Standing Committee on Oversight of
Government Operations and Public
Accounts Hearing on the 2016-17 and
2017-18 Annual Reports of the
Representative for Children and Youth to
the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut
Iqaluit, Nunavut
April 10, 2019

Members Present:

Tony Akoak
Pat Angnakak
Joelie Kaernerk
Mila Kamingoak
Pauloosie Keyootak
Adam Lightstone
John Main, Chair
Simeon Mikkungwak
Margaret Nakashuk
Emiliano Qirngnuq
Paul Quassa
Allan Rumbolt
Cathy Towtongie, Co-Chair

Staff Members:

Stephen Innuksuk Siobhan Moss

Interpreters:

Andrew Dialla Philip Paneak Abraham Tagalik Blandina Tulugarjuk

Witnesses:

Charleen Austin, Assistant Deputy Minsiter of Health
Ruby Brown, Deputy Minister of Health
Louise Flaherty, Deputy Minister of
Education
Joanne Henderson-White, Director of Child and Family Services
Glen House, Manager,
Isumaqsunngittukkuvik Youth Facility
David Korgak, Child and Youth Advocacy

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Specialist

Tracey MacMillan, Assistant Deputy Minister of Education

Kim Masson, Associate Deputy Minister of Health

Lynn Matte, Director of Childen and Youth Advocacy Services

Sherry McNeil-Mulak, Representative for Children and Youth

Yvonne Niego, Deputy Minister of Family Services

Riita Strickland, Assistant Deputy Minister of Justice

>>Committee commenced at 8:58

Chairman (Mr. Main): I'll now call the meeting to order. (interpretation) Good morning. Mr. Quassa, can you say the opening prayer, please.

>>Prayer

Chairman (interpretation): Mr. Quassa, thank you. Good morning, my colleagues and guests. Welcome to the Chamber.

(interpretation ends) Before we begin, on behalf of the Members of the Legislative Assembly, I would like to extend our deepest condolences to the family, friends, and constituents of our late Speaker, the Hon. Joe Enook, who represented the constituency of Tununiq which included the community of Pond Inlet. (interpretation) We have you in our thoughts.

(interpretation ends) I would like to welcome everyone present to this meeting of the Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Government Operations and Public Accounts.

I would first like to introduce my standing committee colleagues:

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- Simeon Mikkungwak, Member for Baker Lake:
- Allan Rumbolt, Member for Hudson Bay;
- Tony Akoak, (interpretation) Member for Gjoa Haven;
- Pat Angnakak, Member for Iqaluit-Niaqunnguu;
- Joelie Kaernerk, Member for Amittuq;
- Pauloosie Keyootak, Member for Uqqummiut;
- Adam Arreak Lightstone, Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak;
- Paul Quassa, Member for Aggu;
- Cathy Towtongie, (interpretation ends)
 Member for Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet;
- Emiliano Qirngnuq, Member for Netsilik; and
- Margaret Nakashuk, Member for Pangnirtung.

The terms of reference for this Standing Committee include the mandate to review the reports of the independent officers of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, including those of the Representative for Children and Youth.

The responsibilities of the Representative for Children and Youth are prescribed by territorial legislation, the *Representative for Children and Youth Act*, which was passed on September 17, 2013 by the Third Legislative Assembly of Nunavut.

Ms. Sherry McNeil-Mulak was appointed as Nunavut's Representative for Children and Youth on June 2, 2014 and she assumed her duties on June 16, 2014. Her office officially opened on September 30, 2015. Ms. McNeil-Mulak's term expires in June of this year.

Today we are meeting on the occasion of our Standing Committee's televised hearing on the annual reports of Nunavut's Representative for Children and Youth for

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the fiscal years 2015-16, 2016-17, and 2017-18.

The Office of the Representative for Children and Youth has a number of statutorily prescribed areas of responsibility relating to the rights and interests of children and youth, including advocacy, advice, and assistance regarding government services for children and youth, providing advice and recommendations to government departments and designated authorities, as well as the administration of the office.

The representative's annual reports have identified a number of key government departments with which her office works on a regular basis. We are therefore very pleased to also welcome witnesses from the Government of Nunavut departments of Family Services, Health, Education, and Justice.

Following these hearings and in keeping with parliamentary practice, the Standing Committee anticipates reporting its findings and recommendations to the Legislative Assembly during the upcoming spring sitting.

I would also like to take this opportunity to note that while subsection 40(1) of the *Representative for Children and Youth Act* does provide that the Legislative Assembly or one of its committees shall review the provisions of the Act and its operations, that is not our objective today. That review will be conducted in the future as determined by the Legislative Assembly as a whole. The Office of the Representative for Children and Youth will be involved in that process at the appropriate time.

I would like to conclude by addressing some housekeeping matters.

סיְלֹטְר 2015-16, 2016-17, סִיּבׁב 2017-18.

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This hearing is being televised live across Nunavut on local community cable stations and direct-to-home satellite service. Transcripts of the hearing will be posted on the Legislative Assembly's website.

For the benefit of our recording system, I ask witnesses to always go through the Chair when responding to Members' questions and interventions and to wait until I invite you to speak before activating your microphone. You will want to watch for the little red light before you begin speaking. I like to remind myself of that.

Members of the Standing Committee have been provided with a number of documents for their ease of reference during this hearing. For the benefit of our witnesses and interpreters, I ask Members to be precise when quoting from or making reference to these documents.

As a reminder, I ask that all Members, witnesses, and visitors place their cellphones and other electronic devices on silent mode.

With that, I will again welcome today's witnesses to this hearing and would ask the Representative for Children and Youth to introduce her staff and then proceed with her opening comments to be followed by the opening comments from departmental witnesses. (interpretation) Thank you. (interpretation ends) Please proceed.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good morning. Joining me today are Lynn Matte, Director of Child and Youth Advocacy Services, and David Korgak, one of our office's child and youth advocacy specialists and a recent graduate of the Government of Nunavut's Sivuliqtiksat Internship Program.

I would also like to acknowledge the officials

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from the four main child and youth serving departments that our office works with on a regular basis: the Department of Family Services, the Department of Health, the Department of Education, and the Department of Justice. I was pleased to recently learn that the Standing Committee requested your presence and participation in today's proceedings. Welcome.

As you are aware, I was last called to appear before Standing Committee in September 2016. Since then our office has continued to expand the supports that we provide to young Nunavummiut and their families. I am pleased to be here today to discuss our office's 2015-16, 2016-17, and 2017-18 annual reports.

As my term draws to an end in June 2019, preparing for today's appearance has afforded me an opportunity to pause and reflect on the last five years. During that time I have had the privilege of being part of the office's creation and evolution; leading the transformation of an empty office space into a welcoming and inclusive space where a fully staffed and highly trained team of advocacy professionals provide young Nunavummiut and their families with rightsbased advocacy support when government systems fail to meet their needs. Our work is never to replace that of the Government of Nunavut but rather to ensure that GN's services, programs, policies and legislation affecting children and youth are working to support the rights and best interests of young Nunavummiut.

Over these years we have seen the percentage of Inuit working in our organization gradually increase from 38 percent to 50 percent. Our organization's goal is to reach 63 percent Inuit employment in the upcoming years and to ultimately create a workforce that is representative of the

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population we serve. As an organization, we have also made a significant investment in building the language capacity of our staff by encouraging and supporting nine Inuktut language training requests for both Inuit and non-Inuit staff. We look forward to continuing to support our staff as they advance their language skills over the upcoming years.

From the beginning, our office has been guided in its work by the Representative for Children and Youth Act, an Act that has been praised by UNICEF Canada as a model piece of legislation for jurisdictions in Canada and worldwide, namely, for its incorporation of Inuit societal values and because of the breadth of its scope and mandate. We have also been guided daily in our work by the voice of young people, Inuit societal values, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, national advocacy standards, and our office's elder advisors: Meeka Arnakaq from Pangnirtung, Lucy Makkigak from Rankin Inlet, Regilee Ootook from Pond Inlet, Helen Iguptak from Rankin Inlet, and the late Bessie Sitatak from Kugluktuk.

From the onset, our office adopted a very deliberate phased-in approach to realizing our full mandate. In keeping with that approach, to date we have launched the individual advocacy program, the systemic advocacy program, and the communications and public awareness component of our office. The final piece for the office to bring into force is reviews of critical injuries and deaths.

Individual advocacy is when our office works one on one or on behalf of a child or youth when they encounter difficulties with Government of Nunavut programs and services.

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Our individual advocacy work is led by an all-Inuit team of advocacy professionals: three child and youth advocacy specialists and an intake specialist. Over the course of the past several years we have seen this team of advocacy professionals make a significant investment in this program area and as a result, many young Nunavummiut have received the supports they need and have a right to. Today I would like to share some examples of our team's work with you:

- Ensuring a child received the behavioural supports they needed so that they could succeed at home, at school, and in their community;
- Connecting a young parent to legal aid services and accompanying them to meetings to ensure they understood options available to them when seeking child support payments for their own child;
- Ensuring a child received an appropriate foster care placement, one that was not only safe but would allow them to thrive;
- Coaching a young person to selfadvocate and assisting the young person to speak up about an issue of importance in their own community;
- Ensuring that a young person, who was experiencing suicidal ideation, was connected to appropriate mental health supports and that the family had relevant information and supports as well;
- Identifying a lost dental referral and ensuring the referral was reactivated and the young person received the dental care they required;
- Ensuring proper interpretation of a probation order, which resulted in a

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youth being able to regain meaningful employment in their community.

Mr. Chairman, by the end of the 2017-18 fiscal year our team had opened a total of 200 individual advocacy cases, 50 information files, and determined that an additional 10 issues brought to the attention of our office were out of scope. Of the 200 individual advocacy cases opened, 151 were closed by the end of 2017-18. From these cases, several themes have emerged. First, as noted in our last three annual reports, year after year the largest number of issues brought to our attention pertains to the Department of Family Services, specifically child protection. A significant number of issues raised in this area are connected to recommendations that were provided to this government by the Auditor General of Canada in his office's 2011 and 2014 reports on child and family services.

Through our work on these cases, we have grown extremely concerned about the weakness of the current system to support vulnerable children and families in need of protection and care. There is a notable lack of investment in the area of family supports and prevention-based initiatives. From where we sit, the resources allocated to this division of this department only allow for fires to be managed rather than prevented. Operating in this manner significantly diminishes a family's chance for healthy and safe family reunification. In a territory that places such high value on family and relationships, this is a very sad reality.

The second theme I would like to highlight is the significant lack of coordination among GN service providers that exists. This often translates into a sense of professional isolation and frustration for government employees, and a lack of high-quality holistic care for young people. Our office has raised L^6d^5 $\Delta^6ba\Delta^{\frac{1}{2}}$ $C^6b^6\sigma^2$ Δ^6d^6

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this concern to the attention of the GN since opening, yet we have seen little to no progress made in this area despite repeatedly walking GN departments through disturbing, real case examples where a lack of service coordination has led to very negative outcomes for the young person involved.

Third, through our individual advocacy work, it has been hard not to take notice of the impact that high staff turnover and an overreliance on a transient workforce is having on young Nunavummiut and their families. It is negatively impacting trust, hope, and the consistency and quality of care they receive.

Lastly, throughout the course of our work, all too often we witness the views of young people not being sought or considered. I want to use this opportunity today to once again remind government that as per Article 12 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights* of the Child, young people have the right to have their views not only heard but also considered in all matters that affect their lives. I also want to clearly state that there is no magic age when this must occur, which is also a misconception we often hear. When delivering services and conducting business that will impact young people, government must seek out their views, regardless of their age, and grant due consideration to those views based on the evolving capacity of the child.

Another area of our work that I would like to highlight is systemic advocacy. Systemic issues are issues that affect many children or youth and often happen when government policies or services aren't working as intended, have a good chance of reoccurring if not addressed, and may require government to change its policies, practices, or laws.

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Based on our phased-in approach, in the fall of 2017 we successfully launched our systemic advocacy program and announced our first formal systemic investigation into mental health services for children and youth in Nunavut. We are pleased to inform the Committee that the report will be tabled and publicly released in the spring of 2019.

The third area of our work pertains to raising Nunavummiut's awareness of child rights and our office's mandate. Over the last several years our office has been a leader in starting conversations with Nunavummiut about child rights and working with young people to increase their confidence in exercising their own advocacy skills. Child rights education is perhaps one of the most important aspects of our work because an educated youth who understands their rights and feels confident to advocate for themselves and others has the potential to be a very powerful change agent both for themselves and their community.

Our public awareness work takes many forms. It includes presentations and outreach activities with children, youth, youth-serving organizations, and government service providers in communities across Nunavut. Ċ⁶d<b Δ⁶⁶baΔ5⁶⁶0 ΠΠς
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By May 2017 our office had visited all 25 communities in the territory, visited every school in these communities, and immediately started our second round of community visits. This area of our work also includes the development of resources, such as our youth self-advocacy workshop, which had been delivered to 503 youth in seven communities across the territory by the end of 2017-18, as well as the development of a child rights book, Mosesie Speaks Up, and educator extension activities, which are now in every school across the territory. Our public awareness works also includes our annual "Your Story, Your Voice" contest which aims to promote child rights and the role of our office.

Lastly, our office also has the ability to investigate when a child or youth receiving government services experiences a serious injury or dies through our reviews of critical injuries and deaths program. Such reviews will provide opportunities to understand what went wrong and to initiate changes to prevent similar events in the future.

Over the last two years significant development work has occurred in this program area. However, much work still remains. Our ability to meet our goal to start this important work in 2020-21 is contingent upon additional resources being dedicated to our office. To date our office has put forward two requests for additional resources to support this and other areas of our work, and we still await the decision on these requests.

Mr. Chairman, our work and accomplishments over the past several years have been built on a foundation which has allowed us to evolve as planned and to focus our time and energy on the needs of young Nunavummiut in this territory. Over the past several years we have had the honour of working with hundreds of young people and

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their families from across the territory. It is important for us today to acknowledge them and recognize the courage they have demonstrated to us by reaching out to us, seeking support, and trusting us with their intimate life stories. We look forward to continuing to empower young people and their families and providing them with the best advocacy supports possible in the years to come.

Mr. Chairman and Committee Members, although we are a relatively new, small team, we arrive here today with much to discuss and report. We welcome the Committee's questions and we also look forward to the Committee's feedback following today's appearance. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. As she has made her opening comments, we will proceed to the departments. (interpretation ends) For each of the departments, if you can just please introduce yourself and then proceed to your opening comments. We will begin with the Department of Family Services.

Ms. Niego: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm Yvonne Niego, Deputy Minister for Family Services, and with me here today is Joanne Henderson.

(interpretation) I would like to begin by thanking the Members of the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts for inviting the Department of Family Services to appear before you today. I am pleased to provide information on the department's involvement with the Representative for Children and Youth's Office and our ongoing activities related to supporting children and families.

(interpretation ends) Appearing with me today is Joanne Henderson-White, Director

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of Children and Family Services.
Since its opening in September 2015, the
Department of Family Services and the
Representative of Children and Youth's
Office have worked closely together on many
individual cases involving children and
youth. As noted in the annual reports of the
representative's office, Family Services is
one of the departments that have the highest
involvement in the representative's office's
individual advocacy cases and systemic
cases. This involvement is not surprising
given the mandate of Family Services, which
is to support children, youth, and families.

Given the department's significant interaction with the representative's office, the department and the representative have worked diligently to streamline communications between frontline workers to facilitate effective advocacy on behalf of children and youth in Nunavut.

Indeed at times the department has faced challenges interacting with the representative's office in terms of information sharing, misunderstanding respective role and mandates, and interaction between frontline departmental and representative staff. However, the department has made concerted efforts to address these challenges.

In June 2017 the department finalized guidelines intended to streamline processes around information requests from the representative's office and to outline the steps departmental staff must take when they receive a request from the representative's office. The department saw an improvement in its ability to respond more expediently to the representative's office requests as a result.

Part of these guidelines includes a courtesy notification system; a simple but effective

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way to facilitate information sharing between departmental and representative's staff. This system also allows for a central monitoring function, allowing the department to have a better understanding of what types of files the representative is involved in, the advocacy challenges, and the systemic issues that children, youth, and families face in the territory.

Additionally, in March 2018 the Department of Family Services and the representative's office signed a protocol to promote and support meaningful and effective advocacy on behalf of children and youth in Nunavut. The purpose of the protocol is to ensure a clear and mutual understanding of the respective roles and mandate of Family Services and the representative's office to help both organizations achieve the best possible results for Nunavut's children and youth.

Since its opening, the department has met with the representative on many occasions to share information and updates concerning the safety, well-being and best interests of children, youth, and families. These meetings also serve as opportunities for dialogue about program, policy and service delivery issues. The department will continue to share information during these meetings and work actively to address challenges or issues raised by the representative. In addition to these meetings, the representative's office has provided information to the department's frontline staff during presentations, training, and workshops to strengthen working relationships and clarify the pieces of legislation that mandate both the work of the representative's office and the department.

Family Services' involvement with the representative's office is primarily through the *Child and Family Services Act*, which governs the department's roles and

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Under the Act, there are two main types of child protection services: service agreements and court orders. The majority of service agreements are utilized when there are no significant protection concerns, but youth or family would benefit from receiving additional supports. These agreements provide opportunities for families to work collaboratively with the department before court involvement is warranted.

One type of agreement is a plan of care agreement. A plan of care is a written agreement between the parent(s) and the department that outlines a case plan for the child and family to ensure the child's protection and well-being. A plan of care agreement can be used when there are immediate child protection concerns in the home. However, it is an alternative to court, which means the child or youth can often remain within the family while the family works to resolve the concerns.

Court orders are utilized when a child is deemed to require protection. They are put in place when serious child protection concerns exist and involve conditions the family and the department must follow to ensure the child is safe.

Where possible, the department will utilize service agreements and plan of care agreements with families first before moving towards more intrusive measures, such as court orders.

Through the provision of these child protection services, the department works to

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uphold the child or youth's best interests. Part of this includes ensuring a child or youth can remain within his or her family, extended family, and community. The department looks forward to ongoing engagement with the representative's office in the delivery of child protection services to ensure the interests and voices of children and youth are considered and respected.

Since its opening, the department has shared information with the representative's office concerning its progress on addressing the Office of the Auditor General's recommendations from its 2014 Follow-up Report on Child and Family Services in Nunavut. The department tabled its final update of the Quality Protects Action Plan in August 2017. The Quality Protects Action Plan was developed to respond to the six recommendations made by the Auditor General related to staff recruitment and retention, training, case management and information management, and community engagement.

Although the final update was tabled in August 2017, the Auditor General's recommendations have shaped and will continue to inform the long-term priorities of the department. For example, the department is working to strengthen its recruitment and retention efforts for community social services workers to ensure all communities in Nunavut have adequate and consistent service provision. Part of this includes exploring strategies to recruit more Inuit community social services workers to ensure we can deliver services that are reflective of the Inuit language, history, and culture.

In addition to this, I am pleased to update the Standing Committee on the department's progress towards implementing its electronic case management system for the Children and Family Services Division. The system

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will enable secure documentation of client information, which will be accessible throughout Nunavut. The system will increase oversight in the delivery of child protection services and support our frontline staff. I am pleased to report that on April 2 the department initiated the global testing phase of the system. This phase is meant to help staff become familiar with the system while noting any issues or improvements that need to be made before the final product is produced.

I am confident that the system will further facilitate information sharing between the department and the representative's office and strengthen the department's ability to deliver consistent and adequate services across the territory.

The department is working to address other challenges raised by the representative's office, including ensuring consistent service delivery in every region, increasing prevention-based supports for families and foster families, and strengthening service coordination across Government of Nunavut departments. I am pleased to report on initiatives the department has and will continue to undertake to address some of these challenges.

To recruit and retain more community social services workers, the department created an open job advertisement, which will allow the department to accept and screen candidates for employment continually. I am confident that this process will address vacancy challenges in the territory and support communities with higher caseloads to ensure families receive adequate and consistent support.

Mr. Chairman, as noted in the "Advocate's Applause" section of the 2016-17 annual report of the representative's office, the

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∆^Ს/ぺ▷Ċ[™], ▷¹७▷/ᇿ/L[™]୮۶ና Ċ^Სd⊲ ጮ^{U™}ጋ∆^È 2016-17 ସ¹ና॑JCĹ[™]/▷∩[™]Ր[™]Ժ^Ს /ʔ/¹ጔ^C L[₺]d[₺]ጋጔ^C ጮ^{U™}ጋ∆Ბ▷< department funded the delivery of four sessions of the Inunnguiniq Parenting Facilitator Training program. This was the first time the program was offered in all Nunavut regions, providing training to more than 50 Nunavummiut. The department continues to fund Inunnguiniq/parenting initiatives in Nunavut and work with community-based organizations and Inuit organizations to deliver this programming.

Furthermore, in the 2018-19 fiscal year the department was successful in obtaining \$415,000 to strengthen the foster care program, to establish three foster program coordinators and strengthen training and resources for foster families. I am confident this funding will recruit and retain more foster families across the territory, which will assist departmental efforts to keep children and youth within their communities when possible.

In addition to this, my department was successful in obtaining funding to support an initiative to address family violence that facilitates service coordination across Government of Nunavut departments and other service providers. My department is initiating work on this and will be consulting with relevant stakeholders over the 2019-2020 fiscal year to explore this initiative further and develop a plan to implement. This initiative will work to support high-risk families, those most vulnerable to family violence.

Mr. Chairman, the representative's office is well suited as a child advocacy office to support the Government of Nunavut's efforts to raise awareness around the systemic challenges facing children, youth, and families in Nunavut. The social inequity in the territory, including poverty, food insecurity, and overcrowding, continue to be main factors driving children into care. In

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addition to this, a lack of social infrastructure such as residential care means children and youth with high needs are sent out of territory to ensure they have access to the services and care they require. Raising awareness around these systemic challenges takes a concerted effort from all of us to enact meaningful and long-lasting change.

We will continue to work closely with the representative's office on individual advocacy cases and engage with them on the broader systemic challenges facing children, youth, and families in Nunavut.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my opening comments. I would be pleased to answer questions that Members may have. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. We're still on the opening comments. Before the Department of Health makes their presentation, I welcome you to Nunavut and to the Chamber. It's our first time seeing the representative from the Department of Health. (interpretation ends) Please proceed, introduce yourself and proceed to your opening comments. (interpretation) Thank you.

Ms. Brown: Thank you. Good morning, Mr. Chairman and Members. I am Ruby Brown, the Deputy Minister for Health.

I am pleased to be here today before the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to respond to the observations contained in the Representative for Children and Youth Office's annual reports and to provide information on the Department of Health's work and involvement with the office.

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With me today from the Department of Health are Kim Masson, Associate Deputy Minister, Quality of Life, and Charleen Austin, Assistant Deputy Minister for Operations.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank the Representative for Children and Youth Office for sharing their findings and recommendations and for the work they undertake to ensure that the rights of young Nunavummiut are protected and respected. We take their work, recommendations, and concerns seriously, and we recognize the efforts that have to be made by all stakeholders, including the Department of Health, to address the issues identified in the reports.

The Department of Health values the relationship it has with the representative's office since its creation in 2015 and we appreciate the ongoing dialogue. We work closely with the office and we meet regularly to discuss the ongoing issues and systemic issues of concern, as well as individual cases. This ongoing dialogue is important for real improvement in the provision of adequate services and programs that meet the needs of the young people in Nunavut. It is also in line with the protocol that was signed between the representative's office and Health in 2018. In addition to providing a framework for collaboration, cooperation, and communication, the purpose of this protocol is to ensure that both organizations achieve the best possible results for Nunavut's children and youth and that the services they deliver incorporate their rights, voice, and interests in the decision-making processes.

Additionally, a guideline was developed to provide health staff and service providers with a process of due diligence to address requests received by the Representative for Children and Youth Office. Since December PULSDADS ANGS SUCE TOPCDS DSPUS 29 2015-F 44L> 645P@SC CLG 647GQGDF \triangleright 5656 \cap 6756 \cap 7766 \cap 776 \cap 7766 \cap 7760 \cap $P_{P} \rightarrow P_{P} \rightarrow P_{P$ Λ^2 ር ውህ Λ^2 ር ውህ Λ^2 ር ውህ Λ^2 acjn/L°r%L9. CA°a 4046c476c690% 40CP%CP-70 Cp94 bp94 V02584P ΛϲʹͺϧϽϦͺϧͺϭͺͺͺϪϧͺϧϽϦͺϧͺϭͺ $DYPL^{1}DU^{2}$ 4466464 CP4L6 ULD46 $\Lambda + \Lambda^2 + \Lambda^3 +$ ᠕ᢞᡆ᠌᠌᠌ᠺᡥᡉᡑ᠂ᠣᠰᡲᡥᡉᡰᠴ ᢗᢀ᠙ᠳ ۵٬۱۰۵۲ م) ۱۳۵۲ م) ۱۳۵۲ م) ۱۳۵۲ مناسب از ۱۳۵۲ میلاد از ۱۳۵ میلاد از ۱۳ میلاد از ۱۳ میلاد از ۱۳۵ میلاد از ۱۳ میلاد از ۱۳ میلاد از ۱۳ میل

2017 the Department of Health's Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Office is the initial contact for the Representative for Children and Youth Office to send their information requests. The information and protection of privacy coordinator in Health is in charge of connecting the children and youth office with the health staff who are best suited to provide the requested information. This central monitoring function helps information sharing between health staff and the office and helps to keep track of the information exchanges between the two organizations. This process also includes an update notification system that informs Health of the status of the requests from the children and youth office. It also sends case closure letters notifying Health of the completion of advocacy issue reviews that involved the department. It should be noted that all cases referenced in the three annual reports before the Committee have been addressed and that there are no outstanding cases.

Despite our efforts, some barriers remain for youth and children and their families in accessing health services. In that regard, we want to acknowledge the need and importance of ongoing, better coordination between government departments. It is essential to work together to reduce the duplication of efforts by multiple service providers with shared clients, to offer more timely access to services as well as better support for the best interests of children and youth. Health recognizes the importance of working together toward the common goal that is respecting and advancing the rights of children and youth.

In its 2017-18 report the representative for the office also identifies the lack of child and youth-centric services as one of consistent and concerning themes. Mr. Chairman, we want to reassure the office and the

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Committee that Health strives to provide services and programming that are tailored to child and youth-specific needs. By way of examples, children and youth can access psychiatric assessments through the department's contract with the SickKids hospital. The department offers youth-specific programs and services, such as the elders and teens sewing group in Rankin Inlet, the youth empowerment afterschool program in Cambridge Bay, youth empowerment camps in Iqaluit, Arviat, and Naujaat, and the youth celebration camp in Coral Harbour, just to name a few.

As of April 1, 2017, all 25 Nunavut communities have a community wellness plan that has been developed by each community based on identified health priorities. Communities are encouraged to work with a number of different community stakeholders and partners in the development and renewal of their plans, including having representation from youth. Some communities consulted with youth at school and during the evening programs. Others had a representative from the youth committee as part of the consultation and development process. Each community wellness plan has at least one program dedicated to youth or a program where youth are integrated. Examples of youth programs include Arctic Bay's Girls' and Boys' Cultural Program, Kimmirut's elders and youth programs, and Whale Cove's Leadership on the Land Program. Furthermore, school food programs, which work to address food security in Nunavut, are identified as a priority program by communities and are included in each community wellness plan.

Mr. Chairman and Members, thank you for this opportunity to highlight the relationship between the Government of Nunavut and the office and the work that the Department of Health is doing to better meet the needs of

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Mr. Chairman, this concludes my opening comments. I welcome questions and comments from Members. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Again, welcome to Nunavut and to the Assembly. I anticipate you will be spending some amount of time in this Chamber.

(interpretation) We will proceed to the next department. Department of Education, Ms. Flaherty, you can now begin.

Ms. Flaherty (interpretation): Good morning. Mr. Chairman, before I begin with the Department of Education's opening statement, I would like to introduce Assistant Deputy Minister Tracey MacMillan, who is to my left, who is accompanying me today. I would also like to thank the Standing Committee for its invitation to speak today. Thank you.

Every child, from the first day they enter daycare to the day they graduate from high school as young adults, is directly impacted by the programs, resources, and services the Department of Education provides. Following the principle of *Pijitsirniq*, my department's primary mandate is offering quality education to the Nunavut children and youth.

Mr. Chairman, as part of this mandate, we not only teach youth foundational skills in subjects such as literacy, mathematics, and Light Daight and Albertain

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Offering Nunavut's children and youth programs and services that develop resiliency and well-being, as well as providing them with the necessary skills needed for a fulfilling future is also reflected in the Inuusivut and the Sivummuaqpalliajjutivut priorities stated in the Government of Nunavut's mandate, *Turaaqtavut*.

The Representative for Children and Youth Office also works to provide youth with similar tools of empowerment. As an independent office devoted to ensuring the rights of young Nunavummiut are respected, they have a mandate to advocate for young people's rights but also to inform children, youth, and those who work with them about these rights. The Representative for Children and Youth Office lets our children know their rights and encourages self-expression on choices and decisions affecting them. As you can see, our mandates greatly overlap.

Mr. Chairman, because of our shared responsibility to children and youth, we have worked closely with the Representative for Children and Youth Office on many programs and services that promote their communications and awareness campaigns, in addition to their advocacy work, both at the individual and system-wide levels.

From my department's perspective, our intersecting and shared mandates have developed into an open and collaborative

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relationship. Reading the three years of annual reports by the Representative for Children and Youth Office has illuminated for us the areas of this relationship that are working well and has also helped us understand which areas need improvement.

One of the ways my department has worked to strengthen our relationship with the Representative for Children and Youth Office was developing and signing a formal protocol to handle the Representative for Children and Youth Office's information requests and ensure that representatives from my department and the office meet twice a year. This protocol was finalized in April 2018, providing a framework for collaboration, cooperation, and communication in the implementation of the Representative for Children and Youth Act. It makes sure the Representative for Children and Youth Office is able to operate effectively in areas that overlap with my department so the best possible results for Nunavut's children and youth are achieved.

Another way my department collaborates with the Representative for Children and Youth Office is ensuring students and educators are made aware of child and youth rights. Whenever representatives of the Representative for Children and Youth Office are in a community, school visits are scheduled. The Representative for Children and Youth Office has conducted its "Raise Your Voice: Self-Advocacy" workshop for students in grades 7 to 12, educating them about their rights and instilling confidence with self-advocacy skills.

Another Representative for Children and Youth Office campaign is the "Your Story, Your Voice" contest, intended to create awareness of child rights. The Representative for Children and Youth Office has also been invited to facilitate sessions on child ΛϲኪႪΠϮ·Πϭ·σ·ͳ ϞͽϷͰͿϫͽ·. ϷʹϧϲͺͰͽϽ· ΛʹϧͺͿϲͺϲ ϷϭͼϧϲϭͺͿͰͿϲ, ϲϧϭͼͺϧͺϲ ΔϹʹϧϼϲ Ͱϧϥϧͺϫ϶ͺϷϧͺϫϧϧ ΠΠϲʹϗͺϧͼͼͺͼͺͼ Λϲͺϭͼ, ϤϷϲͺϹͼͿͿͼ, ͼ Λϲͺϭͼ, ϤϷϲͺͿϲͿͿͼ,

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advocacy and rights at the North and Central Qikiqtani Regional Teachers' Conference and the Nunavut Principals' Conference.

The Representative for Children and Youth Office's report praised several of my department's initiatives. For instance, one of them was for our continuing efforts to develop the Uqalimaariuqsaniq reading series, a comprehensive Inuktut guided reading program that was developed in Nunavut. At present this series has over 500 Inuktitut books and over 250 in Inuinnaqtun. These books have helped instil a sense of pride and self-awareness in students about their culture and language.

In addition, during 2016-17 the department approached the Representative for Children and Youth Office and asked if they would like to create a book for the Uqalimaariuqsaniq series at no cost to them. What came from this invitation to collaborate was the book titled *Mosesie Speaks Up*. It is intended for grade 3 students and aims to increase the reader's self-awareness, encourage healthy coping strategies, promote positive relationships, and demonstrate the importance of effective communication. *Mosesie Speaks Up* was available in all Nunavut schools in Inuktitut and English as of March 2019.

Mr. Chairman, making children and youth aware of their rights is so important. Child rights are the essential things all children are entitled to because they can help children live a thriving life with dignity. That being said, my department understands it is not always easy for a young person or a concerned parent or guardian to express his or her views to government service providers.

The history of residential school, intergenerational trauma, and distrust of government can make it difficult for families የ፡፡ሁነ፡ጋ∆σናΓ፡ ለፈዋጋቦኒዮታር ነየዖነ፡ርσ ኦላኒው, ላዕቴ ሚኒውና ልርካሏትና አስLናፈናሚኒውና ላኒ∟ጋ ውሲያነና ልርቴ ወፈናልና ሊኒኒቴኒስር አስLናፈናሚኒቦኄ

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to engage with not only our department but also other government departments. The lack of coordination of services between government departments, as noted in the 2017-18 Representative for Children and Youth Office's report, does not help this. For this reason, it is important that my department continues working to improve interdepartmental and interagency communications and long-term planning, but also work hard at reducing any barriers, real and perceived, to needed services and programs.

One of the ways my department is acting on improving these areas are by participating in several interdepartmental and interagency working groups, committees and programs that support children and youth. Currently education staff participate on the working group for the creation of the Umingmak Centre, a child advocacy centre; the Pediatric Complex and Chronic Care Committee, alongside the Department of Health; the Child Abuse Response Protocol Roundtable with the Department of Family Services; the annual youth conferences co-developed with the Red Cross in which the Representative for Children and Youth Office has facilitated self-advocacy workshops; and finally, with the Quality of Life Secretariat to support schools and communities following a critical incident.

Mr. Chairman, self-advocacy is also where the Representative for Children and Youth Office's role is so important. Representative for Children and Youth Office staff can coach an individual in self-advocacy so that he or she feels more empowered to express his or her views. There is nothing more powerful than when a young person understands their rights and harnesses that knowledge to advocate for themselves.

With our ongoing proactive meetings and

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collaborations, I am happy to say my department is continuing to build and maintain the positive working relationship we have with the Representative for Children and Youth Office. I look forward to both of us achieving the best possible services and programming for Nunavut's children and youth so that they feel safe, heard, and empowered. (interpretation ends) *Qujannamiik*, *koana*, thank you, *ammalu nakurmiik*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. The last presenter is the Department of Justice. Ms. Strickland, you may now begin.

Ms. Strickland (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) First of all, I would like to extend my condolences to the Members on the recent passing of your colleague and friend, and also I would like to extend my condolences to the families and friends and the community of Pond Inlet.

(interpretation) Mr. Chairman, I appear before the Committee and my name is Riita Strickland, Deputy Minister, and I'm also here with Glen House, Manager of the Isumaqsunngittukkuvik Youth Facility.

Mr. Chairman, I appear before the Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts to discuss the Department of Justice's interactions with the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth which are outlined in the representative's annual reports.

Since the Representative for Children and Youth Office started operations on September 2015, the Department of Justice has been dedicated to ensuring that it can give as much support and information to the office as possible in order for the representative to fulfil her mandate.

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The Deputy Minister and senior officials meet quarterly with the representative and her staff to discuss systemic issues of concern as well as individual cases. These meetings have proven to be instrumental in ensuring that there is regular and clear communication between our offices. Additionally, the representative sends quarterly reports to the Deputy Minister outlining the advocacy issues that have arisen during the prescribed period.

Outside of these high-level meetings, the department and the representative have worked on specific cases involving children and youth in which Justice has been implicated. The vast majority of the cases that have come to the representative's office and that have involved Justice have been resolved.

Justice has also worked with the representative on specific issues of concern. As an example, the department has undertaken to ensure that all government officials are aware of the age of consent for sexual relationships in Nunavut by regularly distributing a memo that is reviewed by the representative.

Justice is currently working with the representative on its systemic review into mental health services for youth. This report was commenced in October of 2017 and will be completed in the coming months.

Justice's contact with children and youth is mainly through the *Youth Criminal Justice*Act, which governs criminal charges against children and youth. Section 19 of this legislation establishes youth justice committees that assist in the administering of the Act. The committees facilitate interaction between the victim and offender, and recommend appropriate programs/services to repair harm and to ensure the offender is held

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accountable. Justice often will be involved with the representative in assisting youth in preparing for conferences under section 19 of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*.

For those youth sentenced to custody, the Isumaqsunngittukkuvik Youth Facility in Iqaluit accepts open custody, secure custody, and remanded youth. Male and female offenders from all over Nunavut are accepted. Any youth with a valid court order between the ages of 12 and 18 years old will be accepted into custody. If a person committed an offence prior to their 18th birthday, the facility can keep them until the age of 20, depending on behaviour.

The goal of this facility is the successful rehabilitation and reintegration of each youth that enters our facility. This begins from the first day they are admitted and continues until their sentence is complete. The representative is also involved in advocating for youth in this facility.

Justice also oversees many youth on community supervision. These youth are not in custody, but the department is responsible for ensuring that they comply with conditions imposed under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*. Recently the department extended programming available to youth in custody such as tutoring and counselling to youth under community sentences. This program was noted in the "Advocate's Applause" section of the 2017-18 Annual Report of the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth.

We will continue to work closely with the representative to ensure that youth in the criminal justice system and all other children and youth have access to the supports they need.

That concludes my opening statement. I

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welcome any questions from the Committee. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you as well. Before we proceed, I'll inform you as to the procedures.

(interpretation ends) There are a large number of issues just based on the opening comments from the departments and representatives that bring questions to my mind and I'm sure my colleagues share this feeling.

That being said, we are here to review the annual reports of the representative and as such, we're planning to structure our discussions today roughly based on the format of your annual report. We just have three, kind of, thematic areas. The first one will be in terms of general questions about the office and background type of questions, and then the second theme where I would expect the majority of the discussion will take place will be regarding advocacy activities and the relationship with government departments, and then the third theme to wrap up the day will be in terms of looking ahead, the future of the office and lessons learned to date and that type of thing.

We will get a few questions in on the first theme, but before I do that, I would just like to remind everybody present that we do have a limited time. Unfortunately we were supposed to have a day and a half to do this work. That has been shortened; we only have a day. I'll ask all members to limit your preambles and keep your questions short, as well as witnesses, please keep your answers as short and to the point as possible. (interpretation) I hope that makes sense.

The committee can now ask questions. Ms. Towtongie.

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Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How different is your office from the other offices across Canada? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are many advocacy offices very similar in nature to ours across the country. All jurisdictions have them with the exception, of course, of Ontario with the recent change that occurred there and the Northwest Territories. There are only two jurisdictions in Canada that do not have independent advocacy offices. Overall their mandates are quite similar. They're independent in nature and they're there to represent and uphold the rights of young people in their jurisdictions.

The scope of the mandate can differ slightly from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. There is a little bit of variance, but the overarching purpose and the independence of the office is the same across the board. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the questions that I have in my mind; we come from an ancient culture, and the prevailing authorities that exist in the Inuit mind differs from the institutionalized authorities that are existing or coming into existence within Nunavut with regard to child advocacy. The concern that I keep hearing is children's rights and the Inuit society is now turning into a legalistic society.

My question; a number of other agencies such as the Arctic Children and Youth

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With that in mind, has there been any consideration with speaking to grandparents' rights? Inuit culture places a lot of emphasis on elders and the elders' traditional knowledge. That is my final question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am hearing two questions there. I am going to start with the first. First of all, there can never be enough organizations, whether organizations like ours that report to the Legislative Assembly or not-for-profit organizations within this territory advocating for the rights and interests of young people. I am a big proponent of "the more the better" because we have a lot of work to do in that respect.

If we use the example of the Arctic Children and Youth Foundation, different mandates altogether, although based on the premise of advocating for young people and grounded in child rights, but they have a very specific function in terms of the coordination of services. If we look at the Umingmak Centre, that project specifically, coordination of services for young people who have experienced abuse, so a little bit of a different mandate and role, but we are all on the same page with those organizations in terms of advocating for young people in this territory.

The second part of the question that I would like address is, and it is a question and a conversation that we have quite frequently PUNDANG NOSISE COLEA

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When we meet with community members, with young people, we have very important conversations around what rights are and what they are not because there is some fear that rights mean the child can tell the parent what to do and kind of take over and those types of things, those types of concerns. Rights aren't about that and so we're very clear in our conversations with people that the rights under the UNCRC are those things that young people need to meet their basic needs in life and how government provides for those. It doesn't really get involved in the UNCRC or this concept of rights of a parent versus a child. It's not about that. The UNCRC is actually very supportive of a family's role in a child's life and promotes that.

Also, when we meet with young people and we teach them in schools and when we are in communities about child rights, we also have that same conversation with them; what rights are, what it means to have a right, and what it doesn't mean. We also have good conversations about the responsibility that young people carry when they have rights. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Before we go on, I'll just remind everyone to please spell out your

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The next name on my list, Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning to everyone. This is indeed an interesting topic to be talking about.

Just to follow up on my colleague's question, you were talking about and it was interesting to hear your definition of what you mean by child rights when it comes to the UN convention. In your opening comments you talk about the rights of the child and that they have the right to have their views not only heard but also considered in all matters that affect their lives. You also said that government must seek out their views.

Can you give us a good picture of what that might look like? How should government reach out to youth and in what way? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that question. I'm happy to have the opportunity to describe what that looks like.

Right now, if we take a look at the *Education Act*, for instance, and the consultations that took place over the past year with respect to those, from a child rights perspective and seeking out the opinions of children and youth, what we would want to see are dedicated consultations that are youth specific in seeking out the viewpoints of young people involved in the education system with respect to the proposed amendments.

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That's one example on a broader scale with a big project that's quite timely and relevant here in Nunavut. We actually made that recommendation to the department as soon as we heard consultations were underway, that we would like to see youth-specific consultations occur, which was also a recommendation in the past by the Standing Committee to the Department of Education.

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With respect to maybe an individual advocacy case, if a child is taken into care and there's going to be a foster placement, we would like there to be good conversations between the social worker and the young person about that placement to explore any kinship placements that would be maybe feasible and to explore any concerns maybe the young person had with respect to maybe a proposed placement.

Having the opportunity to have conversations, whether it be really on a personal level with an individual advocacy matter or a personal matter or broader scale projects that are going on in the territory, if it involves young people, the subject matter, then it should involve them in the conversation and that should be considered. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

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Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your response. You gave an example of a child and where they're placed within foster care. Do you feel or does your office feel that this is not taking place, that that conversation between the social worker and the child is not taking place when it comes to their well-being? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

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Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't think it would be fair to say it's not taking place at all. It's not taking place as consistently as it should be and I think that's fair to say. I think it's also fair to say that there's confusion not just in the child protection sector but across the board with respect to the right that young people have and what it means and government service providers' obligation to uphold that right through the conduct of their work. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you. This is interesting to me too because I wonder, when you talk about the rights of children and how sometimes the departments may not recognize that in the same way that your department does. Do you think that if such a child was going through what you gave as an example and if it was ever challenged in court that their rights were not taken into consideration, what's the possibility of that happening, just in your opinion? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I will note that that's kind of a hypothetical question, so if we can ground our questions in material that's in the annual report as much as possible, I would appreciate it. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you. It is a hypothetical and because I don't have any individual matters that I can concretely speak to, to address that, I can't answer that question.

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

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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In the work that you have done over the three years, have you had to go to the court to support a child? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At times we are involved in court proceedings. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the different representatives here today a question. If your department received advice and recommendations from the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth on how to make programs and services, laws, and policies better for children and youth in Nunavut, could you briefly describe what actions were taken to address advice and the recommendations? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Ms. Angnakak, I'll just ask you to clarify your question. Are you asking this of every department here or are you asking it of a specific department? Please clarify that, Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you. Is it possible to ask each department to answer that question or no? I can ask the question individually if you want. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Okay, if the question is for all four departments present, I guess we will just go through them in order. Family Services.

Ms. Niego: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will defer this to my colleague, Joanne Henderson.

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

Ms. Henderson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Any recommendations for improvement and augmentation in programming that we receive is considered highly and accepted as a means of improving and streamlining our programs and services in the best interest of children and families within the territory. It is the same if we receive a recommendation or feedback from the office of the child and youth representative. We would do the same. We would consider them and utilize those recommendations as a tool to improve our services for children and families within the territory, which is under our mandate. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I will move on to the Department of Health and I'll just rephrase or reiterate the question. The question posed was: has your department received advice or recommendations from the representative's office on how to make programs, services, laws, and policies better for the children and youth of Nunavut and, if so, can you briefly describe what actions were taken to address the advice or recommendations received? Ms. Brown.

Ms. Brown: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The advice that comes from the representative's office is taken very seriously and that is why there has been a process that has been set up to make sure that when they bring forward information for our consideration or for the involvement, we provide them with the information that they need to dig deeper and looking into the matter further.

We have regular meetings with them. They give us some insights about what they are seeing and we talk about particular cases that are being dealt with, and then we take the

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recommendations and develop what we need to do in order to make improvements. Then when we meet with the office again, we share those actions that have been taken.

As I mentioned in my opening remarks, there are no outstanding cases and for the ones that have been brought to our attention, we have acted to address the issues that were brought forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) We will move on to the next department. The same question, Ms. Flaherty.

Ms. Flaherty (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My assistant will respond to the question.

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

Ms. MacMillan (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The Department of Education is committed to working with the representative's office. We collaborate and attend meetings, and specific examples of a positive outcome as a result of that has been the creation of the Interagency Information Sharing Protocol, which goes directly to support concerns of coordination of services among our partner departments as well.

One new program within student achievement that came into being during the 2017-18 year was the education support services and that is within the division of Student Achievement. That area helps to improve the supports to students to improve their education experience in our schools and their specific needs. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you as

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well. The last department to respond to the same question is the Department of Justice. Ms. Strickland.

Ms. Strickland (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I also thank the Member for the question. We appreciate the recommendations that are brought forward by the representative's office. To speak to a specific recommendation, to provide an example for the Member, the representative's office recommended for us to make public to all departments regarding the age of consent for sexual relationships in Nunavut. In 2018 we distributed this memo twice and we plan to distribute the memo twice yearly moving forward. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): I also thank you. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your responses. I asked that because in your opening comments of what you read, you state in here and it really stood out for me that you have grown extremely concerned about the weakness of the current system to support children.

I was trying to get a picture of the working relationship between your office and the different offices of the government. When you provide advice on what should be done to change policies or programs to make it better for children, do you feel that you're listened to? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think there exists a healthy tension between our office and the government departments. I think it's clear from the opening comments from the

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departments and we would echo that there is a sound relationship between us in place. That is because we are led by Inuit societal values of working together for a common cause and creating a respectful working relationship. We know that that needs to be in place in order for us to advance the issues that need to be put forward for young people in this territory. It is a good working relationship and that's not by chance; that's by design of this office with the investment that has been made into the protocols that have been mentioned, I think, by all departments as well as other work that has been done.

To answer your question, do we feel like our advice and recommendations are taken seriously, absolutely. I can give you some examples that I would like to share to your previous question about what recommendations have been put forward and kind of the status on those to give a clearer picture.

For instance, in my opening comments, I said we opened, up to 2017-18, a running total of 200 individual advocacy cases. By the end of 2017-18, we had closed 151 of those. Of that 151, 122 of those were resolved successfully. We have different categories when we close a case. 122 were resolved successfully. What that means, in order to achieve that, that the recommendation, at least a minimum of one per case, was adopted by the department and satisfied us in order for us to close that case. That's one example from the individual advocacy side.

Although we haven't issued our 15 formal recommendations that will be made public related to mental health services, I indicated in the opening comments that they will be released publicly in the spring of 2019. The departments have been, throughout the course of that review, that investigation,

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good to deal with in terms of their openness when we do interviews, in terms of their openness in producing documents and information that we have requested, and have all had an opportunity to review those draft recommendations and provide their feedback to us.

The other thing that I think I would like to highlight is that in my opening comments, I mentioned that we made two submissions regarding the *Education Act*. The first submission contained four recommendations. The four recommendations we learned before the bill was dropped initially, three of the four were going to be adopted by the Department of Education. We have since, on the second consultation, put forward another eight and we wait to hear, of course, the status of those.

There are a few examples of kind of advice and recommendations from individual advocacy, from systemic that have gone back and forth and the status of them, but overall there is a favourable working relationship, which we work hard of keeping intact given sometimes there is that healthy tension that exists between us, and an overall openness and receptivity to the advice and recommendations that we put forward to the departments.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Thank you for your response and for clarifying that. I know that my colleagues would really like to start asking questions, but we will now take a 10-minute break. Thank you.

>>Committee recessed at 10:38 and resumed at 10:54

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you for coming back. We're still on the first thematic area. (interpretation ends) We're currently on

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the first kind of thematic area, which is background or general questions regarding the office of the representative. The next name on my list, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to begin by thanking Ms. McNeil-Mulak, Ms. Matte, and Mr. Korgak for being here today. I would like to thank you all for your hard work and your dedication in ensuring the rights of young Nunavummiut are respected. I understand that creating an office from scratch is no easy task, and I just wanted to point out that it is evident in the information in your annual reports that you have done an exceptional job, and for that I thank you once again.

As you mentioned in your opening remarks, your term is coming to an end in June 2019 and you've had an opportunity to reflect on the last five years, so I would like to begin by asking a few questions on that. My first questions will be: what did you enjoy most about your role and what accomplishments were you most proud of over the last five years? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What I have enjoyed the most over the past five years is meeting young Nunavummiut, having an opportunity to create an office, having a hand in that that is dedicated just for them. It's a rare opportunity to get to do this type of work and to be able to focus on such a subset of our population.

It's an important office for Nunavut and to have that opportunity to get out there, along with our staff, meet young Nunavummiut, start the education process around child rights, the role of our office, start to see those **ΔΔΥϽΦ** (ϽʹͱϒΛͿϚ): ʹϭͰϧʹʹͼͺ ʹϧͺ ΔϷͰʹϘϷʹϾ·Ϸ. ΛΓϤΡΛΓΚΙΕʹϽͿ ʹϭͰϧʹͼͺϳʹͰͿͰʹϽͿ ΓʹϹ ͿϷϭʹϷ-ΓϷʹͼϷ, Γʹ ʹͺ ͼʹ ͼͰͿ ΓʹϹ ʹϭϤϚʹϷ· ϹʹʹͼʹϭʹϒʹϽʹͼͺʹͰͿϹ ϷʹʹϽΓ ϤͰͿϽ ʹϭͰϒͰʹϒʹͼͺͼʹͰͰͿϒ ϤϷͰʹͰʹϭʹʹϧʹ ΛͰʹϒϭ ΛϲʹʹʹϲͰͿϲϧʹϒʹʹϼϲʹ ϹʹϷͿϤ ΛϲʹʹͼͺϷʹϹʹͼ ϫ϶ϧͱΓϷϲ ͿͼͼϷʹϽϲ. ϽͰϒϷͰͿͰͿͺ Ϲʹͼͺͼͺ ΛϦʹͼʹͼͺ ϲʹͼͺ ΛͰʹϭϧʹϼϲʹϳϲͺϷʹͰͿϲʹͺͺͺʹͼϷϼͼͺϲϻϧϽͿͺ ϹʹͼͺϽ ͼͺϫͼϧʹϧʹͰͿϲʹͺϹʹͼͿϫϧʹͰͺͺͺͺͼʹͰͰͺϹͺϷͰϒ Ϸϭ϶ͺϸʹͼϧʹʹϧͼϧͺ ΛϲʹϲͺϒϥͺͼʹͰͰͺͰͺͺϷͺͰϒͺ ʹϭͿϧʹͼͺϲͺʹϲʹϲʹϒͿʹϧͺͿ.

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We have a long way to go with respect to that education piece as a territory, but to start those conversations and be part of that has been very exciting. Probably one of the most enjoyable pieces is when our staff gets to engage with young people of this territory.

The second part of your question, I think, pertains to accomplishments. I thank you for the acknowledgement that we developed this office from scratch. When I walked into the office on that first day, it was an empty office suite. I had one piece of paper only in my hand and it was an important piece of paper. It was the *Representative for Children and* Youth Act, but just to open the office, to take 16 months and to have the opportunity to hire, to train, to develop policies and procedures, all of that work, I think that's what our whole team is most proud of, that we had the opportunity to be trailblazers with respect to rights-based education and having a rights-based office specifically for young Nunavummiut.

I think that initial development work and getting to that day of three and a half years ago after 16 months of development work, that we could confidently open this office and immediately start to work and help support young Nunavummiut and their families that were having difficulty is perhaps the biggest accomplishment, just getting those doors open in a relatively short amount of time, despite some big challenges that we faced in arriving at that day. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for ending off in the challenges. That leads me into my next question. I would like to see the folks on the other side of things, and specifically what were the most difficult aspects of your role and what sort of challenges and obstacles did you face in the last five years. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think one of the biggest challenges is just the newness of the office itself and the newness of introducing that concept of child rights and some of the misconceptions that are around it. We had our work cut out for us with respect to that. The newness of the office, explaining its role as an independent office, and oftentimes people mistake us for one of the departments, so having to have those conversations about our role and what we can do, I think that has definitely been one of the challenges, the concept of child rights and the role of the office.

We're making headway. We have made significant headway because of the investment over the past three and a half years with respect to our public awareness work and communications work, but we still have a long way to go. This office is still very much at its toddler stage and we are based here in Iqaluit, which is another challenge, yet we serve this entire territory. We invest heavily at our office in community visits. We have a community visit planned annually where we visit 12 communities and the other 12 the next year, and then when we are done, we start over.

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That's also a challenge for our office is that we represent all of Nunavut, yet our entire office is based here in Iqaluit. Now, we definitely have certain measures in place to try to work with that challenge such as a community visit schedule, a 1-800 number, staff using flexible hours if they need to work with a young person or family in another time zone, so we do our best to work around that, but that certainly is another challenge.

I think another challenge that I would like to talk about also in terms of our work in the administration of the office is that we are a team of eight and there is a big and increasing demand on our services. We definitely see that the longer we are open and the more that the word gets out about what we do and what type of supports we can provide, we're starting to see an imbalance in terms of the resources that we have available to ourselves and the workload that's mounting.

We have seen a steady number of individual advocacy cases. We have seen their complexity, though, increase. We have definitely seen an increase in systemic issues over the years that have come into our office. We have a staff of two and it takes both of those resources, those two PYs, to put on one investigation in order to conduct a major investigation, such as the one we have done for the past year and half into mental health services. Also, we see an increase in demand for our staff to provide presentations and training for other staff. We have seen that grow over the years. Certainly a big challenge for our office is the growth and demand that we are seeing for our supports and services and having a team of eight.

In terms of the conduct of our office when we're challenged that I'll highlight that we face, it's difficult for us to do our job with the amount of turnover that we see in GN
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staff. We know that that pales in comparison to the impact that that's having on young people and their families who are seeking services, but it does impact the conduct of our business as well when we're trying to connect with people and there's changeover in vacancy and a new person in position who may not be aware of our office. Sometimes we really have to backtrack and start again. That can prolong the length of time that it takes us to close a file. I'll end there. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Mr. Lightstone, I'll give you one more question and then I'll move on to the next person. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I've got a few more questions, so I'm just going to sort of bunch them all in together.

Your term ends June of this year, which is just right around the corner. My question is if you intend on seeking another five-year term and, if so, why or why not, and what advice you may have for the next incumbent. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Mr. Lightstone, the first part of your questions is beyond the scope of what we are here to do today. We are here to review the annual reports of the representative.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak, in terms of the second part of the question, if you would care to respond.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can I ask the Member to repeat the second part of the question, please?

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

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Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Given that the term is about to expire, what advice would you have for the next incumbent? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One piece of advice that I would give the next representative is to continue the investment of the team back at the office. By investment I am speaking of training. We have invested very heavily into the training of our team over the past five years, and not just training but into the investment of the well-being of all team members at the office. That is a big piece of advice. It is a solid group of staff over there and my hope would be that the next representative would pay particular attention to the well-being of that staff given the nature of the work that they do and their training needs.

Another piece of advice that I would offer is that the voice of young people continues to be at the centre of the work of that office and that does not get lost. There are many articles under the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Listening to the voice young people is one and it is so important. My hope going forward is that the next representative focuses as much as we did over the past five years going forward on the importance of the voice of the young people and challenges the Government of Nunavut to make that voice stand at the centre of issues that are impacting young people.

I would also advise the next representative to advocate on behalf of the office for additional resources so that the office can continue to evolve and grow and not be limited in the type of work that it can do. There is very important work that the office is conducting, and in terms of recourse

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capacity, space capacity, it is kind of at a standstill.

I think they would be the three big pieces of advice that I would have to offer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I am sure that the next person to fill your role will take those into account. (interpretation) Following my list of names, Mr. Quassa.

Mr. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, everyone.

The first comment I would like to make is on your opening comments about the responsibilities. You are not trying to take over the work of the Government of Nunavut, but just ensuring that the government's services, programs, and policies are there for children and youth. I was proud of that statement.

The main question that I would like to ask is, as you said, you have eight staff members and you went from 38 percent to close to 50 percent Inuit employment in the office, although there are only eight employees. She also indicated that their goal is to reach 63 percent Inuit employment. It seems like it's the first time I'm seeing that, so I am proud of that. The question I have is: how many Inuit do you have working in your office? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a team of eight staff. Originally when we started out, it was at 38 percent; we're now at 50 percent Inuit employment. There are four non-Inuit staff and there are four Inuit staff, with plans to

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

Mr. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm proud of that. Our Nunavut government has been around for 20 years and we finally reached 50 percent in that. Your office has been around for only a few years and you have eight workers, but I'm proud that you have that many Inuit workers.

The next question is about the Inuktitut language. We consider the Inuktitut language very important in Nunavut and I was proud to hear the Deputy Ministers and Assistant Deputy Minister speaking Inuktitut. How do you apply the Inuktitut language in your office? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that question. Currently we have one staff who is fluent in Inuktitut and that staff is our intake specialist. That's the person who is the voice and face to our office. We have other staff with different levels of proficiency in Inuktitut. As I mentioned in our opening comments, we have invested heavily in terms of helping them increase their skill set in the language when they're ready and comfortable to do so. To date we have supported nine Inuktut training sessions for staff ranging from level 1 to 3 advanced terminology sessions.

In terms of the provision of our service, when we have a request for someone to have a service in another language other than English, we accommodate that through the use of our intake specialist. It is reflected in

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that individual's job description that that is a support that they provide our office on our individual advocacy cases and other work. We also have French language speakers within our office that provide that support when required.

Because we are relying on one individual who speaks Inuktitut fluently, if that person is unavailable to us, then we rely on the use of interpreters to provide the service in the language the person is requesting. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank you for helping me understand that. Yes, the Inuktitut language has to be used because we live in Nunavut and the majority of people speak Inuktitut. The majority of our constituents and people we serve are Inuit.

Are the documents translated into Inuktitut? We like hearing about the office in the communities. When we're in the communities, we hardly ever hear about the office and people realize that the office exists, but not many people are aware of it yet. Your work is very important. With respect to communications and promoting yourselves to Nunavut, what do you do to promote your office to make sure people know about you? Through the news or media? What communication modes do you use? Communities use the local radio stations a lot. Do you use those too? That's my final question, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With respect to all

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communications coming out of our office, everything is in four languages at all times. We follow the provisions within the *Official Languages Act*.

In terms of how do we promote our office across the territory, as I acknowledged before, one of the challenges is that we're Iqaluit based and we have a big territory to cover. We recognize that's a challenge. We know that we have isolated communities; we have different time zones, different languages, and different literacy levels across the territory, so our communications approach takes all that into consideration and it's kind of multi-pronged.

One of the big things that we do in terms of communication is community visits. As mentioned earlier, our community visit plan is 12 communities per year. We wish we could do more and get out there more frequently, but with a staff of eight people who have other duties as well, other than just the travel component, it works well with keeping our staff balanced in terms of their work-life balance and whatnot. Twelve communities are visited per year, then the other 12 communities the other year, and then we start again. Community visits is not something that we check off and finish after round 1. We're close to finishing round 2 of community visits and when we're done our round 2, we start again to round 3. A big part of our communications approach is those visits. They're very important to us.

When we're in communities too, a lot of things need to happen. Before going into communities, our staff have a checklist and meetings they need to set up. One of the big stakeholders when we're in communities is we're in the schools and we're working directly with young people. We're also spending time in the community setting up information tables at the Northern Store,

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looking for opportunities, if there's something going on in the community, if there's a feast, if there's a youth event and taking part in that.

We also meet with Government of Nunavut stakeholders. All the frontline service providers that we often deal with here out of Iqaluit in managing a lot of those cases and files, we connect with all them to build the relationship, ensure clarity of our role, and ensure they're adhering to the provisions under the Act that they need to be. That's definitely one thing that we do.

We also have, of course, more traditional materials, such as pamphlets, rack cards, brochures, and that type of more traditional communications material that we develop. Some of our communications material is actually going to be reviewed this fiscal year because we want to see how we're communicating and how people perceive the words we chose on our pamphlets and whatnot. That will be under review and evaluation this year to see if we need to make any changes to do a bit of a better job with respect to our more traditional communications material.

We also conduct an annual contest for young people, and schools are heavily involved in that, the "Your Story, Your Voice," which gives us an opportunity to talk about our office, talk about children's rights. We're excited with some of the upcoming plans that we have too because we're always pushing ourselves to do better in terms of our communication. On the horizon for us, this year we will be launching social media so we can connect better with young people across the territory.

Very soon we will also be enabling our text support for young people so they can get individual advocacy support through texting ᠴᡆᠸᡥᠣᠴ᠂ᡃᢐᡅ᠘ᠸᢂ᠅᠑ᡃᢐᡃᢐᢦᡐᠫᡃᡥᢐ ᢐᠬᡳᢞᢐᡃᠳ᠌ᡏᡥᠫᡃᡷᡥᡈᡱᡥᡠᡕ᠘ᡰᠳ᠑᠘ᡩᡱᡩᡕ ᠘ᢞᠬᢐᡃᢐᢦᡥᠫᡃᠶᡥᡉ᠙᠕ᢣᡉᢗ᠌᠌᠌ᠪ᠘ᢣᢅᢛᡀᠮᡳᡀᠺ

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with our child and youth advocacy specialists. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you (interpretation ends) I'll just remind witnesses, for the benefit of the interpreters, if you could speak at a somewhat slower pace. It makes things better for the interpreters. Mr. Mikkungwak.

Mr. Mikkungwak (interpretation): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Please feel welcome, witnesses.

The first question I would like to ask is related to question my colleague asked earlier and I would like to add to it. Looking at all of the communities in Nunavut, when you go to the communities, some are small and some are bigger than others. How much time do you spend in each of the communities? Children and youth are not all in school. That's my first question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you as well. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Depending on community size, smaller communities, maybe we're in there for three or four days; a larger community, we will be there the whole work week. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Mikkungwak (interpretation): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I would like to move on to another subject. In the Fifth Assembly and also in the Fourth Assembly we have been pushing for Inuit societal values and the usage of our Inuktitut language. It's something that we're pushing hard on.

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What seems to be the most important challenges you see for the future to make things better for your office? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you as well. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can I please ask the Member to repeat the question?

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

Mr. Mikkungwak (interpretation): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I mentioned that as MLAs, we place great importance on Inuit cultural and societal values. With your office, what major challenges have you faced in incorporating Inuit cultural and societal values in your office? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Mr. Mikkungwak, specifically in the most recent report on pages 13, 14, and 15 there is information that he is requesting or asking for further clarification on. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the clarification. I appreciate it.

At our office we're continuously challenging ourselves to increase the language capacity of our team, to continuously challenge ourselves with respect to how we embed Inuit societal values in our own work. We do a couple of things...well, more than a couple. We invest quite heavily in this area because we know those values guide our work and those values are the values of 85 percent of the population that our office serves. They're not something that is added onto our work.

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They need to be embedded in the way that we conduct our work and the business of our office on a daily basis.

Some of the things that we do to help guide us in that area, first of all, is we work with our elder advisors to seek their good guidance and support. We work together well as a team. Like I mentioned, it's 50 percent Inuit and 50 percent non-Inuit. We have full-team staff meetings on a monthly basis. Inuit societal values is a standing agenda item and it's the first item we talk about, both Inuit and non-Inuit staff to talk about how we do a better job in challenging ourselves on a regular basis to make sure these values are embedded in our organization. That conversation can look like all sorts of things. It's a very open conversation.

We also invest in training of our team in terms of these values. We have worked with the QIA in the past for training on Inuit societal values. We make sure that all of our staff.... It was required that they take the training on indigenous cultural competency. We also work with Inuit organizations on a regular basis to seek their input and good guidance. Most recently just last week we met with Tuttarviit to talk about Inuit societal values and our interpretation of how they apply to our office.

It's an area that our office is strongly committed to because of where we are and the population that we serve. We're continuously challenging ourselves on a regular basis to explore new ways of learning, new ways of incorporating or embedding those values into the work that we do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

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Mr. Mikkungwak (interpretation): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Again, using Inuit cultural and societal values, your office makes sure that there is information for children and youth about their rights. Outside of the written word about Inuitl cultural and societal values, parents provide other information verbally to their children.

Sometimes there are families who occasionally have disagreements in Nunavut. What does your office do when families run into hardship with children and youth? What kinds of problems have you come across in those dealings in terms of cultural and societal values, or what does your office, using your approaches, do to resolve those family issues? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you as well. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With respect to our work and the conduct of our work out of our office, we absolutely include families in our work when we can. If it is safe and in the best interest of the child that we're advocating for, for families to be involved, then they're right there with us. They need to be because the family is the key component to which the child belongs, so we're very much in support of that in the conduct of our own work.

With respect to the Department of Family Services and families being disrupted and not being together and what they do, I think they're in a better position as the department responsible for that program area to answer that question. What I can say is when we see in some of our individual advocacy cases families not together for different reasons, our advocacy work could entail holding the department accountable to making sure the conditions that will support the reunification of the family are in place to help the family

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come back together. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) As you mentioned in your response, the Department of Family Services might have something to add on this, so Ms. Niego.

Ms. Niego: Thank you, *Iksivautaaq*. I think something in what the representative just said about reunification of family, that is very important, that is the philosophy of the department, to keep families together. However, we all know that families do struggle and need time to adjust before that reunification. We sometimes do get pressure from the representative in listening to the youth. Here is where our department may not always agree based on other information that we would have that the representative is not privy to, such as immediate family or extended family situations. There is other private information.

Although we value and accept the recommendations and advice of the representative's office, they are very youth focused. We are family focused and also through our investigative authority, we have access to a little bit more information in certain cases. We still do value the representative's office. They speak a lot to the issues that matter the most to our department as well. I hope that helps. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Your response is understandable. Mr. Mikkungwak.

Mr. Mikkungwak (interpretation): Thank you very much. This is my final question on this subject. Again, using Inuit societal values, there was a recent international meeting that your office attended. On page 7

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of the 2017-18 annual report, you indicated that you were involved in the meeting.

My question is in regard to incorporating Inuit cultural and societal values on the international state in policy and legislative terms. What I'm trying to ask.... For example, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatmi works very hard to promote on this issue. Are you working with Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami on issues such as that within Nunavut? What is your working relationship with Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We're just trying to find what page and what report, if we could have some clarification on that, please.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I believe that Mr. Mikkungwak was referring to page 7 of the 2017-18 report. Specifically he's talking about the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates and national advocacy standards. Is that sufficient to clarify the question? Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you very much. With respect to that page, as I mentioned earlier on in my opening comments, there are several things that guide the conduct of our work. One of those things is the national advocacy standards that have been developed by the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates. On that page it gives an example of how we do that, how we bring that to life.

The example that we highlighted on that particular page is the standard around a young person's empowerment. The council set a standard that for these independent offices, part of their work needs to be

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empower young people to know their own rights and to be able to speak on their own behalf. One of the ways we honour that standard is through the delivery of our self-advocacy workshops. That workshop specifically was developed by our office in response to a need that we wanted to see more young people be able to speak up on their own behalf.

We deliver that workshop to help increase that skill set in young people. It's keeping with the Inuit societal value of teaching. Through practise and mentorship, we put our staff on the ground with young people in the delivery of that workshop and we teach skills, we practise skills through the workshop, all to help increase the confidence that young people have in their own ability to speak up on their behalf and to essentially empower them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Following my list of names, Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, Representative for Children and Youth, your officials, and witnesses. I say "good morning" to my fellow residents of Kugaaruk and to the Members.

In terms of your opening comments, I heard the rights of young people. In English it was (interpretation ends) "child rights." (interpretation) That is a powerful statement. My colleague from Baker Lake mentioned this as well.

I would like to ask your office: how do you communicate with the smaller communities? That is the question I would like to ask, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

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Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the big ways, like I mentioned, that we communicate with smaller communities is that we send staff to the smaller communities. We put our feet on the ground in every community across this territory regardless of size. When we're in communities, like I said, we spend time in the schools meeting with service providers, but we also spend time within the community. We make sure to set up information booths in those places where we know community members frequent.

Our staff are trained and able, and do get on community radio to get word out. That's one of our biggest ways to engage with communities, big or small, and then also some of those more traditional communication methods that I previously discussed, just making sure we distribute really good information in all languages, making sure when we're in communities, our staff do informal audits to make sure that service providers have our materials up as they are required to under the Act, and those sorts of things. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank you for the response. We know as parents, young people have difficult situations in upbringing. I wonder whether you will have an actual office in the communities. Are you currently planning for a new office like that? Will you be taking this approach to the communities? I'm asking that question for clarification, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Ms. McNeil-Mulak, did you get that question? I think there was an issue with the translation channels. Did you

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Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This question comes up quite frequently, and oftentimes when we are in communities, one of the number one questions we get is "When are you coming back?"

Right now, given the newness of the office, the first five years have been spent on establishing the office in one location and establishing a solid foundation. I can't see into the future of course, but I would hope that that foundation in the future will allow for growth here based out of the Iqaluit office, but also that there will be some consideration going forward by the Legislative Assembly on perhaps a satellite office somewhere else throughout the territory.

Right now in the first five years it hasn't been a part of the plan, but when we look forward, it's definitely something I think that deserves sound consideration by the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) That is an interesting point and Mr. Mikkungwak touched on that, that communities are not all one size and if we look at the population of youth across Nunavut, there is a huge population of young people outside of Iqaluit.

That being said, we are on the first thematic area and one of the things you touched on in your opening comments was the ability of your office to review any matter related to death or critical injury of any child or youth. That is not in force yet.

At the same time, through the media, we know that the Department of Justice or the

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chief coroner's office has established a Pediatric Death Review Committee. That's a newly established committee.

From your perspective, how would those two functions work together? Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you for that question, Mr. Chairman. You are correct. That section of the Act that allows us to conduct reviews of critical injuries and deaths is not in force yet. That program area is currently under development by our office and has been for the last couple of years. We have had to press the pause button on that development piece slightly in order to shift both systemic resources on the investigation into mental health services for children and youth.

Part of the development work entails working with key partners that are doing this type of work. That includes the newly formed Pediatric Death Review Committee. It also includes the coroner's office. There has been some preliminary work done with the previous coroner. We need to pick up that work and complete development, so it will entail working with the new coroner and it will also entail working with the Pediatric Death Review Committee.

What that looks like in terms of overlap in mandates and whatnot, we don't know yet. This Pediatric Death Committee is fairly new. We have reached out to them as a part of our development work and we have a meeting scheduled for them later in the month. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) In terms of the Department of Justice, I would be interested to hear your perspective in terms of how well that new Pediatric Death Review Committee worked with the office of the representative

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in terms of reviewing child deaths and in terms of reports and recommendations. How is that envisioned to work? Ms. Strickland.

Ms. Strickland (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) As the representative mentioned, the work for setting up the Pediatric Death Review Committee is still fairly new. We still need to work out how the committee will work with various departments, with the chief coroner's office, and also with the representative's office. I don't know if that helps to answer your question. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Somewhat, but it's still not clear in my mind in terms of how these two overlapping responsibilities are supposed to fit together.

I'll turn it back to you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. You mentioned in your opening comment, on the last page, in terms of this responsibility that it's contingent upon additional resources. You mentioned in here that you have put forward two requests for additional resources. Specifically how much money are we talking about or how much additional resource is needed to bring this function into action under your office? Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it is true, we have submitted to date two requests for additional resources for our office. One was denied and the other is pending, I guess. We are still waiting to hear the outcome from the Management and Services Board.

The resource that we are specifically requesting with respect to this program area, critical injury and death, is one PY to start to enable us to launch the program according to our business plan priority in the next fiscal

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year. We are looking at approximately maybe \$150,000 for that PY plus any benefits and money associated with that. It's one PY we are looking for specifically with respect to that program area and launching it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Thank you for the specific information. Before we move on from our first thematic area, Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, representative.

Are we on the first thematic question? Okay. I think my question is on the second thematic part. Okay. Page 40 of the representative's 2017-18 annual report describes your office's work toward building relationships with the Government of Nunavut, and it notes that there is a "healthy tension" between the office and the government. In your report you have on page 40, "Due to the nature of our work, we acknowledge the healthy tension that exists between our office and the GN. However, we also recognize the importance of working together..."

My question, I note that Family Services says on occasion that they disagree on the representative's perspective. I would like to ask the other departments: when they don't agree with the representative, how do they deal with the problem? Do they talk amongst the two departments and the representative? How would you handle it or how did you handle it? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I will direct that question first to the Department of Health. Ms. Brown.

Ms. Brown: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In responding to that question, I think

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ultimately the end goal is the same for the representative's office and the Department of Health in what we want to achieve for the children and youth. Sometimes there may be a difference in the process that is used to get there.

We have considerations in the Department of Health related to some of the protocols or policies or expectations or legislation that are in Health and they might differ in terms of what the representative is bringing forward to the table. It requires a lot of discussion and trying to figure out a way to get to the end goal together. As has been the case in the circumstances that have been raised with Health through the representative, we have been able to come to a good outcome based on that.

We have learned along the way as we have gone along. For example, on the issue around the advocate office outlining the deficiencies in the training of mental health staff, we took their information and we worked with them and now they're a part of the two-week course that is taught to all new and returning nurses on training. That's just one example. In most of the cases there is a way for us to come to some agreement and a solution in the best interest of the children and youth and families. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) For the next department, Department of Education, in terms of responding to the same question, Ms. Flaherty.

Ms. Flaherty (interpretation): Thank you. To date we haven't heard whether there have been problems in that area. When they inform the Department of Education through the (interpretation ends) Partner Relations Division, (interpretation) we work with that division concerning the schools and the other

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divisions of the Department of Education that are responsible for that. It's set up properly right now, but at the beginning there were some organizational problems.

Perhaps since the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth is not so new anymore and we have worked well together with them, the process is set up properly. We would like to see requests through that office only because it's set up properly. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you as well. Department of Justice, Ms. Strickland.

Ms. Strickland (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank you for that question. Concerning the Department of Justice, there haven't been too many people who needed services. When the representative's office informs us of who needs services, we follow their direction and we work well with them. It's through understanding each other and cooperating with them, and that's what we follow. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Akoak, are you done? Ms. Nakashuk.

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, witnesses.

The first question I would like to ask is...and I would like to recognize those who spoke in Inuktitut. I can't speak eloquently, but I would like to ask first of all in regard to the opening remarks of the child and youth representative's office. I don't have the Inuktitut version. When you're going to be publishing them, some people want to see them in Inuktitut. This is something that I would like to see as there is a demand for it.

(interpretation ends) In you opening comments you had stated as well that

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UNICEF has recognized the importance of the representatives.... Let me state this right. The office has been guided in its work by the *Representative of Children and Youth Act*, an Act that has been praised by UNICEF Canada as a model piece of legislation for other jurisdictions in Canada and worldwide, namely, for its incorporation of Inuit societal values.

When we're talking about ISV, I'm just curious and looking at the reports that your office brought forward, I'm curious to know how often the elder advisors meet. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There should be copies of opening comments available to all Members in Inuktitut. I just want to clarify that. We meet with our elder advisors and work with them on an as-needed basis. There is no set schedule, but I can give you some examples of how we work together.

For instance, initially when elder advisors were selected, they came into Iqaluit and took training with our team over a two-day period, training and orientation to our work, to our staff that they would be working with. Elder advisors also came into Iqaluit in May 2018, almost a year ago. When we held our staff retreat, they were a part of that. At the staff retreat they discussed the various aspects of the business of our office with us over the entire retreat.

Our staff also work with elder advisors to assist our child and youth advocacy specialists with managing their cases if the specialist deems that support from an elder advisor would help support the advancement of that particular file.

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Elder advisors also worked with our office on the conduct of the systemic investigation into mental health services for children and youth.

They also helped our office with respect to the storyline and development of *Mosesie Speaks Up*, the book that is now in schools across the territory.

We don't have a strict way of working with elder advisors or a strict schedule. It's very fluid and we involve our elder advisors in every aspect of our work across the board. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you for clarifying that. In the 2017-18 annual report it outlines how elders have assisted children and youth clients dealing with the Department of Justice or going through the courts. That's why I asked what your foundation has been as the children and youth representative's office. Elders have very strong words. How are you going to base your work? I would like more information on that.

As she stated, we are lacking mental health workers within Nunavut. We still don't have child mental health services in Nunavut. What are your recommendations to the government on what more they can do or what additional assistance they can provide for children? (interpretation ends) If we know we're facing issues in terms of not meeting the mental health of the youth, (interpretation) what other work do you do in that area? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

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Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As indicated in our 2017-18 annual report and as indicated in my opening comments, our office has initiated an investigation into mental health services for children and youth in Nunavut. That report will be tabled and publicly released in the spring of 2019. Until that happens, I'm unable to comment on the nature of those recommendations.

What I can say is that there will be 15 recommendations issued to the Government of Nunavut and some of those recommendations will contain themes or elements of themes that have been highlighted in the past annual reports issued by our office. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Recognizing the clock, we will break for lunch. (interpretation ends) We will be back here at 1:30. Thank you.

>>Committee recessed at 12:00 and resumed at 13:28

Chairman (interpretation): Welcome back, my colleagues and guests, to the meeting on the Representative for Children and Youth in Nunavut. Before lunch break, we still had questions on the first thematic area. (interpretation ends) When we ended off just before lunch, we were focusing on the first thematic area, which were background and general questions about the representative's office. Ms. Nakashuk.

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have only one question and I'll have other questions afterwards.

I wanted to touch upon an issue that was brought up earlier by one of my colleagues about the representative almost reaching the end of her term, and also the vision and **Δº/«ኦር»**: L'a. L°a 'bኦትዘላኦ' Cd'JJ ው^ቴ b^ቴ ሀርኦ b^ቴ ታላና'C ኦ'ጋን'Γር'a.J'. (ጋኒትበሀ') ኦበ'σላ^ቴ > J' 1:30-<'. 'd৮°a.广^ቴ.

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objectives that she would like to see in the future. Can you elaborate further about what you would like to see the office doing? That's my only question. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe that question was asked this morning.

In response to moving forward, the vision that our office and hopes that we have for the work down the road with respect to this office, I would like to highlight a few areas. One is the continuation of youth voice being at the centre of the work of the Government of Nunavut: and two, continued investment into the team of the RCYO, both in terms of the training supports and well-being supports provided to that office given the nature of the work that they do. Also, I would like to see the continued advocacy for additional resources dedicated to that office, so continue to phase in the final piece of its mandate and continue to evolve and grow as service demands increase as they have over the recent years.

I believe that touches on all the areas that we highlighted this morning. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I believe Ms. Nakashuk's question was specifically focused on additional positions. Ms. Nakashuk.

Ms. Nakashuk: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, that is the question I am trying to find out. With your budget and the PYs of eight people that you have in your office right now, I'm just curious how many additional positions are you thinking of, or is there

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something that you feel should be added? If we are talking about the vast territory and all the communities not being met, with eight staff, I'm sure is not enough. That is why I'm wondering: would you foresee additional positions to meet the communities? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you for the clarification and my apology; I misinterpreted the question that was asked.

In terms of staff specifically and growth, I would like to share with the Committee that the most recent request for additional resources, we requested two additional PYs to our office. That is the minimum that we require immediately in my opinion in order to realize the full potential of our mandate. Those positions, as previously mentioned, one is a critical injury and death investigator so that we can bring that final component of our office on board.

The other position that we asked for, which we didn't talk about this morning, is a manager of individual advocacy services because of not only the number of files but the complexity of files. The director provides a lot of joint advocacy support to our staff on the management of those files, which has meant that the systemic advocacy program that is also supposed to report to the director has not been able to do so since we opened our office. We thought there might be a decrease in demand on the director's time, but that hasn't been the case; there has only been an increase. As a result, the systemic advocacy program has reported directly to me since we opened.

We requested a manager position for individual advocacy support to allow the

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manager to shift to the full responsibilities within her job description, which she is not able to do, and for the representative position to be able to shift more to their job responsibilities as well. We have made some decisions based on our current staffing capacity as a temporary basis and it's just not, I don't think, in the best interest of the organization going forward for the systemic advocacy program to report to the representative of the office and for the director not to able to take on that responsibility.

We have requested, most recently in August 2018, those two additional positions at minimum. Although we didn't put a request in, there is also a significant demand and increase on the number of systemic issues that have been put forward to our office. As I mentioned earlier, when we are conducting a formal investigation such as the recent one that we are wrapping up now into mental health services for children and youth, it takes two staff to work one of those investigations because of the scope of work that needs to take place. That is best practice and that best practice was informed on our work and meetings with the Auditor General of Canada in understanding how they conduct investigations, as well as other independent advocacy offices across the country in developing our program.

Also in my opinion, if we want to tackle as an office more than one of those systemic issues at one time, there absolutely needs to be greater investment in the systemic advocacy area of our office as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Are you done? Okay. The next name on my list, Ms. Towtongie.

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τ CPD°% Γ. Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What we are discussing, as an Inuk, it is something that is foreign to me. The way we were brought up, we don't argue with our parents even when we become adults. I do like what you do, but there are a lot of regular Nunavummiut, elders included, who have nobody to turn to, including children.

(interpretation ends) Just an observation, Mr. Chairman, before I get to my question, the role of advocacy for children is a very foreign concept. In my lifetime we grew up and we followed the Inuit customs without having to talk back to our parents throughout our lifetime, and we are dependent, even when we get children, on our parents throughout our lifetime without an age limit. In fact, with the education system, they put a limit, grades 1, 2, 3, up to 12, but it doesn't define the maturity of the child in question. It's just the system and an artificial system at that and we adopted it.

I get concerned when we talk about mental health, clinical health, without reference to Inuit mental health concept; the holistic approach. In saying that, I believe the Auditor General did describe the best practices, but still it is a very foreign concept to a large majority of Inuit of Nunavut. Therefore my question to Justice, Health, and Family Services is: a large number of the public, children, youth, families, and parents are often at a loss when seeking information on government programs or services for children and youth. What kind of information referral procedures do these departments have when contacted for assistance in seeking services for children and youth, and that includes linguistic and cultural availability? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Ms. Towtongie. (interpretation ends) That is

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directed to Family Services? Maybe you could just clarify who you are asking the question to. (interpretation) Thank you.

Ms. Towtongie: I would like each of the departments to address it. We're talking about systematic advocacy, but I don't see any of these systems dealing with our ancient culture. I would like to see what kind of information referral procedure exists within each department. I am confident there are individuals out in Nunavut who feel they have no place to turn to. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Ms. Towtongie. (interpretation ends) I'm struggling with this a bit because we're here to focus not just generally on the departments. It is their interactions with the representative's office that we're most interested in. I'll start with Family Services, Ms. Niego, in terms of Ms. Towtongie's question and how it applies within your department. Ms. Niego.

Ms. Niego: Thank you, *Iksivautaq*. If I can refer this to Ms. White.

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

Ms. Henderson-White: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a very important question. In the work that we do, we ensure that the cultural aspects of our practice are sound and we ensure that when we make referrals, we're taking into consideration the cultural needs, as you mentioned.

We are limited in the fact that we still lack psychological resources. We have new child psychologists attached to our department or to the Government of Nunavut. That's one of the things that we are concerned about. There's a lack of child psychiatric services as

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well. We try to work as much as possible with elders, families, and extended families.

When we're placing children, the first line of consideration that we make is to extended family and within the community. As I indicated before, there's a clear lack of psychiatric, psychological and other professional services attached to those specific needs.

We try to work very closely with the children and youth advocate office because we have the same interest, which is the best interest of children and families and so forth to the community, but there is clearly a lack of these resources within the territory. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The same question posed to this time the Department of Health, Ms. Brown.

Ms. Brown: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are quite a few services and programs that are available and we can compile the information, if you like, about the mental health services. I sense that there is confusion out there about what these services are and how to access them, but there are multiple access points depending on what it is that is required.

As a foundational base, there are the community wellness committees in each of the communities. Part of their role is to determine what the needs of the community are and to share those with the help of staff and also at the same time to develop the capacity and ability to culturally provide the programs and services and organize them. They are sort of our source of information, but that's one aspect of it.

There are also lots of programs that are

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culture based and targeted at youth and children that are delivered through the Quality of Life Secretariat and my colleague, Kim Masson, is the associate deputy for that secretariat. There are quite a few programs and we're constantly developing more and more after we get feedback from youth and families saying that this is lacking or that that is needed.

With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I would like Kim Masson to just shed some light on the types of services that might be available. Thank you.

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

Ms. Masson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, there are a number of very specific programs that we're working on developing and really trying to make far more robust. We're particularly working with traditional counsellors who have been trained in "Our Life's Journey" and similar programs by Ilisaqsivik and Pulaarvik Kublu in Rankin Inlet. As agencies, they are trying local counsellors to provide for the needs of our communities.

In addition, with our grants and contributions programming, local community members and hamlets are able to access funding for supplemental programs and those supplemental programs that I can think of are, for example, the Makimautiksat program for young people. It's designed to be a youth mental wellness program designed by the Qaujigiartiit Health Research Centre. We're funding training for trainers in that program around the territory and hope to have individuals able to facilitate the program in multiple communities, if not all in the territory, when they are able.

Additionally, some of our communities are

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working with some of their traditionally based Aboriginal Healing Foundation counsellors and elders that were practising a number of years ago when that funding was in place. They are revitalizing those and securing training, support, and honoraria for that to be provided for not only children and youth but all community members.

I think of the Mianiqsijiit program in Qamani'tuaq that's, again, providing some local holistic support for individuals. There are multiple ways that we are trying to make that system more robust, as well as the clinical side of it with the elements of things like access to SickKids and therapy through there and/or psychiatric services, as well as helplines, Kid's Help Phone. Significantly we're working within the territory. They have an indigenous-based branch now and they would like to work with our traditional counsellors in order to support better programming that they can offer for young people online, which may be a more preferred method of access for young people potentially. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Now for the Department of Education, if you can respond to the same question, Ms. Flaherty.

Ms. Flaherty (interpretation): Thank you. I also thank you for the question. In the fall of 2017 the Department of Education increased support services for students who have literacy problems. Also, recreation or sports people who have to go to different schools, all the schools in the Kitikmeot, Kivalliq and Baffin regions have been visited. School counsellors also handle delivery of specialized services in the schools and they look to see how else children can be helped.

In 2017-18 the Department of Education introduced a new way to help more with this matter. All the schools in Nunavut are visited

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twice for teaching and to provide more training to kids about language. Also, since January 2019 there are visits by a physiotherapist and a linguist that have been going to the schools to help. We are also looking for proposals that can help children with hearing problemms, and therapists for children who are misbehaving too much. Sometimes someone needs to come and help calm them down. That will be looked at as well as help for children who need help with mental issues. Those are some of our plans for this year.

If you may, my assistant can add to that.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Please keep it short, Ms. MacMillan.

Ms. MacMillan (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) To ensure that the needs and special needs of our students receive supports and *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* and societal values are followed, we did create an education support services directive as of November 2018 which clearly lays out a process that involves the school team members, *Ilinniarvimmi Inuusilirijiit*, as well as parents throughout the entire referral process. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. The Department of Justice will be the last department to respond to this question. If you can respond, Ms. Strickland.

Ms. Strickland (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the question. There are two divisions within the Department of Justice with those responsibilities. There is community justice that has responsibilities and there are also victim services. They are notified when someone needs help.

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Chairman (interpretation): Yes. Mr. House.

Mr. House: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. All the programs in our facility are based on Inuit social values. There are mainstream programs, but once we get them, we call it "Nunavutize" them, make it so the kids can understand them and make it local to them.

We bring in elders all the time to talk to the kids, to counsel. We have a counsellor on staff as well that deals with any issues the kids have.

Our land program is run every week, where kids learn traditions, culture, and they go out on the boat, on skidoos, hunting, fishing. We don't just do this in the community. When our kids eventually go back home, we make sure there's a healthy transition to the home, so we involve community corrections, local elders, the RCMP in the communities so we can continue to care back into the communities.

There's always a big emphasis on family with us because we like to have families involved with the kids right through their stay with us because they are going to go back to their families and we want it to be not like they're annihilated for a period of time. We want to make sure they're still part of the family that they're going to go back to, so that's very important to us as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. I have no more names on my list at the

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It mentions on page 22 of the latest report that "Government service provides continue to be the main contact" in terms of individual advocacy. When you look at the other advocates across the country, you answered this morning, there are similar roles and there are some differences there. The fact that government service providers are the main contact for your office, is this something that is also seen in other parts of Canada or is this something that's unique to Nunavut? Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't know. We do a lot of comparison to other jurisdictions in certain respects, but this isn't one that we have necessarily explored. That statistic for us, though, here in Nunavut is quite telling. It is the highest source of contacts to our office year after year. It tells us two things. One thing is that it tells us that there is a lot of frustration being felt on the frontlines by frontline service providers. There are a large number of people working in departments doing very challenging work on a day-to-day basis on behalf of young people and they're feeling a sense of frustration in terms of feeling stuck at times in terms of the degree that they can help young people in their own departments.

That is quite telling from the statistics, but not only the statistics and the conversations that we have with service providers on our community visits; that's backed up and endorsed. It's quite telling in that respect to us, but no, we don't have a comparison to other jurisdictions with respect to that. \\ \Delta \cdot \cd

The last thing I'll say is that it tells us that service providers understand the provisions within our Act. They understand that anyone can raise a matter to our attention, whether you're a service provider, whether you're a young person, a family member, or a community member. They're understanding as well that when they do that, the information is held by our office in strict confidence and that there are in fact provisions within our legislation that protect them from any type of harm should there be disclosure that they brought that information forward to our office. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. (interpretation)
Thank you. Before we proceed to the next section, I would like to recognize Mr. John
Amagoalik and his wife. Please feel welcome in the Legislative Assembly.

>>Applause

You helped create our Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

(interpretation ends) Our next thematic area for today's discussion is focusing on the advocacy role. In terms of the reports, we're focusing on the sections that are titled "Reporting on Our Activities: Individual Advocacy and Systemic Advocacy." Just to let the Committee Members know that is where we are focusing. The first name on my list, Mr. Quassa.

Mr. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be speaking a little bit of English if it's okay with everyone.

(interpretation ends) Your 2016-17 annual report notes that 68 percent of individual advocacy cases involved the Department of Family Services. On page 19, a case sample describes a foster placement situation. Can

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you provide further detail on how your office works to address cases which involve child protection matters? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is in fact true; a large number of our cases do pertain to the Department of Family Services and of those cases, a significant number pertain to child protection matters. I'm going to, for further detail in terms of what that can look like, refer this question to Ms. Matte, the Director of Child and Family Services. Thank you.

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

Ms. Matte (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I think my microphone just kicked in.

Thank you for the question. It is absolutely correct to say that we have worked on a large number of issues pertaining to children in the care of the director or children receiving services through Family Services. We try to provide examples in our annual report. I would like to provide a few other examples of cases where we have supported young people and their families in receiving supports and services through this department.

One example is a young person who was in the care of the director, who had also run into the services of the justice system because there were some pending charges. The young person had been given some conditions by the court and the young person's social worker had interpreted those conditions to mean that the young person could no longer have their part-time job. ႭჂჿႭჼჼჂሲ⊲ჇჼႭჼჼ₽₽ჼჼ ჼႦϼჼჼ ፈჼፎჼልቭ ለ⊏ሲჼቴႶჼቴቭჼฃჼĽჼႱႠ ႠĽჼ₫ႫჼႱ ∆Ხ₹ჼჼႠϷՐፈሮჼኇና. ለʔᆉċና, ለʔᆉċ ∖>シᡃᢣ₽Րፈჼቴჼჼበ՟ጔՐσċჼ. ՙⅆታ°Ⴍቮჼ, ∆ჼᆉ≪₽Ċჼჼ.

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When our office became involved, we reached out to probation and we also spoke with the RCMP to get their interpretation of the order. Their opinion was that there was no reason why the young person couldn't continue to have their employment while waiting for the courts to deal with the matter.

As a result, we worked with the departments to come to a resolution on that matter by connecting those service providers so the information was shared. The young person was able to have their job reinstated and the employer was very happy to have them back at their job in the community.

Another example would be a situation where we had a young person who was living in a care facility and was going to be transitioning to a different facility. The young person didn't feel as though their opinions on where they should live were being heard properly by the department. We worked with that young person in order to make sure that the department had the opportunity to hear the young person's thoughts. Hearing a young person's thoughts doesn't mean the young person always gets what they're asking for. It means their opinion was considered in the decision.

Another example would be around ensuring visitation occurs. Sometimes young people's visitation, especially if they're not in the community where their family lives, can be tricky to keep track of and to make sure it happens on a regular basis. That's another area where we have helped young people and their families connect, ensuring that they're getting the visits that they're entitled to while in the care of the director. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

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Mr. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Again, just on your 2016-17 annual report, it notes on page 19, "Lack of planning and communication with foster parents." Can you describe what advice and recommendations your office provided to the Department of Family Services to improve this aspect of service delivery to children and youth across Nunavut? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to refer this question to Lynn Matte to provide a little bit of additional detail to the case sample that's outlined on page 19.

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

Ms. Matte (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) What I would like to add regarding this particular case is that there was a breakdown in communication. The plan regarding the foster child had not been adequately communicated to the foster parents before action was taken.

A lot of the work that our office was doing was helping the social worker and the family to rebuild their relationship, to open up those lines of communication and make sure that the reason for the decisions that were being made was properly communicated to the foster parents, and also that the foster parents had an opportunity to share their thoughts on what was going on with the social worker, opening up those lines of communication, rebuilding that relationship, making sure that those foster parents understood why the decision was made and that it was actually a

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temporary decision and that the child would be returning to them, rebuilt that relationship and made sure that that young person received the care that they needed. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you. Under *Inuit Qaujimajatuqanit*, one of our goals is *Aajiiqatigiinniq*, having open discussions. I believe we understand what that means. It has become apparent that Nunavut government departments sometimes have problems in following these requirements.

Also to speak English a bit, (interpretation ends) a question to the Department of Family Services.

On page 19 of the representative's 2016-17 annual report, a case sample of a foster placement situation is described. At the top of the case sample it notes, "Lack of planning and communication with foster parents."

Can you describe some of the factors involved in the planning of foster care and what steps are taken to ensure that communication is ongoing between all individuals and agencies involved? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Niego (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) It is only in the last fiscal year that we've actually had foster care coordinator positions. Obviously three, one per region, will help, but perhaps it is our frontline lack of resources that is likely one of the biggest contributors. However, of course we do have staff in every community

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and we could do our jobs better.

If I may, I'll defer it to Ms. White.

Chairman: You may. Ms. White.

Ms. Henderson-White: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As my Deputy Minister indicated, we know that there is more work that could be done to provide support to all foster families. It was the intent to secure funding to have three foster parent coordinators in place within the territory to support our foster families. We know that this is an area in our programming that requires even more support, even more structure, and even more resources. We have taken steps in that regard to provide support to our foster families.

We are also working on developing training for foster parents, which is something that we know that we need to continue to support. We also are making efforts with our coordinators to improve areas in terms of, as I indicated, training, recruitment, retention, and providing supports around resourcing and helping them in crisis situations. It's within crisis situations that sometimes needs and gaps are identified.

We have taken the recommendation from the office of the child advocate and we are making steps to improving and streamlining supports within our services. Thank you.

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

Mr. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Just to follow up on the question I had earlier to the office of the representative and back to Family Services, the representative's 2016-17 says that an earlier annual report noted that 68 percent of the individual advocacy cases involving the Department of Family Services

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related to family protection matters. What specific challenges does your department face in protecting the rights of children and youth? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Niego (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Of the 68 to 70, depending on the year, percentage, one of the main challenges is that our social workers are generalist social workers. Not only do they handle about 500 cases a year, so the actual percentage of our child cases are only 13 percent where the advocate is office is involved, it may be 60 percent of the cases that the advocate has, but it's about 13 percent of our department's child work.

However, our social workers also have adult cases. The adult cases are climbing up over the child cases. We're seeing some serious growth in more and more adults being referred to the department and it makes it very challenging on a day-to-day basis. Being especially a lone social worker in one community with a supervisor located in another community, 24/7 on call, the demands become very stressful, I would say, on our frontline worker. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Mr. Quassa, go ahead.

Mr. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you. I also thank you for the clarification. As Members, it is better to have a clear understanding on those matters and that's how it should be.

(interpretation ends) Just going back to the representatives, again, your 2016-17 annual report noted that 9 percent of individual

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advocacy cases involving the Department of Family Services related to adoption. Can you elaborate further on what kinds of issues are raised with respect to adoption and more specifically with respect to custom adoption practices in Nunavut? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to refer this question to Ms. Matte.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Ms. Matte, go ahead.

Ms. Matte (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thank you for the question. Although adoption is a much smaller portion of the cases we deal with, some of the issues that arise that require our additional assistance include issues such as delays in processing of paperwork. Sometimes families are in the process of trying to go through with an adoption and they feel like the process is taking a very long time. They are wondering what the delay is and how to get additional help to move that forward.

With custom adoption, because that is managed through custom adoption commissioners and not directly by the department, our involvement looks different. Generally, when it comes to a custom adoption situation, we help people connect with information, how you go about performing a custom adoption and who they can connect with, what that process looks like, and making sure they are connected to the adoption commissioner. It's not a Government of Nunavut service and so we are not usually involved directly in that whole process because it looks different and

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is operated by non-government service providers. I hope that answers your question. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you. My next question is for Family Services.

Members in the House have asked numerous times about the issue of custom adoption in the Inuit way. Perhaps I'll speak English in regard to that. (interpretation ends) What consideration has been given to amending the *Aboriginal Custom Adoption Recognition Act*, specifically with respect to improving the situation for children and youth who may be affected? By the way, the legislation is currently being implemented. (interpretation) I hope that was understandable. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Niego: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For amending the Custom Adoption Act, I believe my Minister has committed to doing so.

As the advocate's office has mentioned, the commissioners are independent of government to a degree. However, we are responsible for the training of the commissioners, and obviously need to amend or update the Act. The difficulty would be that we are a public government and so it requires commitment by the Inuit organizations to be involved and perhaps the communities to be involved in identifying what those customary issues are, especially given today where our population numbers are higher and we're not as familiar even with our own family members given distance and intermarriages to other communities. The

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customary piece is changing to the times.

We need to be very careful, committed to the Inuit, hearing the Inuit organizations and the communities, Inuit themselves before any amendments can be made. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Following my list of names, Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon. My question is in regard to page 18 of your office's 2016-17 annual report. It notes that 60 percent of individual advocacy cases in that year involved the Department of Health while, on page 25 of your 2017-18 annual report, it notes that 31 percent of individual advocacy cases in that year involved the Department of Health. In your view, what accounts for the decrease in the number of individual advocacy cases involving the Department of Health from year to year? Thank you, *Iksivautaq*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you as well. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have no way of predicting what types of cases are going to come to our attention year after year. It is dependent on an individual's circumstances and their individual struggles. There will be some variance year after year.

We have no further comment, I think, than just to say that it is the nature of what comes forward is very unpredictable. The only thing that we have seen pretty steady over the three and a half years that we have been open in terms of individual advocacy cases is that we are dealing with the Department of Health quite a bit consistently. They tend to hold that second spot in terms of the number of cases that are brought forward year after

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year, following the Department of Family Services.

Beyond that, it would be pure guesswork for me to speculate why that shift year after year in terms of the number of health-specific cases that are brought forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I said earlier, my second question around this is that a lot of these advocacy cases involving the Department of Health related to rehabilitation services. Can you provide some examples of what your office provides advocacy support for in this area? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am going to refer this question to Lynn Matte. Thank you.

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

Ms. Matte (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thank you for the question. Many of our cases that involve rehabilitation or occupational therapy services are usually a coordination of services piece. It often involves other departments, such as the Department of Education, and making sure that the right supports are in place for a young person so that their physical needs are being met so that they can succeed in another location such as the school. Sometimes it is that connection of services that would be the lead item under that particular service area. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the Department of Health: how has the Department of Health worked with the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth to develop ways to improve rehabilitation services to children and youth? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Brown: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have to say that I don't have the details specifically related to the rehab in the school settings that was referred to in the example, but we can have that conversation with the representative of the children and youth office and get you some information and we will also look to see what sort of actions Health has taken. At this moment I can't respond to that. I don't know the circumstances behind the rehab incidents that have occurred. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. While we're on the topic of schools and advocacy, one of the things that have been spoken about quite a bit in the past is the lack of assessments on children who are suffering with their schoolwork and their placement. What kind of involvement does your office have in this area? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It has absolutely been cases come to our office's attention with respect to lack of assessments for young people on their

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Now, what we do with our individual advocacy work, our individual advocacy work also feeds into our systemic work. Our systemic work, we identify systemic issues through many sources. Our individual advocacy data is a big source for that. When we spot an issue on an individual basis, that rears its head several times, then that gets carried over into the systemic database. We have absolutely done work in this area on an individual advocacy basis and we have it noted in our systemic database along with a significant number of other issues, but it is there for recording for future consideration for either informal systemic advocacy review or formal. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your response. I think this is an area that will require a lot more focus on. Going forward, is that something that you can continue to work with the departments with, like the Department of Health or with Health, to ensure those kinds of assessments are going to be something that's regularly done? Is that the influence that you can have on that system? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On a go-forward basis, any

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individual matters that a young person is struggling with pertaining to assessments, our child and youth advocacy specialists deal with that.

In terms of the bigger piece, which I think is more in line with what your question is speaking to, can we? Yes, we can. We do have that authority to work on those bigger picture issues. I need to reiterate to the Committee that we have a significant number of systemic issues identified in that database and we have two systemic team members.

Whether or not when we get to it, if we get to it, there is big competition in that database for our staff's attention from a systemic perspective and very limited resources to carry out those reviews because those reviews.... First of all, systemic issues get categorized. Are they formal? Do they require a formal investigation to resolve or can they be resolved informally? It would depend on each issue; its categorization.

Those informal issues, because that list is so extensive, we didn't want to just depend on conducting formal reviews that would take a year and a half and our full staff complement in terms of systemic advocacy to complete. We really wanted to get a bit innovative, which is why we have the other categorization system that says, "Okay, this is an informal issue and maybe we can move this issue forward at proactive meetings with departments and in another way."

There are different ways of doing that, but even there's competition in terms of our staff time for advancing all those issues that are categorized as informal. We absolutely have the authority within the scope of our mandate to look into matters like that. It is a matter that is recorded in our systemic database and that is very important and an issue here in Nunavut.

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I can't comment further than that in terms of next steps of our office in terms of a selection of a systemic issue for an investigation following the mental health review, but it's definitely one that is on our list for consideration. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The next name I have on my list is Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My first line of questioning is a major issue facing the youth of our territory and that is the high rates of child sexual abuse in Nunavut. I'm a bit surprised that there was no reference to it in the representative's annual report or in the Department of Family Services' director of child services' annual report.

Just to save some time, I'm going to pose a three-part question and this is for the child and youth representative.

Have you had any cases specifically related to child sexual abuse and, if so, how many and are we speaking a few, a lot, or do you get them every year? The next question is: what are your observations, views, or analysis of the current situation? The last question is: what recommendations would you have on how to address this issue and means to find a possible solution? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Ms. McNeil-Mulak, as Mr. Lightstone said, that was a three-part question, so if you would like to answer in three parts, I'll leave it up to you.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to address your first question which is: do we have cases that pertain to child sexual abuse in Nunavut in

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our individual advocacy work? We absolutely do. I don't have those exact numbers to provide you today, but it is definitely an issue that we have dealt with and supported families through on different occasions. It is also one of those issues in responding to Ms. Angnakak's question and describing a little bit about systemic advocacy because it has appeared multiple times through our individual advocacy cases and we looked at that data to help inform our systemic work. It is an issue that has carried over and is noted in our systemic database for future consideration of review, with a tremendous amount of other issues, I might add.

I can't speak to the analysis and recommendations. That would be in and of itself what would be produced by a systemic review on the subject matter. I can comment and say that we are, as an advocacy office, aware of the issue. We are very happy that the issue has been addressed in this House. We would support continued discussion around it. We work to reduce the stigma that surrounds that topic as a community and to keep the conversation going.

Our staff did over the past year, which you will see reported on in our next annual report, participate in such things as the development of "Our Children, Our Responsibility," the workshop to talk about preventing child sexual abuse, and we took part in ITK's meeting in November 2018 on prevention of child sexual abuse. All of this gets added into our database and those activities of some of our work that we started in that area and some of the initiatives led by other organizations that we have been a part of in the last fiscal year will be reflected in our next annual report. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that response. I hope that you will have the ability to conduct a systemic review on that issue at a later date.

I would like to pose the same line of questioning to the Department of Family Services. I would first like to enquire why there's.... I believe there might be one minor reference to child abuse rates in the territory in your annual report, but I was curious why the Department of Family Services has not decided to address the issue full-on in the annual report and what their observations, views, and analyses of the current situation are and once again, what recommendations that they may have on how to address the issue and find a solution. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Maybe I'll just add to Mr. Lightstone's question. I'll take that question in light of the department's relationship with the representative. I'm just trying to keep the focus on the representative's office. I understand this is an important issue, but in respect of the relationship that your department has with the office and Mr. Lightstone's questions on this issue, Ms. Niego.

Ms. Niego (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I would consider this topic one of my speciality areas and one of the main things that I would be committed to in regard to our department, particularly the Child and Family Services Division and our working with the office of the child and youth advocate. This is where we totally agree on listening to the voice of the child or youth. This is where our department's concentration is perhaps not so

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much in an annual report but in how we do our work.

For me, the importance is in training our frontline. I do not have faith in our communities' ability to hear children because of how sensitive sexual abuse is to a child. It is something experienced by a child at too early an age where they can't even formulate the proper language, perhaps. The number one importance is finding that voice for the child and that would be through training not just social workers, police officers, teachers, health professionals, anywhere where there is contact with the child. All of those members of the public, everyone should be attuned to what the signs and symptoms of child abuse are. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank you, Ms. Niego, for that response. I would like to move on now to another topic. A common theme that seems to be repeated in the representative of children and youth's annual reports is the high rates of turnover and the rates of transient employees. I would like to ask if the representative would be able to provide us some examples of specific positions that are being referred to. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do have some specific cases that we can walk you through to give some examples of turnover and vacancies and the impact that that's having on the lives of young people in this territory. I'm going to refer the question to Lynn Matte and she will walk us through those. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Matte (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) There are several different positions that are regularly raised to our attention through our individual advocacy cases and in fact some of the individual advocacy cases that we have worked on have been group advocacy regarding vacant positions. We have monitored staffing processes for certain positions when those are raised to our attention as a concern. Some examples would include mental health positions in communities and community social service worker positions.

We've also had a case where we have monitored the community school counsellor position, the *Inuusilirijiit Iliniarvimmi*. I apologize; I'm probably mangling that word. I should have memorized it, the formerly known as school community counsellor position. Those are some of the positions where our office has seen vacancies or turnover lead to either a complete lack of services or delays in the ability to access services for young people. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to next pose my questions to the Department of Health, the Department of Family Services, and the Department of Education. I would like to enquire what specifically each of those departments has done to address the high turnover rates and vacancies of those three positions that have been identified. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) We will start with the

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Department of Education this time.

Ms. Flaherty: Oh, us? (interpretation) I apologize. I was expecting you to start from the other end.

(interpretation ends) We do have *Ilinniarvimmi Inuusilirijiit* in all the schools and the RCYO, *Inuusilirijiit Ilinniarvimmi*, you stole a PY from us. (interpretation) All of the schools have counsellors at this time. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) In terms of the question posed by Mr. Lightstone, we will go to the Department of Health, Ms. Brown.

Ms. Brown: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We're in a constant state of recruitment and trying all kinds of approaches that we think might work around the retention of it. Some of the positions... Well, most of the positions in the area of mental health are short across the country, so we are competing with the workplace that provides opportunities that are in other places. We're doing our best to try to promote the value of the work up here and the breadth of experience that health professionals can get.

At the same time, for every strategy that we implement, we try to look to see what local community members can be used to serve in those positions. My understanding is that we're at the point now where we have 50 percent of our mental health outreach workers who are from the communities and they speak Inuktitut. All of our community oral health coordinators, for example, are local staff. All of our community health development coordinators that plan out the health care needs of their communities are local people.

We are working also with colleges and

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institutions to try to see if we can implement programs in all fields so that there is less reliance on having to bring people up here who are of a transitory nature. Any ideas that people have are welcome and we will continue to pursue that. It is absolutely critical and it is critical because it affects the patients first of all, but it's also critical because when you work with an inadequate number of people, it puts pressure on those people too and they burn out. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) This time around you're the last department up, Ms. Niego.

Ms. Niego (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) There are several things that the department is doing to try to address the rates of turnover. Firstly, we have just started running open job advertisements, building up a pool of applicants of CSSWs into our social work community. It is the first time, so we will see how it goes. It will take some time to build that first pool and then maintain it.

We also are working with the college in support of the social worker program. This summer we have five, I believe, of the students entering their practicums with our department. We're almost at the finalization of our organizational review. We may need to improve child and family services; how it fits within the department.

We have been improving our training and supports for staff. Upon reviewing exit interviews of staff who leave, I have taken those quite seriously and recognize that there is not enough communication amongst our staff and interdepartmentally. One way is to concentrate on the performance management process, ensuring that supervisors are continually meeting with their direct reports.

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Additional to that, what will assist is our new database, our child and family services database. It is a roles-based system, which means that the frontline person in the community will have certain access; the supervisor has access, and the manager, and so on. There's immediate access to the information in that community, even if you're dislocated from it, so that better supports and immediate help for a community, we can better monitor data out of the communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank all the officials for those responses. I would like to move on to my next line of questioning.

Part of the representative's mandate is outreach and passing on this valuable information to children and youth. I appreciate that the Department of Education has worked with the representative in developing the *Mosesie Speaks Up* book for grade 3 students.

I would like to enquire with the Department of Education if they're working with the representative's office to incorporate their roles into the curriculum. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Department of Education, Ms. Flaherty.

Ms. Flaherty (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank you for the question. That's not the only book that has been published. We have others that will be used in the schools by the teachers. There are also other books that were published regarding one's body parts and their

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functions. There are also books that are child-friendly about appropriate touching and other things to be aware of as a child. Further, if this body is mine, then any parts ought not to be touched inappropriately by others. Those are the kinds of resources that we use in the school system. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Ms. Flaherty, for that response. I would just like to reiterate my question. I believe that the roles of the child and youth representative and their office are extremely important, and I think that it's also very important that children and youth understand the representative's role. I would like to know if the Department of Education is working to build that into the current curriculum. I'll ask the Department of Education again if they're working with the office of the child and youth representative to do so. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Flaherty (interpretation): Thank you for your question. Usually when the representative comes into the communities, they go to the school. I'll also indicate that in 2018-19 the communities that have been visited are Qikiqtarjuaq, Arviat, Pangnirtung, Kimmirut, Pond Inlet, and Sanikiluaq, and in 2019 they also visited Igloolik, Grise Fiord, and Naujaat.

I would like to refer the question to my assistant, Ms. MacMillan, to provide information about some of the other programs that we have.

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

Ms. MacMillan (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In addition to those programs, we also work in collaboration with the representative's offices in regard to the youth conferences, which again focus on positive empowerment, resiliency, and mentorship roles for our youth.

In addition to that, we have the "Be Safe" training kits that are focused for children aged five to nine. All of our grade 4 teachers were trained in regard to this program and that is part of the curriculum and strengthening the child sexual abuse prevention efforts.

As well, at the high school level we have the Aulajaaqtut program, which again focuses on empowerment, resiliency, and developing those sorts of improvements and supports for our students. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the department for that information. I'm just curious if all of those programs that were described actually explain the role of the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth, and explain what they do and how to contact them if ever need be. I think it's essential to incorporate that information into the curriculum so that every teacher in Nunavut will teach children about the office of the children and youth representative.

Having specific programs is great, but if having it specifically in the curriculum at every grade or every other grade to **Δ⁶/
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reintroduce this information as the children grow older, I think, would be an ideal situation to really solidify this amongst our youth. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I think that kind of sounds like a suggestion for the department. Ms. Flaherty, do you care to respond?

Ms. Flaherty (interpretation): Well, like we heard this morning from the representative, they go to 12 communities every year as part of their mandate and they go and talk to the schools on what they do. As part of their mandate, they do their own presentation in the schools to the students on what they do as representatives and the fact that children's voices need to be heard. We each have our own responsibilities and we want our students to learn what we teach, especially the students in the higher grades. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Lightstone, are you done? Okay. Following my list of names, Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Reading the report on pages 26 and 27 on the statistics, I have a question. Was the survey done in-house or was it done independently? That's my first question, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Ms. Towtongie is referring to the client satisfaction survey that's summarized on pages 26 and 27 of the 2017-18 annual report. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Initially the client satisfaction survey was done in-house. We had an opportunity to rehire one of our summer students and support the student as they continued their education, so they initiated

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the survey for us. Since then, it has been contracted out of our office because the student is no longer available to us to support that area of our work.

Another thing that I want to add is that this satisfaction survey wasn't just a point-in-time survey. These satisfaction surveys are conducted for every case that's closed within our office, so they're ongoing with each case closure. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that response. I like to deal with realistic figures, so it was quite rosy when I read the survey.

However, my question is on page 25 of the 2017-18 annual report. Figure 6 indicates that a number of individual advocacy cases involving the Department of Health related to out-of-territory care. Can you explain how your office follows up on cases which are outside of the territory of Nunavut and how you work with agencies in other jurisdictions to address individual advocacy case issues? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our office absolutely supports young people from Nunavut who have to leave the territory in order to receive services. If it's a child or a youth whose home base is here in the territory and they can't be provided with the services by a given department and are sent out, then we can absolutely support them. The support might look a little differently because our law here isn't allowed to cross the border when that young person crosses the border. It looks

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a little bit differently. Rather than dealing directly with a service provider on the ground, a third party that's delivering services on behalf of the GN, we still work with the GN, the department back here on the ground to obtain information and updates and work on the file.

In addition to that, our office is a member of the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates. As a member of that council, we have entered into a memorandum of understanding with advocacy offices that exist in all other jurisdictions across the country. That allows us to seek support and receive support from other advocacy offices in other jurisdictions as well. Those two things combined absolutely allow us to support young people's advocacy needs when they are sent outside of the territory. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just an observation: Inuit children are used to traditional food. I wonder, within that memorandum of understanding, the needs of a child are considered such as traditional foods.

My question is, on page 19 of the 2016-17 annual report, it notes that 14 percent of cases involving the Department of Health related to general health services were usually accessed through community health centres. Can you describe some of the challenges faced by health centre staff in providing specific services to children and youth, and how the department has worked with the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth to find ways to address these challenges? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you.

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(interpretation ends) The way you worded it, I'm assuming that's directed to the Department of Health. Ms. Brown.

Ms. Brown: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm assuming the stats are referring to the 14 percent of the cases that were dealt through the patient advocate office. We see thousands of cases coming through to the health centres and in the health care service. With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I would like my colleague, Charleen Austin, the ADM of Operations, to shed some more information on that topic. Thank you.

Ms. Austin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Hold on. (interpretation) Thank you. (interpretation ends) Ms. Austin, just wait for the red light to come on.

Ms. Austin: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the question. I would argue that in the last two to three years in particular, in the time frame that the representative has been working in advocating for children and youth, it has been some of the most challenging years in health care across the territory. As a department, we continue to struggle to staff at minimum requirements, but rest assured that that is not a problem that we take lightly.

When it comes to accessing services for Nunavummiut and our youth and children, we will provide what services we can within the territory. We are very committed to ensuring that the services that we need to access out of the territory, we are working to finding craftier ways to do this. Some examples of that would be continuing to expand our out-of-territory service list, in particular with mental health. We are looking at the Child First Initiative in particular to access psychological services for children and youth.

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In addition, we are looking at a robust recruitment and retention strategy, including our Nunavut and Inuit educational upgrading program. With a shortage of staff across the territory, it is very important that we cultivate programs that can put jobs back in the communities and have positions in health that are led by Nunavut Inuit. Again, as Deputy Ministry Brown has said earlier, we are continuing to work towards more Nunavut Inuit employment and any suggestions to our department are welcome, including those from the office of the representative. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is directed to the Department of Education.

Page 23 of the report, 2017-18 and again page 20 of the report, 2016-17; in 2017-18 this describes a mental health assessment on a child and the subsequent actions of education staff, the DEA, and community social service worker; 2016 describes a case of a child with physical challenges who was unable to access reliable transportation to school. The representative's report indicates that these case examples demonstrate inadequate service coordination.

Can you describe what steps the department takes to ensure efficient coordination and communication when education staff work with other service providers to access and provide the necessary support and services to children and youth in the education system? Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is my final question.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Department of Education, Ms. Flaherty.

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(interpretation ends) As I mentioned this morning, anything that is coming out of the RCYO's office is flowed through the Partner Relations Division, and from the partner relations, it then goes to the principals of the schools where the child may be, and then the regional school operations is included in that request. The request is dealt with from the RCYO directly to the principals.

That communication opens up, begins, and then until the closure of the case, then once the case is closed, I'm finally informed that it was dealt with and how it has been resolved or if there are additional supports that need to be in place. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Before we move on to the next name on my list, I just wanted to follow up on something that was mentioned earlier. In terms of the representative and your office, government employees are one of the biggest sources of your information or your contacts.

In the past years, in your experience, have you seen any cases where government employees were discouraged from contacting your office, whether it be, let's say for example, a teacher or a nurse or anyone? Has that come to your attention and/or have there been any cases where there have been repercussions or negative consequences for government employees who have flagged issues to your office? Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The first part of your question, yes, it has come to our attention on occasion

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that employees have been discouraged from contacting our department. I'm happy to report that it's not a frequent occurrence and when it has happened, we addressed it immediately and elevated it within the department and the challenge was resolved. To my knowledge, there have never been any repercussions experienced by an employee as a result of contacting our office. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Thank you. Just to follow up on something you mentioned earlier, you mentioned that persons who contact your office are protected or there are measures in place to protect them. I believe you referred to the legislation, but it might be something useful to clarify for anybody who may be listening who might be interested in contacting your office, if you can maybe provide a bit more information in that regard. Ms. Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Anyone is able to make contact with our office regarding an issue relating to child or youth. That can be a family member, a foster parent, a community member, a child or youth themselves, or a government service provider. We accept any and all contacts and we encourage them.

When anyone reports an issue to our office, we are held under very strict confidentiality provisions outlines in the *Representative for Children and Youth Act*. There are only a very few exceptions to the provisions to maintain confidentiality within our office. For instance, if it's disclosed to us that a young person is in need of care or protection, we do have a duty in that case to report that. There are a few exceptions, but they are very limited.

In our Act it is actually outlined that it is an

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offence to punish or impose penalties on a person that makes a report to our office to obstruct, hinder, or resist the representative in exercising her powers or to refuse to comply with the lawful requirements under the Act or to give false information to the representative. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Thank you for clarifying that. I thought it was something important to maybe reiterate or get out there.

We are about to go on a break, but before we do, Mr. Mikkungwak.

Mr. Mikkungwak (interpretation): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. My first question doesn't have much to do with what is in the report, but your office deals with the rights of children and youth in Nunavut.

First of all, I want to ask about children and youth out there that we are planning for and thinking of their future. This is my first question for the office about children and youth. If a youth or child doesn't go to school, how do you deal with and think of that child in terms of not getting services, neglect, or issues related to safety? How does your office deal with students or youth and children whot aren't in school? I'll speak in English. (interpretation ends) Would it be considered child neglect if this child or youth is not attending school? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have absolutely dealt with individual advocacy cases that have pertained to non-attendance of students at school for a whole host of reasons. I'm going to refer the question to Ms. Matte and she can walk through, maybe, an example or two of what

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those cases entail and what interventions our office has put in place to help support that young person.

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

Ms. Matte (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I will answer this in two parts. The first part is, under the *Child and Family Services Act*, which is the responsibility of Family Services, it lays out grounds for what would constitute a child in need of protection. Non-attendance at school by itself does not necessarily constitute a child in need of protection. That, in conjunction with some other things that may be going on in a young person's life, may and is the responsibility of that department to make a determination.

It requires some good communication between educators and social workers to make a decision about whether or not this is a child in need of protection. We all recognize that there are some tensions with the education system given the history of our territory and the realities of what residential school has done to families and relationships.

In situations where we have helped young people who have been dealing with concerns around non-attendance, most of those cases have actually been cases where the young person has contacted us, worked with us directly, to say that they were experiencing barriers to attend school and that they wanted support and assistance to overcome those barriers.

Some of the barriers included things like concerns around bullying. They didn't feel comfortable going to school, even travelling to and from school, and what could be done in their community to reduce the bullying and make them feel comfortable and safe

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Another example is around a young person who was experiencing some difficulties attending school because they have younger siblings and sometimes the family relies on them for assistance with child care so the parents can go off to work. We were trying to work with them to figure out what other supports could be put in place to assist that family so that the young person could attend school.

Those are some examples of situations where we have tried to help with school attendance. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you as well. Mr. Mikkungwak.

Mr. Mikkungwak (interpretation): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Just to add another question to the response, my next question is for the Depastment of Family Services. Looking at the entire territory of Nunavut, are there enough foster homes for children in care or is there a shortage? If you are short of homes or families that can adopt or foster children in Nunavut, can you identify some numbers for us? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Niego: Thank you, *Iksivautaaq*. For example, in one community we may have enough foster parents for today for the number of kids requiring fostering. However, every child is different, so therefore they have different needs. We try to manage the needs of the child with the availability of the different types of foster families we have.

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Again, the issue of training for foster parents has already been raised. We could increase our capacity in training our foster parents, giving them the proper tools, providing them with the equipment. There are a number of areas around foster homes that need some work, although we may have enough for the current number of children in foster homes. The more we have, the more likely we can keep children from requiring higher levels of care, such as out-of-territory.

The more preventative work we can do leads to less on the serious end, but if I may, can I refer to my colleague?

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

Ms. Henderson-White: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much for the opportunity to talk about foster homes. As my DM has indicated, we're always in need of foster homes. I'm also very grateful that you have mentioned adoption and adoptive homes.

I think that given the opportunity to speak about this, it is very important for people in the community to reach out to open their homes not only for foster care but long-term planning and support care for children, which includes the availability of adoptive homes. That's one area that we would like to see develop, that we would like to have more of them developed further so that we are able to care for more children on a permanent basis within the territory through adoptive homes and foster homes. Thank you very much for raising that. It's an issue that we would like to raise awareness around and encourage

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families to reach out to become not only foster homes but adoptive homes as well.

As we mentioned before, we do need homes. We do need homes that can provide different levels of care, higher levels of care, and that will become part of our prevention resources within the territory so that going forward, we can develop capacity in the community to provide that much-needed support. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Mikkungwak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll ask this next question in English because I just couldn't think of a translation on the term I'll be using.

The question I have to the representative for children and youth office is, and no doubt this is evident in Nunavut, although it is not indicated in the report again, I did skim through the reports, but I did not come across it. How does your office deal with, in blunt terms, spoiled brats? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I believe you're talking about parenting or parenting skills. I believe that question could fall under parenting. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think this is a good opportunity for me to share that there are some restrictions in terms of the scope of our mandate. One of those restrictions is that our office does not get involved in private family matters or disputes between private family matters. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

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Mr. Mikkungwak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess I can thank the office for the response. I have this question to the departments, and with that question that I posed to the office earlier, the question I have now is to all departments.

As the Representative for Children and Youth's office is devoted to ensuring the rights of young Nunavummiut are respected, and you come across young individuals, whether it be children or youth, that are presented to your offices, how do you deal with that matter? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Mikkungwak. (interpretation ends) Maybe if you could rephrase the question. What type of youth in particular are you referring to? Are you referring to youth who are misbehaving or what? Maybe just be a little bit more specific.

Mr. Mikkungwak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For individuals in communities, children or youth, as the term I use, "spoiled brats," are bullying other children or youth that should also be respected, and if those cases are brought to your office's attention, how do they work and deal with these individuals, as it does no doubt impact the other children and youth within the community? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I guess this time we will start with the Department of Justice. Ms. Strickland.

Ms. Strickland (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the question. Mr. House can respond to that if you will allow him.

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

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Mr. House: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I could speak to my centre, the youth centre, and how we deal with spoiled brats, I guess. We have rules in place at the centre and the kids are very good. They love structure. When they come into the centre for the first couple of weeks, they like to push and see how far they can go. There are repercussions for that. We're not punitive in our things that we do for them, but usually what we find is that if a youth is misbehaving, there's a reason for it. We want to get to the reason for why they're misbehaving.

Every youth acts out. That's just part of their nature, but what I have found in my experience is there's always a reason for it. The sooner we can figure out why they're misbehaving, the sooner we can help them deal with that issue and get past it. That's how we would deal, at a centre level, with what we called a "spoiled brat" or someone that has never been told "no" or anything like that.

It's making them understand that there are consequences for behaviours and just that no matter what you have done or what you have had done to you, you can get past it and it can be made better. Usually with that, by the time they get ready to leave us, the unfortunate part is a lot of kids don't want to leave our centre and go back home, but we have no choice because their sentence is done. That's what we do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Department of Education, Ms. Flaherty.

Ms. Flaherty (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If a bully has been identified who refuses to attend school, the school principal is informed and the child who is bullying is given assistance. I would like to have my assistant, Tracy MacMillan, respond

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

Ms. MacMillan (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) There are a number of ways and strategies that our schools and educators help to support these students.

First of all, based on the *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* principles, each of our schools work with our DEAs in communities and they create an Inuuqatigiitsiarniq Policy, and that is one strategy that outlines supports for students.

In addition to that, it starts right at the classroom level for teachers, and they can differentiate the instruction, their instructional strategies, and the resources that they use in the classroom.

As well, in the school there are student support teachers, our *Ilinniarvimmi Inuusilirijiit*, and our school team members. Again, they will come to work with teachers, parents, and DEA members to find out and to try to meet the needs of the child. Why is this behaviour being exhibited?

Again, we also have different directives and educational support services at the department level. That child may need auditory assistance or occupational therapy. Again, there are many ways that we need to reach the students and put supports in place.

Also, throughout the curriculum there are support programs, such as RespectED, that directly deal with bullying and positive behaviours in schools. This program is available to our teachers as well as our students. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Department of Health, Ms. Brown.

Ms. Brown: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With your permission, I would like to ask my colleague to respond to that question. Thank you.

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

Ms. Austin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to mention that Health recognizes that the health of our children and youth is dependent on the health of families in our communities. As much as a focus, and the focus today has been on youth and children, it is important that Health acknowledge that in the treatment, care, and wellness of children and youth, we embrace families and support families when we can. One example of that would be the parenting program that was developed, a culturally relevant parenting program that developed with Qaujigiartiit Health Research Centre in Iqaluit as one example.

Furthermore, I think it's important to mention at this time that Health counts on the interagency work within communities and our partnerships with different departments of government to coordinate services, including Education and Family Services, but community wellness plans in our communities across the territory are very important to our youth and children in particular, especially those as mentioned previously not attending school.

In those community wellness plans, in each community there is at least one youth-centred program and we welcome much more than that. We know that youth have shared that self-esteem and boredom are some of their own personal concerns, along with connecting with their family members and

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Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Last of all, Family Services, Ms. Niego.

Ms. Niego (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's unfortunately the case. (interpretation ends) First I must say that that is not a term we would ever use given that our children and family services work is all about high-needs children, vulnerable youth, and those are more the terms, I think, we would use in English. High needs could be behavioural issues, medical, physical, and emotional, but it is the core of what our child role is within our department.

How we deal with the bullying aspect, if they were behaving in such a way, obviously we would assess for any underlying causes. We would refer to any available resources in that particular community. If there's an immediate safety concern, we would likely look for having a potential forming under the *Mental Health Act* where they would be referred, either through Quality of Life or mental health, or else if there's a very concerning safety element, then the police could also be called. However, this is the core of what we do and so every case, there's this assessment being done and handling the child as one with a particular need.

If I can refer to my colleague. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Henderson-White: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To add to what my DM has said, we also have support services that we can put in place for children that are acting out. As

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We have what we call voluntary service agreements under the Act which allow us to provide counselling referrals, support for putting in interventions that improve the quality of life for the family and for that youth, and we have supports like, as I indicated, referrals for mental health supports, educational supports, and other wraparound services. That is implicit and part of our Act.

For older youth, we have support services agreements for youth who come forward and are experiencing challenges. For even older youth who are over 19, we have extended support agreements and we would provide care and access to resources for them up to age 26.

There are tools that we use to provide for youth who are experiencing challenges and acting out on that basis and seeking help. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Thank you. Thanks to all the departments for your responses on that question. Before we move on, I'm going to call a 10-minute break. (interpretation) We will take a 10-minute break. Thank you.

>>Committee recessed at 15:28 and resumed at 15:51

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. We're now back, my colleagues and guests. Our second thematic area, as we discussed earlier, (interpretation ends) we were on the thematic heading of advocacy and relationship with government departments and this was for individual and systemic advocacy, and Mr. Mikkungwak.

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Mr. Mikkungwak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the departments for the response. Regarding the terminology I used, it was not in any way, form, or shape to put down the children or the youth of Nunavut; just terminology that we commonly hear in remote communities, but I just wanted to make that clear.

My last, final question here to the office of the children and youth representative is: how does your office advocate and ensure that children and youth who have a disability, either physically or mentally, are represented fairly in our territory of Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To date we have provided individual advocacy support to young persons with disabilities. Some examples of the type of supports that we provided and issues that these young people have faced, as already mentioned, access to school and ensuring that access and attendance is facilitated by ensuring the young person has appropriate transportation to move to and from school.

Also another item that came up is school assessments. Another area that we provide individual advocacy support in over the years is ensuring that children and youth are provided with the proper assessments so that their needs are clearly identified, and then we advocate for the proper supports to follow those assessments.

There are a couple of examples of cases that we have dealt with in the past for young persons with disabilities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Mikkungwak indicated that he's done.

(interpretation ends) Before I move on to the next name, I just wanted to throw in a question based on your opening comments. You mention on the third page of your opening comments that you're "extremely concerned about the weakness of the current system..." This is Family Services; "...the current system to support vulnerable children and families in need of protection and care." You go on to say, "There is a notable lack of investment..." I found that interesting because that is consistent with what I recall hearing from the Department of Family Services when it comes to budgeting and in terms of the need for additional resources and supports.

You mentioned that in your opening comments and then on page 31 of the annual report, you mention that your office met with the Auditor General regarding... It says in here on page 31 of the 2017-18 report, "We encouraged the OAG to consider a follow-up audit on Child and Family Services."

In terms of addressing that weakness of the current system, what is needed? Is it more money? Is it stronger oversight? In your opinion, understanding that you are not the department but you deal with the Department of Family Services a lot, is it something else that's needed in terms of making the current system stronger for children and youth? Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Absolutely, I think it's fair to say that our office and the department are on the same page with respect to concerns raised around capacity within the department. As Ms. Niego clearly identified, one of the issues, and we are in agreement with that, is that the social services workforce in Nunavut

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are generalists, so there's no specialty. Not just the caseload that they carry but the variety of cases can be quite complex.

There's definitely, from our perspective, a couple of things that we see the department doing and are really great signs, but there's definitely additional significant investment that needs to be dedicated to this department. We're pleased to hear from an operational perspective, and we have been touch with Family Services on this during several of our proactive meetings, that they're taking a look at the reporting structure within the department that, in our opinion, is problematic. I think, through our conversations with the department, they have agreed to that. I'm happy to hear Ms. Niego in her response today report that that is progressing, that review of the reporting structure within the department.

Also, outside of that, there is, from where we sit.... Although we didn't do a comprehensive workload assessment on the department, it was one of recommendations provided by the Auditor General of Canada to this government that the department do that. We see a tremendous burden on the social services workforce, like I said, in terms of the mix of cases, complexity of cases, number of cases, and as Ms. Niego stated, oftentimes these are sole positions within some of the communities and they are covering 24/7 care and supports for that sector, and so then we get into issues like burnout and vacancies. It's kind of a vicious cycle. There is definitely, in our opinion, a need to review reporting structure and definitely a need for this government to invest in additional resources within child protection.

We have had two auditor general reports done in this area over the past several years. The recommendations from the first report, ᠙ᢣᠫᡎᡒ᠘ᢗᠪᢣᡕ᠋ᡕ᠂ᢣᢛᡥᢕᡶᢗ᠂ᢗᡏ_ᠹᡐ᠋᠔᠙ᠪᡒᡥ᠘ᡊᠫᡶᢎ ᠙ᡥᠹᢣ᠙ᡫ᠕ᢣ᠙᠐ᢣᡣ᠋ᢛᡒ᠘᠇ᠮᢗ᠂ᢗᠮ᠙ᡆ᠂ᡏ᠙ᢧᢛ᠘ᠾ᠆᠑ᢣᢕᡕ

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there were so many, and there were so many significant deficiencies that the OAG came back again a couple of years later and still found progress to be lacking. When we met with the OAG, we did make that request. Of course we can only put that forward. It's up to the OAG what they decide to investigate in the territory, but it's clear from our individual advocacy cases and the systemic cases that we see in this particular area that many elements of those recommendations are still outstanding today, all these years later.

What's at risk is a segment of our population that are most vulnerable. These are young people who are in need of care and protection due to various issues within the family unit and they rely on government supports and services at a very trying, vulnerable point in their life. We're finding that the system of supports isn't there to support them and so I ask, "Who else do they have to turn to?"

Yes, we see some progress within the department. Like Ms. Niego said, the implementation and with our case management system being in the testing phase, I think, as of April 2, I'm very pleased to hear that. That's definitely a step in the right direction. Something we have advocated for before is additional foster supports.

To have three coordinators now, I think one filled, two out for competition, if I'm correct, these are positive steps in the right direction, but they are baby steps. We need to act swifter and invest more heavy in this department and in this specific division with this department in order to better protect the most vulnerable young people in our society. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you for that response. With the Committee's blessing because the Chairman will get things thrown at him if he

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Ms. Niego, if you could maybe elaborate a little bit in terms of the pressures within your department. There's a huge need for proactive and preventative work, but at the same time you have very immediate needs in terms of fires, as it is put here, that need to be put out in terms of trying to balance those needs within your budget. If you could explain to us what the situation is within Family Services, Ms. Niego.

Ms. Niego (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Maybe I'll start with the creation of Family Services out of Health and Social Services in 2013. At that time it was recognized that it would be a no-cost separation and also recognized that it would be Family Services' shortcoming within policy and corporate services.

With my year and a bit now in the department, I recognized since then that there have been multiple Ministers and multiple DMs now in such a short time. Trying to build stabilization into the department and then finally coming upon the 2013 creation document, realizing that perhaps increasing our capacity in our corporate services area will lead to better end policy, to better verbalizing our needs onto paper.

I think our business cases have not done ourselves justice because some of the decisions through Finance and through the government procedures, I would have to **ΦΔJ** (Ͻʹ៶ϟႶͿና): ʹͼͿϧ·ʹͼͺϹͼ·, ΔͼϒϭϷϹʹͼ. Δͼͺͼ ΛΓϤϨΠΓͻͿ Δϼϲͺͺͺλͼͼ ͼʹͼϭͺͼϧͼͺͼͺͼϲϲͺϧͼͼ 2013-Γ ϹΔʹϲͿϲϭ ʹϐϷϟϲͺϷͼͼϒͿϲͼϲ ϷͼͺϷϧ·ͼϽϚϧͼͼͺϲ·Ͻͼ ϤϗͼͺϹϻ ͼͰͺͻͺʹϧϷϟͿϲϷͺͼͺϲͺϲ ͼϧͻͼͼͺͼͼͺϲͺͺ

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agree that perhaps our business cases weren't worthy of approving because of lack of data or lack of information. The case management records system being implemented will greatly assist with capturing data for our business cases.

I'm recognizing that we still have shortcomings, but it would also help with support from cabinet, from advocates, from communities to help build the work that Family Services does. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Thank you for responding. I realized my question was quite general, so I apologize for that. Ms. Nakashuk.

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you. First of all, I would like to ask a question. This morning you indicated that there are approximately 100 files that have been closed. I would like to refer back to it. There are youth and children whose paperwork for their care has taken longer than ususal. (interpretation ends) I'm curious to know: when do you determine the file should be closed if a youth has been in the system for a number of years? That's my first question. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that question. I just want to start by reiterating our statistics on our individual advocacy cases up to the end of 2017-18.

By the end of 2017-18 we opened 200 individual advocacy cases. We closed 151 of those and of the 151, 122 have been successfully resolved. How do we close a

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We can also close cases under other categories, for instance, unable to contact. Of the 151, 16 cases were closed because we were unable to contact the client that we were working with, and this can happen for a wide array of reasons. Our staff wait 20 business days and are required to make at least three contacts and be unable to reach the person for three attempts before they close. Those are not closed quickly by our office.

Another reason that we will close a case is because the client may decline advocacy services and that can happen right at the onset or it can happen at any point in the advocacy file. We have discussions with the client, but ultimately it is their decision if they choose to close the advocacy file and decline further services. The fourth reason that we would close a case... . Sorry, I'm going to back up for one second. Declining services accounts for 4 cases of the 151 that have been closed.

The fourth and final reason is that all advocacy avenues have been exhausted by our office and no resolution has been attained, and that accounts for 9 cases of the 151 that have been closed.

We close depending on four different categories and some parameters that are assigned specifically to each of those categories. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

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Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I'm just thinking of youth that are located outside of the territory and I know you mentioned that there are other jurisdictions that the office has to work with, but I'm curious to know: for those cases, how is the office notified in terms of youth in care in those provinces, or do you request for a log sheet or know how many kids are outside of the territory? The reason I ask is I want to know how long these kinds of cases may be live if they're outside of the territory. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of the management of the caseload for services outside the territory, responsibility for that is maintained by the departments themselves specifically. In terms of our involvement, supports, and cases that are out of territory, we receive notice like we do for all other cases that are inside the territory. It could come from a service provider. It could come from a young person reaching out to us, a family member, or a community member.

In terms of how long our cases, whether they're outside the territory or inside the territory, are opened, it's very much case-specific is what we have learned. Initially we tried to put some parameters before we had some good experience under our belt in terms of how long it should take us. Very quickly we learned that that doesn't apply to life circumstances when it comes to young people.

We can open and close a case as quickly as a week or two, or we can keep a case open for years on end. Our office has experienced both ends of the spectrum and everything in

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between, and it just depends on the needs of that individual young person and us and the young person or family feeling comfortable with case closure. We do not rush the closure of our cases until we're satisfied that the issue has been resolved for the young person. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I'm curious in terms of youth that are outside of the territory. How does the office advocate for youth outside of the territory to protect the culture and language they may be losing? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If an issue that we're dealing with out of territory, if the concern is, for instance, the appropriateness of the care from a cultural perspective, then that's what we're advocating for with the service provider on the ground for that particular youth. It all depends on what issue is being raised.

Also, like I mentioned with some other issues before, we use the individual advocacy data to inform our systemic issues. There is definitely a reporting of culturally appropriate care outside the territory in our systemic database as an issue for future consideration by our office from a systemic perspective. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Can you give an example of that just so I can have a better

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Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to refer the question to Lynn Matte and she can provide an example of an out-of-territory case that we worked on that highlighted the need for more culturally appropriate supports and services in place for young persons.

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

Ms. Matte (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) There are a couple of examples that come to mind and I'll try to give you maybe two. One involved a youth who had been in care in territory, but as this young person moved forward in their life, they started to have more and more complex needs. It was determined that they needed supports that were greater than what was available here in the territory, so the young person was sent out of territory.

This young person happened to go to the Ottawa area and in that area we were able to help make connections with the Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre and sometimes
Tungasuvvingat Inuit to connect them with cultural resources and cultural programming, and other individuals from their cultural group. There is a rather large community in the Ottawa area, which is obviously beneficial. That's not necessarily the case that the young person is being sent somewhere where there isn't an urban Inuit population outside of the territory. In those instances it is a lot more of a struggle to try to connect them with resources.

Some of the ways that we do also advocate to

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help keep young people connected to culture when they're placed out of the territory is by pushing and encouraging their regular connection with family, whether that be through telephone calls, whether that be through accessing videoconferencing opportunities, and also obviously encouraging the available family in-person visitation when it's appropriate and safe for that to happen for the young person. We sometimes get creative on that. Sometimes maybe the parents aren't safe. Maybe the grandparents are, so that avenue could be explored. Maybe siblings are safe. There are sometimes other people that could be considered besides just a young person's parents in order to keep connection to family and culture. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Nakashuk: *Qujannamiik* for clarifying that. Another question I have is the officer stated an example on a youth that might have a physical disability and having to get support locally. I'm just wondering: how does the office determine or know what kind of support a youth may need that might have developmental delays? I'm thinking of a youth. I know that it's mostly SSAs that assist youth in the school, but there's no actual teacher that is specialized in teaching developmentally delayed youth.

With advocating from your office, I'm just curious: how do you reach that goal to ensure that the youth are getting the appropriate education they need? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

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Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our office does not conduct assessments of any sort with respect to young people. That responsibility sits with the various departments.

When we have an individual advocacy case before us, we rely upon input from caregivers, family members, and the young person to provide us with that information. If there are any grey areas or uncertainty in that information, we also start to have conversations with the departments and service providers. We might do document requests just to make sure we have the full picture of the needs of that particular young person and are advocating for the proper supports to meet their needs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) My next name, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My first question is for the representative.

Referring to page 25 of the 2017-18 annual report, it shows individual advocacy cases involving the Department of Justice or related to community corrections, law enforcement, and community justice. My question is: how does your office work with individuals and service providers in outlying communities to address these different branches of the Department of Justice? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to refer this question to Lynn Matte.

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

Ms. Matte (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The service providers who are on the ground in communities that we work with the most often through the Department of Justice include probation officers, community justice outreach workers, and from time to time we are connecting people with services that might be more centralized, like victims' assistance. Those are some of the service providers that we are working with.

When we go to communities for our community visits, those are some of the service providers that we are meeting with, that we are making sure have information on our office and that we make sure they're aware of their obligation to share information about our office with the young people that they work with.

We also communicate with them on a regular basis if we have an open matter via telephone or email, if we aren't in the same location as them, to try to see some forward movement on advocacy matters concerning young people that we're both working with. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My next question is for the Department of Justice.

In the representative's 2016-17 annual report on page 20 there's a case sample relating to community corrections, law enforcement, and community policing services.

My question for the Department of Justice is: how does your department work with the

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RCMP to ensure that their staff are adequately trained to deal with children and youth in the course of their duties? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Strickland (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Member, for the question. The police have been taught to assist children and youth when they require assistance. There are a limited number of police officers that are trained to work in this area. The ones who are trained become our backbone. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Whenever a frontline worker is working with children, they have to be extremely sensitive. I was wondering: what specific training does the Department of Justice have for RCMP officers when dealing with children? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I'm sorry. Was that for the representative? To the department. I'm sorry. Ms. Strickland.

Ms. Strickland (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I don't have that level of detail with me, but I can share it with the Member. (interpretation) Thank you.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My next question is once again with the Department of Justice.

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

Ms. Strickland (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My co-worker, Mr. House, can respond to that question.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. House, please respond.

Mr. House: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For us, we know the situations a lot of these kids come from. Sometimes we feel that it's not in the best interest of the youth to send them back to the same situation they came out of.

We will work with the office and we will work with the courts, the Crown, and the defence on what's called section 19s and the court procedures where everybody that has a stake in the youth's future. It would be Family Services sometimes, probation sometimes, it could be Health sometimes; it could be anybody. Anybody that has a stake is brought into a room with the youth's involvement and it's decided, "Okay, what can we do for this youth? Can we find an alternative place for this youth?" It could be another community. It could be another family member. It could be a friend of the family that has been really close to the family while growing up and was willing to take this youth in.

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For us at the centre, when we know that a kid is maybe going back to a bad situation or even just going back home, we make sure everybody is involved in what happens and where this kid goes, and the main person in this is the youth themselves. You don't want to send a kid to a place that he really hates that he's going to mess up with and come back right away. You want it to be the best situation for everybody concerned.

We have done numerous amount of section 19s for kids just to get them into the best environment possible. We started doing these with Colby O'Donnell back a few years ago when the office started up and we have found them to be very successful. We do 'em quite a bit, but sometimes the kids just come to us sentenced and then we deal with people back in the communities.

If the youth says, "I don't want to go back to that home; I want to go to this home," we will contact community corrections, we will contact the RCMP, we will contact elders back in the community and people in the community that would know the other family, "Is this a good spot for this kid to go?" That's our best resource in the communities. They will say, "Yes, that's a great home. They would do well there," or "No, that's not a really good situation. There are a lot of people living there," and stuff like that.

That's the way it works for us. I don't know if that answers your question or not. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My next question is for the representative.

It has come to my attention that other

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I would like to ask the representative if anything along those lines have ever been brought to your attention, whether the child has come to you or a family member of the child of a sentenced individual. That's my question. Has this situation ever been brought to your attention whether or not a child has been taken into consideration of an individual that is being sentenced? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to ask Lynne Matte to respond to this question.

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

Ms. Matte (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) We have not had very many matters raised to our attention yet regarding this particular type of situation.

We do have an example that I would like to share with you. It was actually raised to our attention by the family, not through the court process. The family itself was considering pursuing a custom adoption and then they ran into some difficulties with communication with the Department of Family Services. There was a miscommunication around whether or not the department needed to be involved if there was going to be a custom adoption so that the children could stay with family while a parent was going to be incarcerated.

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In the end the Department of Family Services was able to clearly communicate the custom adoption commissioner was the correct resource and not a social worker. Also, the family decided to come to a private arrangement that didn't involve custom adoption in the end and so no government services or supports were needed.

We were approached regarding the situation around what would happen with the children with a parent they were anticipating was going to be sentenced to some time in a correctional facility. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to pose a similar question to the Department of Justice. As I have stated, there are occurrences where a child whose parent has become incarcerated and they are left without an individual to care for them. I was curious how often that this sort of situation occurs in our court system and, if and when it does, what does the department do to ensure that this child is being taken care of appropriately? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Department of Justice, Ms. Strickland.

Ms. Strickland (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) If it's possible, I would like to take this question as notice and come back with a written answer.

Chairman (interpretation): That's fine. (interpretation ends) I don't believe, in the Committee, we usually use those terms, "taken as notice," but you have committed to provide a written response and I appreciate that. (interpretation) Mr. Lightstone, are you done?

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Would your office be willing to share that list with the Committee Members at a future date? I'm trying to imagine or I'm trying to picture it in my mind. All the recommendations are already public. The Auditor General's reports are public. Would you be willing to share the updated, I don't know what you call it, tracking document with the Committee? Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll take that under consideration. What I can commit to sharing with the Committee are the letters that were recently released to the three departments, the Department of Community and Government Services, the Department of Education, and the Department of Family Services, with respect to our observations on the implementation of those recommendations. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Thank you for that commitment and thank you for taking consideration of releasing the tracking.

Another kind of housekeeping type item, you had mentioned to Ms. Nakashuk with regard to the numbers of cases that have been closed and which ones were successful. For future annual reports, it would be useful to have that type of information included if at all

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As well, another thing that was noted when our Committee was reviewing the annual reports was there are a number of examples provided in these annual reports which are valuable, but if you are able to provide either a list or a sampling of the specific recommendations that your office is making to government departments.... I mean that's the thing where it's tough to see what the recommendations being made are and then if we can understand as a Committee what the recommendations are, then we can follow up and see if they are being taken into consideration, if they are being rejected in some cases, or if they're being accepted.

Just in terms of those two requests for future annual reports, Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As our office evolves, our annual reports will evolve as well along with us. I appreciate the feedback. We will certainly take it under consideration and it would be helpful for that feedback to also be reflected in the formal letter that will come from the Committee following our appearance today. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I can commit to making sure that's included in the report which will be tabled.

Any further questions from the Committee on this section? Not at this time? We do have one more thematic area, which is the third one. Ms. Towtongie, do you have a question on this current area? Go ahead.

Ms. Towtongie: Mr. Chairman, my mistake. Are we on "Reporting on Our Activities: Systematic Advocacy"? Okay. I have a question on this one. Page 22 of the 2016-17 annual report discusses the development of

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the office's "Issue Categorization and Prioritization Tool." Can the representative elaborate further on how this tool is used to prioritize issues? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks for that question. I would be happy to provide an answer on that.

Because our office has been inundated with such a significant amount of systemic issues, it was very important to us to develop a system to help guide us in our decision-making of how we use our limited systemic resources in the selection of what systemic issue we're going to investigate. Every systemic issue that's noted in our database, we have heard some of them mentioned here today, they're all big, weighty issues and they're all very important to young people and they're important to the people that have raised them to our attention.

The tool that was developed was developed to help increase our accountability when it comes time to selecting an issue and basically an issue that would consume our entire systemic team. The tool that we developed was developed in-house by our office. We did consult largely with the New Brunswick advocate's office that has a similar but not identical tool.

The tool contains a series of 12 questions essentially, 9 of which are rated. At the end of an issue being run through each of those 12 questions, each issue is then assigned a category as well as a numerical score. The categories can include "warrants formal investigation" or "warrants informal investigation." This is where we wanted to get a little creative in realizing that not every issue in the database is well suited for a

formal investigation. We wanted to look for opportunities to move forward some of those more informal pieces that don't require an investigation forward. That's where we raise those issues with the departments at the proactive meetings. The other category is "formal." That's when an issue has clearly been identified as requiring a formal investigation by our systemic advocacy team.

As the result of the tool being used, we have categorization; we also have that numerical score. The highest score an issue can receive is 21. Every issue that comes to our office's attention, our systemic team is required to run each and every issue through the tool to assign both a categorization and a score to help guide our decision-making process. It is not an exact science. It's used in conjunction with the information we hear from the community during our community visits, from other monitoring that occurs by the systemic advocacy team, as well as discussions around our office. It certainly increases our own accountability in the selection process.

It was that tool that was applied of course to all our systemic issues, which resulted in mental health services for children and youth being the first systemic area that our office decided to investigate. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How does your office follow up on your recommendations for improving systems designed to support young people, and how do you measure the success of any improvements undertaken as a result of your office's recommendation? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could I get the first part of the question repeated? I think it was twofold.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Towtongie, if you can repeat your question.

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) How does your office follow up on your recommendations for improving systems designed to support young people, and how do you measure the success of these improvements undertaken as a result of your office's recommendations? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the clarification. First of all, with respect to monitoring, it's the systemic team's responsibility for monitoring in our office. They not only house all the systemic issues, conduct the investigations, but then they also hold responsibility for monitoring. All recommendations that are produced by our office, all formal recommendations, are documented in their database and it is their responsibility to ensure the office is kept abreast when updates are due and whatnot.

In our business plan for this fiscal year we will be reviewing that process. Right now those issues are, like I said, in the database. We want to work with our IT department to see if there is a better way of managing that information going forward. That is something that will be under review, but there is certainly a very basic monitoring system in place right now.

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In terms of how do we measure success, there are various forms of measurement that are employed by our office, some of which is quantitative but some of which is just qualitative too. Advocacy and advocacy efforts, although we do do some quantitative measurement within our office and that is very important, I just want to be careful that we don't lean too heavily on that because it is difficult to measure the impact that this work has on a young person's life. Sometimes it's not just hard; it's impossible to put a figure on that. These are real humans we are dealing with. When we advocate for them and things change in their life, we have no way of really measuring the impact that that will have immediately and in the long run.

One way that we measure success in our office from a quantitative perspective is by the number of advocacy issues, individual advocacy issues that are successfully resolved. As previously indicated, of the 151 that have been closed to date, 122 have been successfully resolved.

We also measure success through our clients' level of satisfaction. We referred earlier this morning to those pages in the 2017-18 annual report that gave a snapshot of what that is looking like for us, which highlights such things as 80 percent of the time our staff are ensuring that the clients' views are heard and considered; 92 percent of the time child rights are the central part of the discussion that is taking place; and 87 percent of the time our staff are encouraging people to work together in their work. Another form of measurement is our own clients' level of satisfaction with our service.

We also measure success of our office by the number of communities we visited. I am happy to report that to date we have been successful in achieving our goal and

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executing our 12 communities per year community visit plan.

We also measure success by the number of schools we visit while we are in the communities. Again I am happy to report that 100 percent of the time we are in communities, we are in schools.

In the upcoming years we will be measuring ourselves against internal quality standards that are reflected in our own policy and procedure manual. That evaluation will take place in this current fiscal year, as highlighted in our business plan, through internal file audits that will be conducted.

We also measure ourselves against the national advocacy standards that have been set and we actually had a role in developing with the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates. There are many of those and many different forms of measurement under each of those, but for the sake of time, I will end there but would be happy to dive into those too if the Committee is interested. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Thank you for that response. (interpretation) Ms. Towtongie, are you finished? Okay. Mr. Mikkungwak.

Mr. Mikkungwak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 22 of your 2016-17 annual report discusses your office's pilot informal systemic review that was conducted with the departments of Health and Family Services. Can you provide a brief overview of what the review focused on, how it was conducted, and its key findings and recommendations? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

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Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The informal pilot, first of all, was just that. It was a pilot project for our office that happened during the development phase of the systemic advocacy program. Prior to the launch of the systemic advocacy program, as part of that development, there were a lot of different types of work done in consultation with other advocacy offices, reviews and development of policies and procedures.

At the same time we also wanted to run a test case, a test informal to help shape the development of that program and give us some real-life experience in pilot form. The subject matter of that pilot project was custom adoption and medical consent specifically. It wasn't a review of custom adoption. It was the issue that had been brought to our attention with respect to young people and their families encountering difficulty when outside the territory, if the child had been custom adopted, in gaining consent for medical treatment.

From that pilot, our office had information that helped shape the development of our systemic advocacy program. It taught us a few things from that experience. It taught us how to better make a distinction between formal issues and informal issues prior to launching this program area. It taught us the need for a comprehensive investigation plan prior to launching an investigation, the need for adequate resources, the need for adequate time to conduct an investigation, and the need to remain focused on the subject matter at hand when conducting an investigation.

We did work with departments on that pilot informal and ultimately provided our office with a significant amount of helpful information in the development of our systemic advocacy program prior to launching that program. Thank you, Mr.

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

Mr. Mikkungwak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The next question I have will be for the Department of Health and the Department of Family Services, and I'll leave the direction as to who you want to respond first, Mr. Chairman.

The question I have to the departments is: can you briefly describe your department's experience in participating in the pilot project there, describe your department's experience in participating in this review, and provide any observations that you may have with respect to how the review was conducted? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Do we have any volunteers to go first? Department of Health, Ms. Brown.

Ms. Brown: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm not familiar with the pilot that took place and so I don't have anything to contribute and neither do my colleagues. They weren't a part of that. We can look into it if you require further information and bring it back. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Family Services, Ms. Niego.

Ms. Niego (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I believe my colleague would have been more participatory and so I'll refer it to her, if I may. Thank you.

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

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Ms. Henderson-White: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we were consulted as part of the review and it was done by a survey which we were provided with and we were allowed to provide wholesome and extensive responses based on our experience with the subject matter. We were given adequate time to respond. There was a personal touch in the process. We didn't feel that we had any restriction in providing responses or how we wanted to respond in time. There was no pressure. We knew the timelines within which it needed to be done.

I appreciated the fact that we were actually involved in that process, consulted and allowed to give an honest opinion on our experiences, and what we provided in terms of information and feedback was recorded and presented as we provided it. It was a transparent process and it was done in a collaborative manner. With respect to the process as it stands, it's a culturally-based process. It was a positive experience in that regard.

Does that answer your question?

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) They're waiting for you to say "thank you" and then they shift the camera, just to let you know. It happens to all of us. Mr. Mikkungwak.

Mr. Mikkungwak: Thank you to the departments for the response. My final question to this to the two departments again, to Family Services and the Department of Health: has your department received the representative's final report outlining the key findings and recommendations from her office's pilot informal systemic review and, if so, how has your department responded? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you.

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(interpretation ends) Family Services, Ms. Niego.

Ms. Niego: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again I'll defer it to my colleague, Ms. Henderson-White.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Henderson-White.

Ms. Henderson-White: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we have received the report in draft and we have reviewed the recommendations, some of which are long term in nature that we need to review and create substantive planning in the long term to implement.

As I indicated, the report was given to us in draft and yes, we have reviewed the recommendations and have full intention of taking each of the recommendations into consideration within the scope of the work of the department. We will provide information as we go through the process of review and planning within our business plans and other departmental priorities and long-term planning. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Department of Health, Ms. Brown.

Ms. Brown: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we received a preliminary draft report from the patient advocate's office. We provided some feedback as they had requested on it. We have not received a final copy and it hasn't been tabled yet, so we will wait for that before we respond to the content. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Mikkungwak, did you run out of questions? Okay. Thank you.

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On page 21 of your 2017-18 annual report you highlight this. Well, it's actually over a page long regarding the lack of coordination. You mentioned that this is something that has been reiterated. I just find this a bit hard to understand in terms of the specifics. My question is, in your experience, there's inadequate coordination and a big part of that is communication, so I'll ask my question like this: who is not talking to whom specifically? That's what I'm interested in. Social workers, nurses, RCMP, I don't know what the answer is, so if you could provide some specifics there in terms of where the communication barriers are in your experience, Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The communication and coordination barriers exist throughout the entirety of government in my opinion. Where we see it the most and where it's having the biggest impact on young people is out on the frontlines, but it also exists within middle management and other areas within government organizations as well.

There is no clear understanding from service providers in terms of how they can work together to support a shared client. There are certain protocols of working together within the government, but they're very specific to certain situations. For instance, the interagency protocol on suicide, I don't think I have the name 100 percent, but that very clearly outlines to government service providers, departments, and staff within

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When young people, even though they may present to the Department of Family Services with an issue, the Department of Health with an issue, the Department of Justice with an issue, what we find is that's not the only issue that they have. Our issues and difficulties don't come very neatly in a box with a nice ribbon on them; they're complicated.

The response, because of the complications that young people face and the need to have services wrap around them from multiple departments, it requires departments to do just that, to work well together as a well-oiled machine and to know how to do that and to trust that they know how to do that. We see that sorely lacking across government, like I said, both at the frontlines and at the management level.

It is having a terrible impact on young people in terms of the quality of care they receive. When facing complicated situations, they often require holistic care and for systems to wrap around them. We're not seeing that. Oftentimes it's a big part of our work in terms of pulling people together, getting people connected, getting people talking, and getting people to exchange information. When that happens, great things result for young people, but we're not seeing that happen.

We have raised this issue with the Government of Nunavut, I think, just six months after opening. It was so obvious and so prevalent in our cases. We work with

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I think, while there are pockets of protocols within this government that relate to certain subject matters, what we're missing is a general interdepartmental protocol for the coordination of services for young people, generally speaking. People are hesitant without that good direction from government to work together because of professional obligations with respect to the maintenance of confidentiality, with respect to client information, with respect to upholding our own professional standards and the uncertainty of where this government sits with respect to the exchange of that information when services need to be coordinated for young people. It's something that we have advocated for since, I think, six months after opening. We will continue to advocate for better service coordination for young people in this territory.

Like I mentioned earlier, you will see elements of these themes and observations we made appear in our soon-to-be released mental health report as well. This is one of those themes that you're going to see and this time it's going to be in a formal recommendation to the Government of Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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Chairman (interpretation): Thank you.

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(interpretation ends) Thank you for that answer. I would like to turn to the Department of Health. Your opening comments mentioned...you acknowledged the need for increased coordination with other departments. In terms of the work that the Department of Health has done with the representative's office, what has been done, to your knowledge, to improve government service coordination for children and youth? Ms. Brown.

Ms. Brown: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With your permission, I'll ask my colleague, Charleen Austin, to respond. Thank you.

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

Ms. Austin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to acknowledge that the Department of Health certainly recognizes that coordination with other government departments as well as our community agencies is a work in progress. We take the recommendations from the representative very seriously. We think that without coordination, it is difficult to provide a wholesome service.

That being said, a couple of points to consider would be that across government organizations, you have individuals who report and take direction from different regulatory bodies. This complicates bringing our work together as well as the protocols for information sharing.

We believe in the interagency working groups within communities as a frontline, important tool in bringing together cross-governmental departments as well as community members. We're actively working to build upon those in communities. A quick example, being cognizant of time, would have been the GN interdepartmental

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cannabis working group as well as the most recent Therapeutic Justice Program that is being piloted in Cambridge Bay in answer to some questions earlier with regard to highrisk youth.

I think we're moving in the right direction, recognizing it's a complicated topic and we're certainly committed to continuing to coordinate. At an ADM and DM level as well, particularly speaking as an ADM, we have had regular meetings recently and have looked at a terms of reference and a mandate that's very different that stops the duplication and coordinates better.

Thank you for the question; it was an important one. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I guess we will turn to Family Services now. I'll just note that in the opening comments from the Department of Education, they mentioned education staff participating on a child abuse response protocol roundtable, which is interesting as an example of coordination between departments or working together. Maybe using that roundtable as an example, Ms. Niego, in terms of the efforts your department has put towards working with other government departments in response to recommendations from the representative. (interpretation) I hope I was understandable. Ms. Niego.

Ms. Niego (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Yes, the Department of Family Services coordinates the Child Abuse Response Protocol. It has taken some time and it has come back to the turnover issue, but we are getting back on track on that protocol. That will be completed as per our business plan.

In regard to better collaboration, as a former

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police officer, I could not leave here without mentioning training for police officers. A Member had asked for the justice department. One thing that I don't see is training in regard to the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*. There are allowances for youth conferencing prior to youth sentences.

There are different things that a police officer can do at the preventative end: warnings, letters, conferencing, or bringing in different partners. Police officers are not alone. There are the resources available through these departments here: Justice, Health, Education, and Family Services. I would urge the RCMP to get back into YCJA, or *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, training.

I wasn't here or I'm not aware of the dismantling of the old culture, language, elders and youth department, but I would have thought that the youth part to that former department was to collaborate the other parts of the GN and other stakeholders.

As a DM and co-chair with my colleague from Health, we have committed to keeping a child and youth focus as a standing item on the Quality of Life Committee at the DM level. I believe the discussions that Charleen Austin was talking about at the ADM level links to our DM level committee, which should help assist in that collaboration. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Thank you for that. I apologize for such a mess of a question that I asked you, but I'll try to do better next time.

For the Department of Education, I'm interested and I'll try to be more specific, I'm interested with how teachers or school officials specifically work with health staff or family services staff. I'll use an example of a high-needs youth who's in school. Is there a

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Ms. Flaherty (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I can speak to, as Yvonne, I had a former life; I was a teacher. When I was a teacher, when we were concerned about a specific child to issues with them, the process was for us to inform our principal, who then informed Family Services or social services at the time, and the collaboration started in that perspective.

I will have my ADM answer the rest of your question because she is coming out from regional school operations, who immediately worked on these cases. Thank you.

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

Ms. MacMillan (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Yes, right from the teaching level, again, working with the school team, the student support teacher, *Ilinniarvimmi Inuusijiliriji*, there are services available right at the school level. If the needs extend beyond the school, it is where at times the interagency community meetings would take place. As well as often social workers, social services, or the Department of Health from the health centre could also be invited to attend the school team. Again, the parents are involved with that as well to address the needs of the child.

If the services cannot be met at the community level, at the department level is where education support services and that new group, new program that was formed, then they would, through the department, put in place specific requests for services to

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address the child's need. Whether that is occupational therapists, speech and language, or OT services, there are various levels and services that they could receive. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. The last department will be the Department of Justice. I would like to know how they work with the different departments, if that made sense. Apparently government departments don't work well together, according to the representative. I would like to know how the Department of Justice works with other departments. If you could give me a brief answer, Ms. Strickland.

Ms. Strickland (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. From my own knowledge, we work with the other departments whenever something happens in a community. If someone needs to be notified, so that everyone understands what is happening among the departments, I work with the other departments directly.

If there is someone taken into custody or someone in a correctional centre, I can probably respond better in English. (interpretation ends) When there is a complex case with an individual in one of our facilities, some of the time it requires collaboration with other departments.

For example, if there is an individual with complex mental health needs that have been in contact with various organizations, such as the RCMP, Corrections, the Department of Health, and Family Services, there are ongoing case management meetings with the departments to ensure there is proper care provided to the individual.

Also, Mr. House can speak to specific youth advocacy. (interpretation) Thank you.

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

Mr. House: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can speak with regard to my centre. We have, I think, a very good relationship with the other departments that are seated around this table. Our ultimate goal in our centre is successful reintegration and rehabilitation of our youth, and we can't do it alone.

Our youth have so many complex needs. We work with Education; we have our own teacher on staff. We work them with mental health. We work with Family Services because these kids all go back to their home and their parents, and if we didn't work together, then we couldn't be successful and granted, we're not successful all the time. That's a given. As much as we want to be, we're not, but we do the best we can. We're not perfect, but we work hard and we continue to work hard, and we're going to continue to work with each other. We have to or we're going to fail. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Thank you to all of the departments for providing that information.

I would like to go back to you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. It's in your reports; it's in your opening comments, the lack of coordination. We hear from the departments that there is effort being put into coordination, but you say you have seen little to no progress made in this area in your opening comments.

I'm not trying to focus on the negative here, but I think it's important. You mention disturbing real case examples where a lack of service coordination has led to very negative outcomes for the young person. Can you share any examples with us? Speaking in vague terms so as to not impact any person's

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privacy rights, if there are any examples you can share with us, I would be interested. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Absolutely we will provide an example, and we have provided examples to government departments and walked them through multiple examples in the past of a breakdown of service coordination leading to very serious consequences for young people.

I do want to acknowledge that there absolutely is effort being made. Like I said before, there are pockets of coordination happening and specific protocols around certain subject matters in place. The problem even with those that exist is because of the rate of staff turnover in this territory. It is not uncommon for staff not to know that they exist, let alone to be aware of the contents that are described in these protocols.

It's also not uncommon for some of these protocols to be very outdated. While there may be certain sector-specific protocols in place, two of which were mentioned here today, they require regular updates. They require to be shared with staff on a regular basis. They require to be embedded in orientation material, and just regular updates. I just wanted to mention that.

There are pockets, but from where we sit, it's not enough. It's not enough for what young people need in terms of the situations they're facing from where we sit and the cases that we encounter with respect to service coordination breakdown and the impact that's having on the lives of young Nunavummiut that have crossed our paths so far since opening.

I am going to ask Ms. Matte to continue on and share an example to maybe highlight.... Even though we do have several examples in

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

Ms. Matte (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I would actually like to share a couple of different examples with the Committee, if you will indulge me. I'll keep them brief. Some of them have to do with coordination within departments and so when we talk about information sharing between departments is important, but sometimes we see that breakdown even within a department.

An example I would like to share is in regard to a delay in young people being able to attend school because there was a complete breakdown of communication regarding the transfer of school records. In theory this should be a simple process, but sometimes we run into barriers. A young person had moved from one community to another. It should be a request placed from one school to another through an electronic system to transfer those records about what classes they have taken and what courses they have successfully completed. In addition, sometimes a young person might also have some physical files that need to be transferred.

In this one young person's situation, the individual who signed the form to request the transfer of the records was not authorized to sign the form. The school that received the request for those records looked at it and thought, "This person is not authorized to request." They didn't bother to communicate back to the school that made the request; they just never sent the records. This led to more than a month of delay before the young

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person could actually go to school all because of this sort of administrative lack of communication. That's an example within a department.

An example between departments, a young person had been placed out of territory for mental health services. They had completed their course of treatment and were going to be returning to Nunavut. The young person's family had indicated that they would not allow this young person to move back in with them and that alternative arrangements needed to be made.

The Department of Family Services and the Department of Health needed to coordinate to sort out an appropriate placement for this young person, but the frontline workers who were supposed to be working on this situation were running into barriers communicating with each other. As a result, this young person was potentially facing a homelessness situation and our office needed to get involved to bring those service providers together to ensure that this young person had a safe, appropriate home to come back to at the end of the treatment they had received out of territory.

Those are just a couple of examples of cases where we have seen a lack of coordination of services through the course of our advocacy work. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you as well. (interpretation ends) Thank you for providing those examples. We're just close to wrapping up our hearing and so we're moving on to the last thematic area, which is "Looking Ahead and Lessons Learned." I have Mr. Quassa.

Mr. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is more of a general

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comment and not an actual question. We have been listening all day and the rights of children and youth are very interesting. We all have to know those things, but I have been noticing that we all say that we believe in *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* and Inuit societal values. Everyone who is sitting here says that we believe in those things and we try to believe in them. It's good to hear.

However, most of the children and youth have parents. Now, I haven't heard one reference to parents. Children are taught by their parents. Are the parents fully informed about the things that we're talking about today? You have very important positions here. Are the parents informed about children and youth rights? Maybe they do, but we also know that some parents can't speak English and some speak of them speak broken English.

I was really thinking: what about the parents? Are the parents informed properly? There are so many different departments that are trying to work on children and I'm proud of that work, but I'm just concerned if the parents are properly informed. It's like we're forgetting them here. It's probably not the case, but that's what it seems like.

Children have to be treated like children. These days, people are trying to counsel them like adults. They have to be children and they should be children for as long as they can. I'm proud of the things I have heard today, but I want to make sure that parents are properly informed. These many different departments work on our children and youth. That's what I wanted to say because I felt that I really had to say it.

To move on to something else, just a very short question, I'll talk about money a little bit. On page 3 of the 2017-18 annual report it states and it's good to see that there were

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eight staff members. However, on page 48 it states that almost \$100,000 was spent for casual wages for the representative's office in 2017-18. My question is regarding the fact that you have a (interpretation ends) fully staffed (interpretation) office of eight. You also have additional money for casual staff. I would like to get a brief explanation on that. Perhaps I will speak English so that everyone will understand my question.

(interpretation ends) Can you explain why you needed additional casual staff when your office was fully staffed? (interpretation) That was the question I had, but also to remind you that we have to keep the parents informed of what we spoke about today. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that comment about parental involvement and the question. Even though there wasn't a question around parental involvement, I would like to just maybe start there. I'm glad you brought that up.

With the respect to the work of our office, the involvement of parents, family, and caregivers is extremely important to us. Anytime it is possible for our office to work with families and their children, we absolutely do that as long as it is safe and in the best interest of that child to do that, then we are absolutely working with families. Thanks for bringing that up and reminding us of the importance of that because our Act, the values that guide our office, the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, all of those things are in harmony when it comes to respect, in respect to the role that family plays in a child's life.

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In terms of 2017-18 and the expenditure with respect to casual wages and running over in terms of our expenditure with respect to our compensation and benefits, there were a few things that were at play that year.

First of all, we did hire a casual, but we balance our use of casuals as much as we can with vacancies in our permanent salary budget line. That being said, when we do use casuals, we have to allow for some overlap between the indeterminate position coming in and the casual exiting for the transference of information related to the files.

Also in that year we decided to hire a second summer student to help administer our client satisfaction surveys. We could have contracted that service out and pulled from our contract dollars, but it was very important to us to re-employ a former summer student who did really great work for our office in administering those client satisfaction surveys because that student was so well versed with the conduct of our office, plus we wanted to support that student.

Also in that year there were other things like outstanding salary payments that had to be taken into account, as well as we have been working with the Office of the Legislative Assembly, their finance division, to make sure that our budget lines, particularly this one, are loaded properly. And it wasn't. Their salaries were set a certain level. There weren't adjustments made over time for increases due to increases in pay and whatnot, but I'm happy to report that, working closely with the financial division of the Office of the Legislative Assembly, we have ensured that that budget line particularly is loaded properly to reflect the actual cost of compensation and benefits that our office incurs on a regular basis. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

γ%'ς", Δ%baΔ+%ηΓ% Δ%baΔ+%ηςηςςς Δ'L Ċ%dd d'%PΓdς, Δ', Δη Θαργος Ανας ΔωβaΔ; Δνα ακωςρων ΓςηΔς CΔ%dd Θαργως Δνι ΔωβaΔγς ακωςρων ΓςηΔς δανην γιτα αςροςην α Λεας ργαγος του Δανην γιτα και ανα δου Αρος ο
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Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The authorities in the small communities are often the RCMP, the social worker, the nurses, and the teachers. At times it becomes very autocratic and almost legalistically they're the ones who have the legal right for social control. It becomes visible that this eliminates the authority that a young person or a child recognizes in terms of escalating violence, for example, a standoff.

We have observed across Nunavut that when there's a standoff with a young person, only the people that are involved in de-escalating that violence are these authorities. I have often thought that if an authority that a young person recognizes is involved, it could de-escalate the violence.

I'm talking about small communities and I was talking about the prevailing authority that exists in the Inuit mind, conflict resolution, not institutionalized authority. Years ago I watched during residential school times, children were taken away. Inuit society changed. There were no more running or breathing steps of children; parents changed.

With terms of child protection, I have often thought that there's a better need to deal with family separation. There's a need to ensure that because Inuit rely heavily on elders, the grandparents' rights are recognized along with youth advocacy. In saying that, I believe that due to the protocol within the departments and the coordination within departments, there's a need for these same departments to have a protocol at the grassroots level, either with the hamlet councils or somebody that's recognized as an authority within the small communities, and they still exist; informal leaders still exist.

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In saying that, at the federal level, the *Child Welfare Act* is being discussed because indigenous parents have the highest [rates of] children taken away from them in Canada. My question to the youth representative is: right at the beginning stages or any of the departments, have you been involved in discussing how the *Child Welfare Act* across Canada for indigenous children is being dealt with? That's my final question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) In terms of that draft or that piece of legislation that's currently being worked on, Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To answer your question, yes, we have been involved. We have been involved, I guess, in two ways.

As part of the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates, the council, which includes our office, has been strong advocates to the federal government that change needs to happen with respect to the overrepresentation of indigenous children and youth in the child welfare system. That type of advocacy has been happening at the Canadian council level even before my existence and this office's existence. It is an issue that the council has been moving forward for quite some time.

In addition to the development and the consultation that took place most recently leading into the development for Bill C-92, our office was invited to a meeting that was hosted by Pauktuutit in Ottawa for Inuit child and youth-serving organizations and leaders. We absolutely took part in those discussions as part of the federal government's consultation process.

We're pleased that that bill has been put

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forward. We're very pleased that it has been co-developed with indigenous leaders. We think it holds great promise. It shows commitment to the drawing down of jurisdiction, a commitment to kinship placement, a commitment to investment in prevention-based supports, early identification to help better support families in keeping them together. That's all very positive.

Along, I think, with ITK's observations, we share similar observations and concerns in that the indigenous communities across this country need to be given adequate time to review the bill. They need to be given adequate time to put forward amendments and to digest what is being put forward before anything advances further.

Equally importantly of concern to us and I think many stakeholders with the development of this bill and potential legislation is that the resources need to be given to indigenous communities to execute what's contained in the legislation and not just a one-time influx of cash but ongoing financial support so that the spirit of the legislation, so that indigenous communities are successful in managing the concerns of the child protection sectors within their own communities. Legislation is one thing, but the resources need to be provided to indigenous communities across this country in order for it to be successful and for it to ultimately lead to better outcomes for indigenous young people across this entire country, Nunavut included.

I'll end there. We're watching this very closely. We have been part of it and we remain cautiously optimistic, I think it's fair to say. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Thank you.

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(interpretation) Are you done? (interpretation ends) Okay. Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.My question is short but required for my clarification and hence my question on it. Firstly, as a premabular foreground to place it in the proper context for our witnesses, we are discussing children along with our youth and the cultural perspectives. In thinking of that, we are providing our comments. Today this subject of children and youth includes the debate about immaturity and improper behaviours or anti-social behaviour. It always has a starting point from whence it came and much of it has to to with lack of discipline from a parent, from being overly spoiled, as it depends on how they are treated. In thinking of this matter, I want to ask about this matter to try to get solutions as we can add improvements.

I want clarification on this matter. We're asking questions to the departments presenting here and they're trying to answer questions related to that area requiring improvments in the realm of youth and children in our schools. This could include the departments of Education, Health, Justice, or Family Services on possible enhancements. As Members in the House, we start with the question or statement of improving the situation for Nunavummiut. This is why I wish to clearly understand this, so we as MLAs can provide tangible solutions within this House to assist our fellow Inuit, along with our children and our youth, as well as advice on living a healthier lifestyle in their future.

Can the Representative for Children and Youth provide further information we have not heard from these departments and whether they can add further information on the youth and children's best chances on (Ͻ[']λλη[']J²°σ⁻⁶) CΔĹ⁶Λ^C? (Ͻ[']λλη^C) ΦδΔ. Γ[']C [']P⁻⁶[']J¹⁶

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pursuing a healthy lifestyle? I hope that was clear, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A couple of things. If I'm understanding the question correctly, it is how Members can support the work that we're doing, support the advancement of child rights, as Members of the Legislative Assembly. I hope I have that correctly.

One thing is when we come into communities, as many of you know, I'll often send a notice to the Member that our staff is coming into the community. I know sometimes it is challenging. Folks aren't often in the community and whatnot, but one thing we find very helpful when we're in the community is if we have an opportunity during our visit to sit with you as a representative of your community and have a conversation about what life is like for young people in your community because we know that there are several common issues across the territory affecting young people. We also know there are very specific community issues that are affecting young people. I would encourage our office and Members of the Legislative Assembly to continue with the practice of meeting with each other when we're doing our community visits.

The other thing that I could suggest is just to continue to have conversations with your constituents in your communities about our office, about the role of our office and what types of supports that we can provide, and playing an active role in connecting constituents who are in need of assistance to our office. That is something I think that we can work on and continue to do.

With respect to the government as a whole, a

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couple of ideas with respect to how the government can better support child rights; one is to reflect the United Nations
Convention of the Rights in legal statutes in the territory, especially those that impact young people. Currently the only two pieces of legislation that give mention to the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* is our piece of legislation and the *Child and Family Services Act*, so there is definitely room for growth in there. Actually that was one of the recommendations that we put forward to the Department of Education as they're reviewing and consulting on amendments to their *Education Act*.

The other thing that we suggest to government is to get in the habit of applying a child rights lens to your work, especially any new programs or services that are being developed. You will notice in our business plan that there are some upcoming priorities for our office to do work on the development of a tool called a child rights impact assessment. We're looking forward in the future years to developing a tool specific to Nunavut and working with government departments to teach and train on the use of that tool and to serve as a resource to support government departments in applying that lens to their work.

Also, lastly what I want to mention, and I can't stress this enough, is including and seeking out the opinions of young people in your work and remembering that there's no magic age attached to when that needs to happen. Like Ms. Matte mentioned in one of her responses before, that doesn't necessarily mean that what the child wants is going to happen, but the child does have the right to be heard and has the right to be considered in all areas of work, whether it's in the delivery of health care, social work, community justice, education, to seek out those views and not only because it's a right that young

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ρ%ισικί ριδρηλητικί ριβουδριατικί συματικί συμ people have; because we can learn a lot from young people. They can learn from us.

Older adults have experience and wisdom. Young people have a way of thinking outside the box and a freedom with their ideas that sometimes we lose in adulthood. The combination of those two pieces combined is a very powerful thing. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I have no further names on my list at this time.

I just have a closing comment with regard to your most recent annual report. Where you have all these examples of things that are being done and the applause, I notice that a lot of them are focused on this particular community. I understand that's where your office is based, but as much as possible, I would encourage your office to continue your outreach and reaching out to communities like my home community of Arviat. We have close to 1,000 children in school age and that doesn't include the ones that are up to that 19 or 22 age threshold, so there's a huge need out there. That's just a closing comment in terms of future annual reports.

At this point, on behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank everyone who was in attendance today. I thank you all for your patience and your answers. This is the first time we have used this particular format for a meeting like this. Normally it's for the Auditor General's reports that we have departmental representatives here, and I think it worked quite well.

In terms of your appearance and any closing comments you may have, Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

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Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the Committee today for your time. I appreciate your questions and your interest in our office's work. The feedback provided by the Committee following our 2016 appearance proved very valuable to our office and resulted in elements of all five recommendations being adopted by our office. As before, I look forward to receiving your formal feedback following today's appearance.

As Members of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, I also value the role that each of you play in connecting your constituents with our office. We encourage you to continue to share information about our office with the children, youth, and families in your communities, especially those who may be experiencing challenges in their lives or experiencing difficulties with government services.

I would also like to thank my officials, Lynn Matte and David Korgak, for joining me today. I would also like to acknowledge and thank the full RCYO team. It is this small but mighty team that carries out the work we discussed today.

I have been very fortunate over the last five years to be surrounded by a group of advocacy professionals who bring passion and dedication to their work on a daily basis, who want to see a better and brighter future for young Nunavummiut and believe it is possible. I have been very fortunate to be surrounded by such good humans.

It has been a privilege professionally and personally to work shoulder to shoulder with Lynn, David, Lori Kannak, Kim Foster, Christa Kunuk, Sharon Reashore, Jeff Kheraj, Nancy Pellerin, and Katie Didham over the last five years and I will miss each

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of them dearly when I depart in June.

Lastly, the well-being of children and youth is an important responsibility. It is a responsibility that does not belong to just one group; rather it is a responsibility that we all share as parents, communities, and government.

A wise man once said, "There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children." In parting today, I encourage everyone to reflect on Mr. Mandela's words and carefully consider how each one of us can do better to contribute to a society that places the highest of value on young people and their well-being.

It is imperative that we rise to this challenge because the future of young Nunavummiut depends on us and before we know it, our future and the future of this beautiful territory will depend on them. Thank you.

>>Applause

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. On behalf of the Committee, in light that we know that you will be moving on from your role, thank you for all your hard work. You are leaving behind an office that is now set up and is now functioning. I think that's something that bodes well for future activities of the office.

To all the departmental representatives, thank you very much. (interpretation) Thank you very much for being here today and answering our questions.

The Standing Committee will be meeting again tomorrow at nine o'clock in the morning. (interpretation ends) We will continue our televised hearings tomorrow with the Information and Privacy

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Commissioner of Nunavut at 9:00 a.m.	PLY⊄ 9-74*<< ▷,<ç₁q<
(interpretation) Thank you. The meeting is adjourned.	(ントント೧リ๖゚チ゚ト゚) L'a Þ゚bddポ>ポ bNLσ゙ヤ。
>>Committee adjourned at 17:52	>>_ [®] b [®] ጋ ^c 17:52Γ