

**ORAL QUESTION—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE**

**QUESTION 540-18(2)—QUESTION 547-18(2)**

**STUDENT INSTRUCTIONAL HOURS IN SCHOOLS**

**February 8, 2017**

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today my questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. The Minister has yet to brief the Members of the Standing Committee on Social Development on the MOU reached with the teachers. These are important changes, and the Minister is not making allies by ignoring it. That said, let us get into the rationale for this decision. What is the policy basis for cutting instructional hours? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Currently, NWT has the highest student/teacher instructional hours in all of Canada. Our teachers, on average, are working about 52 hours a week. Research has suggested that increasing teachers' professional learning and strengthening a teacher's instructional practice is one of the most powerful and effective ways to ensure quality teaching and significantly improve student achievement. I believe there isn't a policy that we have to address. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. GREEN:** I note that is not a policy basis. That is some research that he is quoting from there. That said, what other options were considered to reduce teacher workloads, such as using more teachers' assistants or increasing administration staff rather than cutting instructional hours?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** As I've said in the House on many occasions, we do give \$152 million to all the education boards. How they choose to budget line items within those dollars that we give them is up to the education board.

**MS. GREEN:** The Minister has an unblemished record of not answering the questions, so I will plow on. Where will resources for the increased professional development come from?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** With the announcement, the NWT Teachers' Association, all the school boards, and our staff are working out a way to support our teachers in the schools, and this is going to be on a school-by-school basis, how they make those decisions.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Finally for this round, at what point will the GNWT be prepared to make investments in education instead of making cuts on the backs of children through JK, instructional hours, and other initiatives? Thank you.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have made those investments, fully funding junior kindergarten moving forward, so it's not on the backs of children. We work with the school boards to ensure that they get the support they need for student best outcomes, best student success for Northern residents, right from our smallest communities to here in Yellowknife. Those decisions are also made by the school board, how they take that funding that we give them and allocate it in the school system.

**QUESTION 547-18(2):  
STUDENT INSTRUCTIONAL HOURS IN SCHOOLS**

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have some questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment about instructional hours. Mr. Speaker, I'd like the Minister to answer this question: what discussions, if any, have been held with Alberta Education about delivering the Alberta curriculum in fewer hours than prescribed for the curriculum at the high school level? Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have that level of detail or the specifics at this moment, so I'll take the question as notice. Thank you.