

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

**QUESTION 250-18(3): JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN EVALUATION**

**March 13, 2018**

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. I have great hope that JK is going to improve student readiness for school and ultimately their success. I am sure the Minister does, too. How is the development of students in JK going to be evaluated and when? Mahsi.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One way that we are measuring the evaluation of four-year-olds in the education system is through our early development instrument. Later on, we have the middle development instrument that we are introducing into the schools and, obviously, ultimately, at the end of the school year, the graduation rates either from elementary school or even through high school. There are other areas that we are looking. Mainly, it is the early development instrument to make sure we watch the progress and then re-evaluate again at the middle development instrument. I agree with the Member that I do believe this is going to have an impact in all of our schools and our education and the development of our students in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. GREEN:** Thanks to the Minister for that response. Student achievement is one measure of this program, but I also have questions about value for money. I am wondering if there are other measures that the Minister is going to consider for junior kindergarten.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** There are other ways. One way was: everyone knows that junior kindergarten is optional. For the parents, single parents, even, who enter their four-year-olds into the junior kindergarten system, I did mention that it saves the families anywhere from \$8,000 to \$12,000 per year. On the family side of things, it is economically having an impact on some of the families across the Northwest Territories. Also, areas that we are able to help the junior kindergarten classrooms, as well as Aboriginal Head Start, they were able to access the \$5,000 one-time funding to get pay-based materials into the school. Other than that, that is really it.

**MS. GREEN:** I wonder if the Minister could tell us what the ratio of funding is for early childhood development initiatives, ages birth to three, versus the funding available for school?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** This year, when we fully implemented junior kindergarten throughout the territory, we had a budget in the 2017-2018 school year of \$5.2 million. Our ECD budget throughout the territory was set at \$8.91 million. I don't have the ratio of the education authorities to ECD. Our JK funding to ECD ratio is 1 to 1.7. In this upcoming budget for 2018-2019, we will have a junior kindergarten budget of \$6 million. We will also have an ECD budget of \$11.6 million throughout the territory. We are making very vast investments and improvements in how we operate with early

childhood programs in the Northwest Territories, as well as our support for junior kindergarten throughout the NWT.

**MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Final question, Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the detail the Minister was able to provide in his answer. I guess my last question is about the funding for early childhood development initiatives. I understand that there is money from Canada coming for early childhood development. Could the Minister talk about how that is going to be spent? Thank you.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** The Member is right. We do have an agreement that we have signed. We are just waiting for the announcement from the Government of Canada that will increase the amount of funding we will have in the Northwest Territories. As I mentioned in this House, we have 11 communities that don't have any early childhood programming outside junior kindergarten that we implemented in the school.

We want to ensure that we put a focus on those communities that currently don't have early childhood programming and also continue to sustain other daycare spaces and daycare programs throughout the Northwest Territories so that we do have accessible and affordable childcare in all 33 of our communities in the Northwest Territories. Getting into more detail of how we are going to spend that money, once the announcement is made, I will brief committee. I have made that offer to brief committee once that announcement is made. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.