begin deliberations on the proposed 2025-2026 budget and business plan of the Department of Education.

Chair, the Department of Education's proposed 2025-2026 operations and maintenance budget is \$289.5 million, which is just under \$10 million more than the budget brought forward for 2024-2025. The Standing Committee notes that a significant majority of this increase in funding will be allocated to wage increases following the government's compensation review. The collective agreement with the Nunavut Teachers Association expires in June of 2025 and it is not clear whether the department's proposed budget amounts for compensation and benefits anticipates additional expenditures in this area.

Chair, during the Minister's appearance before the Standing Committee to address her department's proposed business plan and main estimates for 2025-2026, members were given to understand that in addition to 8 new positions to provide full-day kindergarten and human resources services, the department plans to convert a number of positions which are currently funded year-by-year under a federal government contribution agreement to become indeterminate positions within the Government of Nunavut.

Committee members raised a number of concerns with this proposed approach, given the uncertainty of ongoing federal funding and the fiscal impact of a forced growth in the number of departmental positions which may not otherwise have been approved through the regular budgetary process. Members caution the minister and her officials to be fiscally prudent when addressing staffing needs.

Members continue to have concerns about staffing issues in Nunavut's schools and strongly encourage the minister and her staff in their efforts to recruit trained and certified teaching staff, including working with Nunavut Arctic College's Teacher Education Program. Nunavut's education system also relies on such staff as student

support assistants, guidance counsellors and language specialists to fulfil its mandate as provided for under Nunavut's Education Act. The Standing Committee supports the department's renewed Inuit-specific focus within its Educator Retention and Recruitment Strategy. Members appreciate that one significant challenge in filling such positions as Language Specialists is the lack of staff housing and the committee supports the minister and her officials in their ongoing discussions with the Nunavut Housing Corporation on this issue.

Committee members had a number of questions respecting the department's progress in developing Inuit language curriculum materials and resources and how regional language differences are taken into account. Members look forward to seeing the results of the ongoing consultations regarding Language of Instruction models and the implementation of bilingual education in Nunavut schools.

The department's most recent annual report indicates that the Coalition of Nunavut District Education Authorities is participating in these consultations. Members would welcome an update on any other recent activities carried out by the Coalition of Nunavut District Education Authorities, which is established under the Education Act to work in collaboration with departmental staff to provide guidance and assistance to District Education Authorities with respect to their roles and responsibilities.

In the past, the Standing Committee has encouraged the department to include enhanced information and key performance indicators with respect to school operations in its Annual Reports and continues to hope that such additional detail will be included in future reports.

Chair, the Department of Education initiated its full-time kindergarten program in 2023-2024 and now twelve schools across Nunavut are delivering this program. The Standing Committee recognizes that implementing full-time kindergarten in some schools will require substantial and costly physical renovations to provide the necessary classroom space. As some schools are already struggling with capacity issues, members look forward to updates on how the department will prioritize its capital requests moving forward.

The Department of Education manages the Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students (FANS) program which supports Nunavummiut who are pursuing post-secondary studies.

As part of their role on the Standing Committee on Legislation, members have had the opportunity to review and discuss the proposed new Post Secondary Student Support Act. Committee members anticipate that the department's new data management system will be able to provide enhanced information on the number of post-secondary graduates who enter Nunavut's labour force after successfully completing their studies, especially in the field of education and recommend that this, and other data, also be included in future Annual Reports.

That concludes my opening remarks. Individual Members may also have questions and comments as we proceed.

Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: Thank you Ms. Brewster. Before we proceed to detailed questions, are there any general comments? Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, Minister and your officials.

In the opening comments by the minister it states that they want to provide the best education possible for the students in Nunavut. And all students, I raised a couple of issues during question period. When students don't know what their grades are or what they've accomplished, it's hard to plan for the future. Like, for example, a grade 10 student is already doing some of the grade 11 work, and that same student in grade 10 is also doing part of grade 12 curriculum. This is the same student. So the high school students are sort of not fixed right. They're not sure what course they're going to be doing next and they don't know about their credits. Some of them are in grade 11 but some of the curriculum they have to do is in grade 12, and then there are grade 10s doing grade 11 and grade 12 work.

I've seen how this has been put together not in a right way. I got this information by talking to students. It looks like the students are getting confused by the school and the students have expressed their dissatisfaction with the way it's being done and they're not sure what grade they're actually at now.

I think this needs to be corrected within the education department. All the schools in Nunavut should have like a similar curriculum. The three larger communities do more academic education than the smaller communities. I can use Iqaluit, Cambridge Bay and Rankin Inlet as an example. When students graduate and they try to go to university or college, they can get in right away. However, from the smaller communities, when they try to go for higher education, either university, they have to upgrade before they can get accepted to university. I would really like that to be recognized.

Education is said to be very important, but then each school should have the same or similar curriculum, is what I'm trying to say. I hope I am understood. I don't know why they do this. Our students in the smaller communities are always lower, academically. That's what I wanted to say. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you Mr. Malliki. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Chair. Good afternoon, Minister and officials. Welcome to day one. I would like to start off by thanking you for consolidating your branches in the main estimates. Compressing it down from nine to four will be a nice change for us.

I also wanted to note that it is appreciated that the Department of Education has been tabling their annual reports in a timely and regular basis, which is a positive change in recent years.

I would also like to thank the department for shifting to an Inuit-specific focus on the educator retention and recruitment strategy. I think that's something that the Department of Health as another department with a working retention strategy could really learn from, creating that Inuit-specific aspect to it.

I also wanted to congratulate you on the recent signing of the National School Food Program. We'll have some questions for you on that later today.

I just wanted to touch upon a couple other key issues which I think would be good to discuss over the coming days. One issue that we discussed yesterday was the need for enhanced supports for teen pregnancies, ensuring that young mothers and young parents stay in school and do not get stuck in the income support or agent income support.

Another issue is I note that the department has added a focus on career and tech studies in the business plans. I applaud that, but I've been really pushing for the need for youth trade programs in our schools in collaboration with Department of Family Services' apprenticeship program.

Lastly I would also like to put some focus on the language of instruction regulation development, and more importantly, the need for language specialists, especially in our communities that are at risk of losing Inuktitut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you Mr. Lightstone. Any other general comments? Mr. Kaernek.

Mr. Kaernek: (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and welcome to Madam Minister and her officials.

Going through the opening comments, and I have stated this repeatedly, you indicated that you'll be implementing full-time kindergarten in seven new communities, bringing the total full-day kindergarten to 12.

Maybe I can rephrase my comment. There is probably going to be additional cost when we increase the full-day kindergarten in seven new communities. And I can use an example: In Arnaqjuaq school in Hall Beach, or Sanirajak, you will probably need extra dollars to expand the classrooms. I am concerned about it as there's going to be seven

new communities implementing this full-day kindergarten, which is perfectly fine, but as there has been an increase in the budget, we're implementing full-time kindergarten in seven communities and since Sanirajak has one school, there was a case where a student had to get out of the school in order to accommodate the extra kindergarten students, and they are now teaching them in the cafeteria. During my questioning it was indicated that they had set aside some funds, and they were denied when they asked to make an expansion to their school.

Mr. Chairman, the people of Sanirajak need a new school, and as I indicated earlier, so where are the students going to go if the school is not going to be utilized anymore. It's something of a major concern in my community. And I believe that we should include Sanirajak being slated to get a new school.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Any other general comments to the opening comments? Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok: Thank you, Chair. Welcome. I want to speak about the teachers in language, Inuinnaqtun, Inuktitut, all Inuit language. As you know, Kugluktuk and Cambridge, they're losing their Inuinnaqtun language. From my case, in my constituencies, I've heard concerns from people that speak, they are very fluent in Inuinnaqtun, read and write, and there's one case where one tried to apply to be a teacher, but they did a little research on the wages and the wages were too low. These were I guess they date back 15, 20 years, maybe. And this concerned person didn't apply because the wages were too low.

Then to have a community losing their language, and we think that that would be looked at too. And even you have a new position, kindergartens, lots every new positions there, these people would fit right in there, the ones that are very fluent in that language. And it would help probably revitalize the community's case in losing language. *Quana*, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you. Any other general comments to the opening comments? Everyone please proceed to page G4, Directorate. Total operations and maintenance to be voted on, \$20,516,000. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The department's main estimate indicate that there will be an increase of eight positions in 2025-2026. Are these new teaching positions? If not, what type of positions are they? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for the question. For the full breakdown of those positions, I would like to ask Mr. Loosemore to clarify those positions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Loosemore.

Mr. Loosemore: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for the member's question. I'm sorry, the seven positions, I know the one position is a vote 4 position that's labelled on the first page, and that position is an early learning childhood care position. And the remaining seven positions are that are changing are the seven teaching positions, NTA positions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the staff member. How many teaching positions are vacant currently in Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for that question. Currently we have vacancy of 14 percent. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Sorry, Minister, if you could just clarify. I know you mentioned a percentage, but if you had a current number. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for that question. We have 115 vacancies. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Sorry, if you could just nod 1-1-5 or 1-5-0? 115, Minister?

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's one hundred fifteen. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Sorry, it's echoing in mine. Is it 150, Minister?

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. 1-1-5. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you. I apologize. It was echoing in my ear so I couldn't differentiate between the two. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to make everybody smile. 1-1-5, bingo.

>> *Laughter*

How many of these positions are vacant in Naujaat and Coral Harbour? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you to the member for that question. So at the elementary school in Naujaat there are three vacancies and at Tuugaalik high school in Naujaat there are nine, and for Coral Harbour we have five vacancies. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Are these jobs advertised or are we still waiting for something? Can the minister elaborate on that, are they advertised or not. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, they are advertised. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Minister mal.

Mr. Malliki: Qujannamiik. When are we anticipating these jobs will be filled? Thank you, Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's currently hiring season as we speak, and we hope to have all of the positions filled by June. However, we know it doesn't always work like that and the teams do work to ensure that if there are any vacancies that they are filled right until we can continue hiring people. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you. And just before I go become to Mr. Malliki, if I can maybe get a clarification. The minister in the previous response mentioned that all the positions are under recruitment, so there's job actions open on it. Are any of the positions currently filled with casuals? And are those positions that are being advertised are they specific positions or are they general teaching positions that are open until filled? If I can just get some details on that. Minister.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you for the question. The deputy minister can elaborate on that technical question, thank you.

Chairman: Ms. Hainnu.

Ms. Hainnu: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for your question. (interpretation ends) I believe that when we have vacancies in the school, the school team lead which includes the principal, vice principal, student support teacher and school team lead, they meet and allocate which positions need to be filled first. When those positions are advertised, they are advertised on education.canada.com. And when some classroom teaching positions are vacant, they are filled with a substitute teacher. So the team lead planned for the substitute teacher and the lesson delivery is by a substitute teacher.

Where specialized position like student support is vacant it is not usually covered by a substitute teacher. I'm trying to avoid acronyms. My apologies. (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Hainnu. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Chairman. You asked the question that I was going to ask. It's quite concerning that the Tuugaalik high school was half-day for high school and half-day for junior high school for a long period of time, and from what I have heard from the students that were attending the school, they didn't have teachers in classroom that gave me worrisome. Was the minister aware of that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair and thank you to the member for that, and raising that. As soon as there are issues such as the one that the member just raised, it's important that we know about it. It was the first time when the member raised it last week. So we have asked the team to do a deep dive audit into the Tuugaalik high school, and to specifically look at some of the questions, all of the questions that were raised, but this one in particular as no student should ever go unsupervised. So we are still doing our research to find out more information, but we never want that to happen. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In my general comments I stated that students are frustrated with their subject that they need to do. Like half the time they don't know what they're doing. How is the department trying to resolve these kind of frustration that students are facing in our schools? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for those questions.

The Department of Education is working on a new assessment policy, and we also have the validation statements that are sent out with each report card. We have also standardized the report card.

In terms of supports, not all of our high schools have guidance counsellors. That was an as-needed by discretion of the school and district education authority, if they wanted to use the monies to fill and hire a guidance counsellor.

However, we are looking to see that we can ensure that each school does put out for that position, that they have guidance counsellors in their schools to help with the students and their report cards and their career planning and so forth going forward.

It is still up to their discretion, but we are ensuring that we ask that they do work towards recruiting somebody as a guidance counsellor if they don't have one in their school. Those are some of the ways that we are ensuring that issues such as this are worked on. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the department provide what's the dropout rate in Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The dropout rate, we don't have the figures for that information. And it's hard to determine, as sometimes the students do return back after they might quit. They might return back. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's unbelievable. Like we should know how many students are dropping out in Nunavut to make adequate adjustment to the budget. How can we push the students to stay in school if we don't know the rate of dropouts in Nunavut?

I'm sure every school has dropout rate. I don't know why the department doesn't have it because they have to make adjustment to the business cases. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for that. Within each school the principal should know that information for which students are currently not attending school, and work to recruit them back into school, as it is one of those areas that we really do want to see students in school. We have worked on an attendance toolkit. As well as we've offered the flexibility for district education authorities to hire attendance officers, and within their discretion they can use the funds that they receive for their community to help support attendance and recruitment back into school so students can come back into school if there are any issues, and work with those appropriate channels to ensure that any issues are dealt with, if they do have any, or also just encourage them and support them back into the school environment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I really encourage the department to seek the dropout rate in Nunavut so we'll know what's right and wrong going on in the Nunavut schools. Because majority of them are, dropouts are frustrated with something in the school that is affecting their ability to learn, it can be used as a mechanism to determine what school is doing good and what school is not doing good. So I really encourage the department to get that information and provide it to us. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you again to that question. We can say that we can ask parents if they do have a child or children that aren't in school to speak with the principal of the school to support their child or children to going back into school. And so we can also have the guidance counsellor work directly with the parent and the student to get them back on track and to have that opportunity to get back into school.

But as far as the dropout rate, I know our department is willing to explore opportunities to see if we can gather that information. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for committing that, because we can use that information to provide adequate funding to the department from this committee. I'll move on.

One of the objectives of the department directorate branch is to evaluate teachers credentials and determine certification eligible in accordance with the legislation. What issues has the department faced respecting teachers' credentials? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for that question. None that we know of. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How many teaching positions are currently filled by individuals with letters of authority in Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As of February 6 for the 2024-2025 school year we've had 79 teachers on letters of authority. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the minister elaborate on how many substitutes are currently working in our schools? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair and thank you for that question. In terms of substitute teachers, that information is hard to get as the reason for teachers' absence and may need a substitute teacher could be in relation to being sick or being on medical travel or travelling for other volunteer duties within the school. So we don't have that information. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the minister elaborate on substitutes that are awaiting for new teacher hires. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Sorry, Mr. Chair. Does the member mean to ask about long-term substitute teachers? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes.

Chairman: Thank you for that. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for that clarification. That's information that we don't have currently, but we can look to see if we can obtain that information and get back to the committee through letter. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll expect the letter. (interpretation ends) The government's most recent published public service report indicates that the department employed 1,286 substitute teachers in September 2024. This appeared to be an increase in the use of substitute teachers, compared to prior years. Is the need for substitute teachers increasing? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: We would have to analyze that information, but we have increased our teaching positions as well. So we'll also put that in the notes back to the committee. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I did not clearly understand the minister's response. Can she repeat it, please. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We will work to analyze that information and we'll ensure that we put it in the notes back to the committee. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What is the reason why they are different? Because in Tuugaalik school there's quite a few teachers after they had resigned. Does the minister know the reason why the teachers had resigned? For those teachers that did not return after Christmas season, do you know the reason why they had resigned. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. One teacher resigned. Three of the four have returned back to the school. And in terms of the reason why, we do not share that here. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the minister had elaborated further in her opening comments that they are utilizing the best curriculum in Nunavut schools, when we lost teachers in Nunavut how can we provide the best curriculum in the schools when there's shortage of teachers? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So if there are instances that may happen, and unfortunate circumstances in terms of the member's constituency of Nauyasat, we underwent a short period where we had to adjust the timetable for the students. But we had an acting principal who was created by a schedule for half-day sessions to accommodate all of the students, especially those needing credit courses. So we accommodated the schedule.

We've also returned back into regular school programming within the school, and we are working to review the grade 12 schedules, along with validation statements to ensure that the grade 12 students have access to the courses that they require to graduate so that this conflict does not affect graduation for those students.

We have a superintendent and the executive director of the Kivalliq school operations is there working in the community right now. It is our utmost priority to support students and schools if there are any issues, and we have noticed that this is a community that really does need extra support so we are working to ensure that both the students and the staff are well-supported in a time where things might be uneasy. And we're working to ensure that students are in school and that things in the workplace and in the school environment are as best they can be. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I still don't quite understand, when I was asking questions to the minister and the minister had stated that she was shocked. Now she's saying that the students had to take half-day schools with the higher grades and the lower grades in order not to interfere with the education.

Can the minister clearly tell us exactly if she knows about the situation and the students of the school in our community. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for the question. If he can please repeat the question. I'm just wondering if he's referencing if I knew about an incident, and if the students were not in full-time and are back again. Sorry, if he can please repeat the question around that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I asked the students in the higher grades. They went to school early in the mornings and then from grade 10 to grade 12 they went to school during the day.

During the question period the minister stated that the first time she heard about the students going to half-day schools. So I'm completely confused now.

If the minister can clearly state how much she knows about the status of our community. I just want to make sure that you're being given the proper, full information from them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for the clarification. So when the member initially asked the question last week, it was new information the way that it was posed. I knew that the students had returned back to school full-time, and further information provided to me was that the students were returned back to regular school programming with support of long-term substitute teachers was on February 3. So that was information that came forward after the Member asked the question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I spoke to Naujaat high school students regarding the school programming, and what students told me is that there were no teachers in the classroom from grade 7 to 12, or grade 7 to 9 in some of the classrooms and in the afternoon high schools were in the school and there weren't science teachers and social studies teachers in classrooms and students were alone in the school. That's very concerning to hear from the students.

These students are really frustrated and there's some high-level staff that know exactly how Kivalliq school operation works, and should have the idea of how information should be flowing from teachers to minister. There seems to be so much gap in between them that minister didn't know that there's a school in Nunavut that was in half-time schooling for the students. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for raising what he just said. It is very concerning that there would be no teacher or substitute teacher in a classroom, so we do have the superintendent and the executive director in the community talking to the students, to the teachers and to the district education authority this week to look into the issue and if there are issues, we encourage those in the community to talk to our staff as we do have an ongoing investigation to the school and the issues there.

When the member did ask about that question, we had information that they were supposed to return back a week later into full-time programming. However, that information was not relayed to the Department of Education, so it was the first time that we found out that the school went back to full-time on February 3. I will say that there was a professional development week across the territory in February as well.

We do not want to see any issues in our schools and if there are ever any issues, it is really important that we know about them so that we can ensure that the issues are dealt with right away, especially concerning issues that are as big as this. Just I know sometimes issues are hard to talk about or might be hard to talk about, but there are people out there who want to work and directly solve the issues. And there's a lot of people out there within the department and other resources that can be utilized to support students, and if there are any conflicts, we wish to support everybody. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's very concerning that these schools in Nunavut are not getting into Minister's reports. Is the minister aware if there are other communities that have half-day classes? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There none that we know of. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki. We'll go to Mr. Quqqiaq who's it's next name on the list. I want to follow up on one of the questions that Mr. Malliki asked and the minister responded on guidance counsellors in the schools. I too share Mr. Malliki's concern that students aren't being guided into the appropriate courses to be able to accommodate their own education goals, whether that be trades or post-secondary. Probably a number of us have heard stories of youth that graduate and then they find out then that they don't qualify for the program that they wanted to get into.

What type of work do the regional school ops do with schools within their regions on not just so much making sure that guidance counsellors are available, but that parents and students are provided with guidance on the course selection? I've often been quoted as saying a lot of times if the students aren't given direction by the parents or by the schools themselves, they're going to take the easier route. It's kind of human nature for the most part. If you want to take the hard math or the easy math, and if you don't have a goal at the end of that tunnel, you may tend to pick the easier path, and then find out a year or two later that you have to go back and take upgrading or that you're just flat out not eligible to get into the programming.

What type of work at the regional level is done to make sure that these students, even if there's no guidance counsellor chosen to be hired by the district education authority that these students aren't left behind. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair and thank you for that question on guidance counsellors and the work with our regional school operations. I would like to ask our deputy minister to elaborate on the technicalities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Hainnu.

Ms. Hainnu: Thank you, Chair, and thank you for the clarification or expansion of the question provided by the member. As it pertains to the work of the regional school operations, it has been very clear since my arrival at the department that the school operations are inundated with human resource and employer relations that typically in another department would be handled by an HR division, a human resource division.

This year with the funds that we are asking for approval here in the House, it includes the human resource department division be created at the Department of Education so that it would free up the executive director and superintendents' time from the human resource and employee relations leave and attendance and such, and leave it to the human resource division, and freeing up superintendent and executive director's time so that they could have the strategic thinking and be the strategic voice as it pertains to guidance goals.

We have recently in the last year, two years in fact, made mandatory guidance counsellors for every high school. Where they haven't hired one we hope that with our assessment policy that has been renewed, where the requirement to give out validation statements of credits earning high school students be given during every handout of the report card will improve that conversation about the graduation requirement of every student.

I think strategically we're taking a pivoting so that we are tailoring our services to our students. Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: Thank you for that. Go ahead, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This month being March, it's the last month for the Jordan's Principle. I'll be talking about the school meal programs.

Mr. Chairman, the department has been working on improving school food programs across the territory. The draft business plan, pages 78 and 80, notes that the department leads an interagency group working on this issue and will be developing a proposal to submit to the federal government. And the question is, Mr. Chairman, what options are being considered to deliver, enhance, and standardize school meal programs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for that question. So on this past Friday, we had a wonderful announcement with our federal colleague, Minister Suks, as well as our colleague here, the Minister of Health, Minister Main. And we gathered at Nanuk School on Friday afternoon after session, and announced that Nunavut just signed on to the school food program, National School Food Program and we signed \$7.8 million over the next three years to enhance school food programs.

And with the funds that we have this year, we are hiring a nutritionist to help support some of the areas that we have gaps, as we don't have a National School Food Guide, and to help develop school food meal plans and to support the schools by buying certain ingredients and so forth.

So a job advertisement will be coming forward for this next fiscal year for this school nutritionist.

We also are working to support the schools through this funds to purchase country food to enhance the funds that are already available to the schools. And those are some of the areas where we're looking to invest the money that we are receiving from the federal government. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Minister, for your response. With this new signing agreement, and my hope is that for all Nunavut schools it would be breakfast program and lunch programs. That's my question to the minister. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And my hope is lunch program for all schools are included. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you for the question. It is our hope that it is a meal program. We do have limited resources on which we are able to run school food program. But we are going to see what we can do with the funds that are already available and the new funds that became available and see what kind of breakfast and/or lunch programs we can provide. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Minister, for your response. If there is no lunch programs in the communities, I'll be asking with the fund that they are asking for the year, would the department agree with me if the government can provide more monies so that every school has breakfast and lunch programs. And I'm looking at couple years ahead of me.

That would be really great for every student in Nunavut to assure that there is breakfast and lunch programs available in all Nunavut schools for many great reasons, so we can have students that will achieve their goals in learning and gain the knowledge they need to succeed in life. That's my question, Mr. Chairman. And I'll move on from there.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for that question. So our schools currently receive funds from the Department of Health that access a federal Wellness Agreement Funding as well as 20 of hour communities receive additional funding from Inuit Child First Initiative to enhance their school food programs.

We do know that this funding goes until June for the School Food Programs, and it is our hope that we can establish a longer agreement, that the schools will be able to still provide food for their students past June. However, that comes with uncertainty.

But we will make sure that we are still advocating for the schools and for our communities and students. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This will just be a statement. I really recommend that the Government of Nunavut has the meal programs in place for breakfast and lunch programs, and that would allow maybe perhaps the attendance to go up in every school in every Nunavut community. And that will just be a statement, Mr. Chairman, and I'll move on to my next line of questioning.

Bullying and violence have been raised as serious health and safety issues in Nunavut schools. A school violence reporting system was introduced in 2022. The question is, Mr. Chairman, has the reporting system been implemented to all Nunavut to date, and if so what trends have been identified and what steps have been taken to address the specific issues identified. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, the reporting system has been used in all of the schools and, as far as the trends, I don't know the trends at the moment, as we have some regions reporting and using the system very frequently and doing a great job report the incidents, while other regions don't report all issues.

So we are ensuring that with the principle's monthly report that they are also reporting violent incidents. But we hope that we can have more accurate information come forward as we continue to work on ensuring that incidents are reported across all of our schools. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, minister, for your response. With the reporting system, and it's the trends according to the minister, they know what is going on. Has there been any action plan to tackle the bullying in all schools to make sure that it comes to an end. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for that question. We have a wonderful department. Our student achievement division that works to address and provide resources for issues such as bullying prevention, and they have come out with a number of things this past year, and in the past several years as the department has grown.

Some of the things that they have created are that teaching for positive classroom behaviour, which is supporting engagement, participation and learning. And this is a handbook for teachers that just came out this year. We also have bullying prevention pocketbook guide. We have the Ajunngitugut! Pink Shirt School Resource Guide and we have a bullying prevention tool kit for kindergarten to grade 12, as well as the crisis response guidelines for Nunavut's schools.

And we also have more staff resources in development, so they will be coming soon, which is bullying prevention and intervention resource, as well as sexual orientation in gender identity and expression resource.

And lastly, Mr. Chair, we have training for all school staff that supports bullying preventions. And we want to ensure that all of our staff receive verbal intervention training, to help them better equip and to deal with any violent or bullying incidents. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Minister, for your response. I'll move on, Mr. Mr. Chairman. The business plan states that the department is looking to identify opportunities to accelerate its language of instruction implementation plan. And the question is, Mr. Chairman, what opportunities have been identified to date. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So those consultations for the language of instruction are happening as we speak, and almost done the second round of consultations with coalition of Nunavut district education authorities.

And I think one positive thing that I can say that's come out of that is that we are ahead of schedule on our curriculum development by three years. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank the minister for her response. That's great news, because I've been pushing for this curriculum development prior to being entered into the Sixth Legislative Assembly and that is really great news. I hope to see it being implemented as soon as possible, for a lot of great reasons, Mr. Chairman.

I'll move on, Mr. Chairman. The department's 2022 school planning and design guidelines were tabled on November 6, 2024 and the question is, Mr. Chairman, to what extent does the department face challenges in meeting the specified guidelines in renovation and new school buildings. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for that. It is great that we have those design guidelines. And all of our new schools that are being built are using those guidelines. I think one of the biggest challenges would be related to capital dollars. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the new school that is being built in Taloyoak, the high school, when will the construction begin again. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for the question. In terms of the new school in Taloyoak, the construction is happening and the anticipated completion date is August 31, 2026. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (Mr. Solomon Malliki): Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do know the target date for this new school to be completed. My question was, Mr. Chairman, when will they start construction again. Because of the winter season I noticed that they have stopped for a while. When will the construction begin again. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for the misunderstanding in the question. So the construction will restart in April. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Qujannamiik. Thank you, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Minister, for your response. Mr. Chairman, the idea during the new school build was also to renovate the Netsilik School.

And now my question is, Mr. Chairman, when will they start the renovation of Netsilik School. Because the idea was to build the new school and renovate the Netsilik School at the same time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Qujannamiik. That's a capital question. Do you want to respond to that, Minister.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe there's some confusion, as Netsilik School is not undergoing any renovation with this project of a new school. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Qujannamiik. Mr. Quqqiaq, Maintenance and Operations questions. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was referring to following the lines of questioning the department's 2022 School and Planning Designing. That's the reason

why I asked the question. I'll leave the follow-up questions to my colleague. I'm done for now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Qujannamiik. Are there any more questions. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a couple of follow-up questions. Minister, in response to an earlier question, you mentioned attendance tool kits. I wonder if you could tell us a little bit more about what those attendance tool kits are. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Qujannamiik. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for that question. So the attendance tool kit is to improve attendance and registration of students in Nunavut as a joint effort between the department and the community.

So our department created a registration and attendance tool kit for district education authorities, as well as the French school board to address student attendance and registration.

This tool kit outlines strategies that both the district education authorities and the French school board could use to encourage increased attendance, such as rewards and incentives, school events for families, and increase land based activities and programs.

As well, the tool kit includes a section that discusses attendance strategies related to remote learning caused by school closures.

As well, the tool kit has been completed and shared with all of our parties, the District Education Authorities, the French School Board and coalition of Nunavut District Education Authorities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman (Mr. George Hickes): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Minister. You mentioned a number of stakeholders. I wonder if student councils are engaged in that. I guess a first question to that would be how many schools actually have student councils. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We can get back to the committee on that as it's a district function and we don't have that information on hand. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you. Just to be clear, I wonder if the minister is getting back to me on how many student councils are. There was a second part to that question, and I suppose a better way to pose it is how are students engaged if they are using the attendance tool kits. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for that clarification. So, yes, we will see how many student councils there are, and also ask the schools what positive feedback they have been getting for the use of their tool kits. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Students engagement and peer to peer support is one of the most valuable assets that any school has in encouraging students to stay in school.

And so I just ask the minister to tell us a little bit about how peer to peer student engagement works, whether or not there's a specific program or whether or not it sort of is dependent on who's employed at any given school that is good at bringing students together and engaging them. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you to the member for that question. So that is on the District Education Authority and the French School Board level to involve the peer-to-peer. That information we don't have on hand, but we can look to see if they have any information regarding that, as they do work with parents, community members, elders and all aspects of our schooling. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm curious about how students are engaged by the schools to make going to school enjoyable and something that they can look forward to.

Minister, you did mention on the land programs and things like that. And of course food programs, we know that often students will go to school, and sometimes that's the only meal that they have all day.

I wonder if it's up to each individual school to develop their intermural sports activities or other cultural activities. If I can hear a little bit about that, I would appreciate it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for that question. So there are a number of ways where students can be engaged in different types of activities within the school with their educators and parents, as well as the school community.

And some of the ideas that are out there to promote attendance would be to have breakfast and/or lunch or snacks through a food school program creating a welcoming environment for addressing safe and caring schools, as well as bilingual Inuit teachers in the school who are from the community. Holding school events for families in the community. As well as the school student support for finding childcare through the young parents Stay Learning Program for our students to continue their education if they're parents themselves, as well as work with the District Education Authority and the French School Board who does encourage attendance through, as I mentioned before, an attendance worker which is hired through the District Education Authority or the French School Board.

Also, providing rewards incentives. For example, competitions between classes for attendance awards and certificates at student assembly for attendance, which I know is popular and it's really nice to see students be recognized in that way.

As well as approved after school programs for students. We also know that when we have – our Department of Education is reflected in the students through our language and culture and the curriculum that does support the students and we are working to have that curriculum be implemented this coming new school year for kindergarten and grade 1, which is very exciting.

Our Made in Nunavut curriculum be already coming into our schools. Also, our school calendars are designed in a way that supports traditional activities, as well as holidays, sports, departmental exams and activities that may impact student attendance.

Also, the last thing is that the district education authority and the French school board, as I said before, involve the parents and the community members and elders in the school community in all aspects of our schooling. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Is there a specific --the Minister can remind me, because I know I've asked about early-leavers in the past, and I'm just wondering if there's a specific tool kit, and who it's districted, sort of made for in helping, you know, a school community to entice early-leavers back to school, with the understanding that early-leavers are currently not being tracked. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So there's no specific program for early-leavers. Our attendance tracking and the attendance tool kit is a way to strengthen and support students that may be early-leavers. And we do hope that schools do utilize funds.

And we have had conversations with specific communities who do hire attendance officers to help support students come back into the school environment and into school. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Are there any reports on the number of students that are enticed to come back to school. Are those included in the principle's reports. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to that. No, there are not, but we committed to looking into seeing about the number of dropout students. So through letter back, we'll see what information we can find. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think it's really important to track that kind of information, especially because when you start tracking those students, you can track best practices and what's working to bring students back. And on the other end, you can track what's causing students to leave.

Another follow-up question I have is in regards to the question or the response to the school violence reporting system. Minister, you mentioned that the reporting system is in use in all schools and you're not sure of trends yet, and not all regions are participating at the same ... I'm assuming in the same way and providing the same information, and I wonder what work is being done to standardize that reporting. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for that question. So our violent incident reporting is an area where we have a tool kit or a database that can be used to collect information of incidents and have that information be available to the Department of Education and work on any issues that are raised through that channel.

The average number of reports does vary throughout our regions. And as I mentioned, we had one region which I'll say was the Kitikmeot that was utilizing the violent incident reporting database well, and we are looking to see it how we can further support our schools to use the database more.

As I mentioned, we have the principle monthly reports, and we can also use any more information that is provided.

I'll ask our deputy minister to further elaborate on ways where we can use that database to support. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Hainnu.

Ms. Hainnu: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you for your question. (interpretation ends) Reporting is standard, it's standardized. And with any new mechanism to collect data, there is going to be an uptake that will be different based on how willing a community is.

And so I believe it's going to take maybe a year before it's occurring regularly. So this is a dual way of reporting violence in schools. Each individual incident in a school is recorded in an incident report base, where it goes into the child's report, so that if there were trends, there was an individualized response.

But the violence in school reporting, which is standard, is not yet mandated. And if the uptake doesn't improve in the other two regions, it would be mandated, and that's what we are currently looking at right now. Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Is there anybody collating this data that is being collected in the two separate reporting mechanisms. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So is it safe to assume that since somebody is collating the data that they are actually analyzing the data and reporting on it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We are collating it. However, we have a report for the first nine months, from October 2022 to June 2023, and then we have another reporting period July 2023 to June 2024.

And the most frequent time of violent behaviour is the category of abuse, assault, followed by threats. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Are these reports publicly or otherwise available? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair so the reports will be available with RYCO annually. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Sorry, just to clarify, through the Representative of Children and Youth, Minister? Can you confirm that, Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Staying on the same subject of bullying and violence, Minister, in response to an earlier question listed a number of different plans and ways that they're addressing through the student achievement division. Some examples were teaching for positive classroom behaviour, various pocket guides and things like that.

I wonder if the minister can tell us what's being done to, or how these various plans address the root issues that lead to violence and bullying.

I mean, we could probably spend a long time naming what those root issues are, but I suppose one of the biggest underlying issues is trauma and ongoing trauma. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for the question. So we have really worked to support mental health in our schools, and we have the Ilinniarvimmi Inuusilirijiit positions which support our students social and emotional, as well as behavioural issues to help them cope with difficulties in their lives.

We had, in early February, a five day virtual symposium to help the Ilinniarvimmi Inuusilirijiit familiarize themselves with the new resources that are available to work with students.

And, sorry, if the Member could please repeat the other aspect of the question. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I was just I'm looking at trying to get a really good understanding of how all of these various programs get to the root issues that lead to the violence and bullying.

I suppose one of my concerns is obviously that children who are acting out through violence or bullying are often reacting to factors in their own life where they feel unsafe. So I'm just trying to get a better understanding of how we are supporting these students to move through that, and how we're making not just educators, but other care providers aware of a child's needs when they may be facing some issues of concern. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for that. It's hard to give a pinpoint on the specific answer as each circumstance can vary and be different, depending on the student's needs or what might be the root cause of why a student is acting the way that they are.

However, I would like to ask our Deputy Minister to elaborate on some examples or ways in which the student are supported in the various channels that we do have. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Ms. Hainnu.

Ms. Hainnu: Thank you, Chair. I thank the member for the question. It's an important question. Getting to the root cause of any issue allows an individual to find solutions.

And you can empower a child by acknowledging when they are hungry, when they are angry, when major changes have occurred.

So aside from the violence reporting that we do, I believe the most individualized care that a child she was through the school team is the most appropriate. And sometimes it's through that team and incident reporting and through their file that the school team can identify with the parent a possible solution to assisting the student to face issues or identify learning deficiencies that would require accommodation to the environment. Or it maybe at that they just need to sleep and they have a newborn sibling, whatever it might be. An individualized approach response is always the most appropriate. Thank you, Chair.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I think that as we begin to get better at filling out all of these reports and providing data, we'll get better at that.

I can't remember if I asked whether or not Edsby is being used in any way this year. Because I know I brought up Edsby last year, as I'm formerly a user of Edsby as a parent, and I know that that's a really excellent program for engaging not just parents, but students as well and educators, and I wonder if there's any change to how our educators are using Edsby. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair and thank you to the member for that question. Yes, the Inukshuk High School, here in Iqaluit, is currently using Edsby, and it is a great tool to support remote learning and supplement learning with online tools, as well as to communicate with our students and parents and teachers, as well as give them the opportunity to complete electronic assignments and submit assignments online. And some schools are more effective in using Edsby than others. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you for that. Just on another follow-up, we heard earlier about letters of authority. There were 79 teachers currently on letters of authority, and I can't remember if that was just for a specific community. My data collection is found wanting today.

So I'm wondering how the department tracks letters of authority. Because it's clear that there are some people who are on short term letters of authority related to being a substitute teacher for a day, due to an illness or absence of a teacher.

But what we know as well is that there are individuals who are on long term letters of authority and I just want to know whether or not there's any distinction between long and

short-term letters of authority, and how often they're reviewed and by whom. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member. So those 79 letters of authority are for the whole territory, and they're for one year teaching positions.

So those approval for the letters of authority used to go to the executive director. However, we've recently changed that so that all of the information and the requests for letters of authority go to our deputy minister. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you. And I know you have a number of follow-up questions, Ms. Brewster, but I'm going to have to recognize the clock now, and you can pick it up again tomorrow. So I will recognize the clock and rise and report progress to the Speaker. Witnesses, you can be excused.

>>*Committee adjourned and House resumed at 17:55*

Speaker: Report of item 21, Report of the Committee of the Whole. Mr. Hickes.

Item 21: Report of the Committee of the Whole

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 70. I would like to report progress.

Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the committee be agreed to. Thank you.

Speaker: The motion is in order. Is there a seconder? Mr. Joanasie. The motion is carried.

Item 22, Third Reading of Bills. Item 23, *Orders of the Day*. Mr. Clerk.

Item 22: Orders of the Day

Mr. Clerk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock we will have the Standing Committee on Legislation. *Orders of the Day:*

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. Replies to Budget Address
11. Petitions
12. Responses to Petitions
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 64
 - Bill 70
 - Bill 71
 - Bill 72
21. Report of the Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>*Applause*

Speaker: This House stands adjourned until Tuesday, March 4, at 1:30 p.m. Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 17:58*

Appendix – March 3, 2025



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Nunavut Maligaliurvia
Legislative Assembly of Nunavut
Assemblée législative du Nunavut

Return to Oral Question

Asked by: MLA for Iqaluit-Tasiluk– George Hickes

Asked of: Hon. Pamela Hakongak Gross

Number: 1096 – 6(2)

Date: Feb 26, 2025

Subject: Workplace Injuries

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to clarify a response I provided to the Member for Iqaluit-Tasiluk during our February 25, 2025, question period regarding recent media coverage of workplace injury rates in Nunavut.

The Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission has confirmed that Nunavut and the Northwest Territories do not have the highest rates of workplace injuries in Canada. Nunavut and the NWT are in the middle of the pack and improving. In 2022, Nunavut and NWT ranked 6th for time loss injury frequency with 1.89 per 100 workers.

In 2023, time loss injury frequency was 1.59 per 100 workers and last year, we had an even lower value of 1.54 per 100 workers. This is primarily because the number of claims with time lost from work due to injury is decreasing.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to outline some of the work the commission is doing to help employers prevent workplace injuries. WSCC Safety Officers conduct over 1,000 worksite inspections yearly to ensure employers follow the health and safety standards set by the Safety Act and the *Mine Health & Safety Act*. Inspections can result in directions or orders that list corrective actions an employer needs to complete by an agreed-upon date to protect the health and safety of workers. Inspections can also provide positive observations and feedback to employers.

In addition to inspections, the commission has also introduced a Safety Outreach team to work directly with employers to help them build or improve their safety programs and identify ways to reduce risks for workplace injuries. I am pleased to share the upcoming release of a new Safety Planning Guide for employers, set to launch during Safety & Health Week this May. While each workplace has unique needs and challenges when it comes to safety planning, there are key elements that every workplace safety program must include by law. This guide will provide clear, practical tools and resources to assist employers.

Mr. Speaker, the WSCC is working directly with several departments of the Government of Nunavut to ensure compliance with safety legislation and improve the implementation of safety programs to reduce incidents.

Quana, Mr. Speaker.

