

ORAL QUESTION—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

QUESTION 696-18(2): CLASSROOM INSTRUCTIONAL HOURS

March 6, 2017

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have struggled mightily to get some answers on instructional hours in this sitting, including oral questions and written questions, and I am now down to four that I need answers to, so I am going to try these with the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. My first question is: why are reduced instructional hours being piloted all across the NWT in every school? Thank you.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We did go before standing committee in a public hearing last week. Not every school is taking up this pilot. I don't have the exact numbers on how many schools are going to be introducing this pilot, but it is optional, so we do have some schools that have decided to do the pilot, others that have not. We did give out information in January to all the schools, and we are working with superintendents and the principals to develop some of these plans proving forward. I can assure the Member that not all schools have jumped on to taking this pilot on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: Thanks to the Minister for his answer. Can he give us an indication, of the 49 schools, how many schools have opted out?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: We have given every school in the Northwest Territories an opportunity to participate in this three-year pilot. The deadline actually isn't until the end of March. I do believe our department is still working with some schools to develop a plan, but the deadline isn't until the end of March. At that time, we can inform the Member of how many schools are actually participating in this pilot.

MS. GREEN: Thank you to the Minister. How will the department measure success for students and teachers of this pilot project?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: During the session that we had with standing committee last week, there were a lot of really good ideas in terms of how do we evaluate, how do we measure, and how do we assess how this program is going on on a yearly basis, much like we do with all of our education renewal pilots that we have throughout the Northwest Territories right now. We will be using those indicators, attendance, graduation. We had some really a good feedback on individual education plans as well as student support plans, that Members were sharing. We will take all of that information and that feedback that we got from committee moving forward, in terms of measuring this program, evaluating it, and assessing it.

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

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my final question is: is the department

prepared to reverse this reduction in instructional hours if the pilot isn't successful, using those student and teacher outcomes? Thank you.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, teachers play a very vital role, a very vital, critical, and a very important role, in our communities as well as in our schools. Outside parents, they are the ones that spend the most time with our youth and help them develop, help them to learn. The work done to date between the Education, Culture and Employment, the NWT Teachers' Association, as well as NWT Superintendents' Association brought this forward. We need to listen to the needs and the supports of our teachers. We have to listen to their concerns.

In the meeting last week, I did mention to committee that I have also been attending these local receiving officer meetings, that this is also a big concern, and they represent all teachers in their regions. We will continue to monitor and evaluate the program as a the pilot rolls out, but this is something that the teachers' association that speaks on behalf of the teachers as well as our superintendents have brought forward, and we want to address some of the workload issues and some of the wellness issues of our teachers and how important they are to the development of our children as well as our education.