

COR/17/952

June 30, 2017

Dear Applicant:

Re: Your request for access to information under Part II of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (Our File #: EDU/050/2017)

On June 14, 2017, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development received your request for access to the following records/information:

"All documents that relate to House of Assembly preparation for the Minister. From March 2017 -June 2017"

A decision has been made by the Deputy Minister for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to provide access to the requested information. In accordance with your request for a copy of the records, the appropriate copies are attached.

Please be advised that you may ask the Information and Privacy Commissioner to review the processing of your access request, as set out in section 42 of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (the Act). A request to the Commissioner must be made in writing within 15 business days of the date of this letter or within a longer period that may be allowed by the Commissioner.

The appeal may be addressed to the Information and Privacy Commissioner is as follows:

Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner
2 Canada Drive
P. O. Box 13004, Stn. A
St. John's, NL. A1B 3V8
Telephone: (709) 729-6309
Toll-Free: 1-877-729-6309
Facsimile: (709) 729-6500

You may also appeal directly to the Supreme Court Trial Division within 15 business days after you receive the decision of the public body, pursuant to section 52 of the Act.

Please be advised that responsive records will be published following a 72 hour period after the response is sent electronically to you or five business days in the case where records are mailed to you. It is the goal to have the responsive records posted to the Completed Access to Information Requests website within one business day following the applicable period of time. Please note that requests for personal information will not be posted online.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact the undersigned by telephone at 709-729-7425 or by e-mail at amandagarland@gov.nl.ca.

Sincerely,



Amanda Garland
Manager of Information Services
ATIPP Coordinator

Attachments

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Multi-year Infrastructure Plan

March 7, 2017

Key messages:

- Educating our children is the cornerstone to growing Newfoundland and Labrador businesses, communities, and the provincial economy.
- Our K-12 public education system consists of 258 schools with more than 66,000 students.
- As part of Building Forward, over \$206 million has been allocated over the next five years to fund capital projects to support our K-12 system.
- This funding will support the construction of new schools, extensions and renovations to existing schools, and the continuation of priority repairs and maintenance projects.
- For the K-12 system, Building Forward begins with a total Budget 2017 investment of \$53.8 million for new school construction, extensions and renovations to existing schools, and the continuation of priority repairs, maintenance and building accessibility upgrades at K-12 school facilities.
- Continuing to invest in education infrastructure is a mandate letter directive, and our government will continue to make strategic investments to support high quality learning environments for students and teachers throughout our province.

Secondary messages:

- Over the next five years, Building Forward will provide Newfoundland and Labrador with over \$3 billion for new and existing schools, health care facilities, roads and bridges, municipal infrastructure, and much more.
- This sizable investment will help stimulate the economy, create jobs for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, and foster business development throughout the province.
- Continual maintenance is key to ensure that schools remain safe and comfortable learning environments. Of the total five-year allocation of approximately \$206 million for school infrastructure, over \$81 million will support the completion of important priority work, such as replacement of roofs, windows and siding as well as upgrades to electrical and building accessibility.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
Multi-year Infrastructure Plan
March 7, 2017

Q&A:

1. What specific infrastructure projects will be funded as part of Building Forward?

- Over the next five years, more than \$125 million will be invested to proceed with major capital projects, including the construction of new schools as well as extensions and renovations to existing school facilities.
- In addition, more than \$81 million over the next five years will support the completion of important priority work, such as replacement of roofs, windows and siding as well as upgrades to electrical and building systems.

Overview of Major K-12 Education Projects and Investments
 2017 – 2022:

Project	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
New K-7 CBS School	*				
New 4-6 Gander School	*				
New 5-9 Portugal Cove-St. Phillips School	*				
New 5-7 Torbay School	*				
New Virginia Park Elementary School	*	*			
St. Peter's Junior High Extension	*				
St. Peter's Primary Extension	*	*			
Mobile High Extension	*	*			
New Coley's Point Primary¹		*	*	*	
Gander K-3 Reconstruction	*	*	*	*	
New 5-8 Paradise School	*	*	*	*	
Repairs and Maintenance of Existing Schools	*	*	*	*	*

¹ Revised since Budget 2016. Planning moved to 2018-19 from 2019-20.

2. What specific K-12 infrastructure projects are being funded with Budget 2017?

- In 2017/18, our government will invest \$54 million throughout Newfoundland and Labrador for new schools, school extensions, and school repairs and maintenance.
- Highlights for 2017/18 investments include:

New Schools

- \$6.3 million to complete the new K-7 School in Conception Bay South
- \$5.8 million to complete the new 4-6 School in Gander
- \$2 million to complete the new 5-9 School in Portugal Cove – St. Phillips
- \$1.2 million to complete the new 5-7 School in Torbay
- \$2 million to commence planning and design of a new 5-8 School in Paradise
- \$2.4 million to complete construction of the new school to replace Virginia Park Elementary

Major Renovations and Extensions

- \$2.5 million to complete an extension to St. Peter's Junior High in Mount Pearl
- \$4.8 million to begin construction on an extension to St. Peter's Primary in Mount pearl
- \$5.3 million to begin construction on an extension to Mobile High School
- \$800,000 to continue planning and design for a reconstruction of Gander Academy
- \$16.5 million for repairs and maintenance projects at existing schools

3. How much new money has been allocated for K-12 infrastructure in Budget 2017?

- In addition to a \$54 million investment for new school construction, extensions and renovations to existing schools, Budget 2017 includes measures to begin work on two schools one year earlier than previously scheduled.
- The planning and design phase for a new intermediate school in Paradise will now begin one year earlier in 2017, and the reconstruction of Gander Academy will now begin one year earlier as well, also in 2017.

4. The French school district has been advocating for a new school in the metro region and has made regular requests for additional infrastructure resources, often citing their entitlement to equitable facilities under Section 23 of the Charter. With no funding allocated for these requests in Budget 2017, how will the Provincial Government meet the needs of these students?

- All infrastructure funding requests from both the English and French school districts are carefully evaluated based on a number of key factors, including the state of any aging infrastructure, changing demographics and balancing the needs of the rest of the provincial K-12 school system.
- We are continuing to work with the French school district to ensure students' needs are being met and that they receive equitable opportunities, respect and consideration as is outlined in Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

5. Could the total five-year investment announced with Building Forward change with fluctuating enrolment numbers?

- The province's two school districts make recommendations to the Provincial Government on infrastructure needs each year. Aging infrastructure and changing demographics are the primary factors that guide investments in school buildings.
- Building Forward is the first edition of the multi-year infrastructure plan and outlines detailed levels of investments for 2017/18.
- The plan will be updated to reflect emerging priorities and released annually in advance of the budget, and will balance fiscal responsibility with the need to address key infrastructure priorities.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Overall Budget Allocation vs. 2016

April 3, 2017

Summary:

The total net Budget 2017 allocation for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is approximately \$800 million, down from the Budget 2016 net total of approximately \$912 million (representing a difference of approximately \$108 million). It is important to note that the decrease is entirely the result of moving education infrastructure budgeting to the Department of Transportation and Works for 2017-18 (therefore it is not included in the departmental total for Budget 2017), as well as lower 2017-18 spending requirements for busing and teachers' payroll. These large budget items in no way include reductions in service for 2017-18. The costs to provide busing have simply gone down and cash flow timing for teacher payroll requires less expenditure within the 2017-18 fiscal year window.

Key messages:

- While the figure representing overall departmental spending for Budget 2017 is less than last year's, it is important to note that this is in no way due to service reductions.
- In fact Budget 2017 includes significant increases in crucial areas such as early learning and child care and inclusive education. Consultations with various organizations and the general public support these important areas where we have identified a stronger need for new investment.
- Budgeting for education infrastructure has now been moved to the Department of Transportation and Works, which accounts for a very large portion of the difference from Budget 2016 to Budget 2017. School infrastructure is simply not a part of the overall departmental figure for Budget 2017.
- Other areas – for example busing and teacher payroll – required less spending this year, simply due to budget cycle requirements and reduced costs compared to 2016.
- The costs to provide the same level of busing have simply gone down and cash flow timing for a teacher payroll installment falls just outside the 2016-17 fiscal year window.

Secondary messages:

- Budget 2017 includes measures to address the immediate need for greater access to child care services for low to middle income families and enhanced compensation for early childhood educators.
- This includes an additional \$1.3 million in annual funding for the Early Learning and Child Care Supplement Program, as well as an additional \$2 million in annual funding for the Child Care Subsidy Program.

- Enhancing compensation for Early Childhood Educators is a commitment outlined in the ministerial mandate letter, and we proud to deliver on that mandate for Budget 2017.
- Budget 2017 also includes a number of key investments for the education system, including:
 - Restoration of Operating Grant Funding for all 94 public libraries currently operating in the province;
 - New Funding to Support Implementation of a GED Preparation Program at the Murphy Centre; and,
 - Additional annual funding to provide more student assistant hours to further support inclusive education.

Education and Early Childhood Development

Making up Instructional Time Following Due to Weather-Related School Closures

April 5, 2017

Adverse weather conditions throughout the province have resulted in school closures on numerous days this winter. Some media outlets have been inquiring about the process for closures for weather and making up lost teaching time.

Key Messages

- The decision to close a school due to weather is determined by school administrators with the foremost determining factor being student safety.
- Each system of schools has a designated group of administrators who make informed decisions on school closures based on review of breakdown of regional weather updates
- Current snowfall, weather forecast, wind, visibility, temperature, and road conditions are carefully considered in making decisions on school closures.
- EECD and school staff are attentive to protecting instructional time, but the top priority is the safety of our children.
- School administrators have plans within their schools to adjust courses in order to best cover curriculum and some school activities may need to be adjusted in order to have ample instructional time for students.

Secondary Messages

- Administrators are able to access hour-by-hour breakdown of regional weather updates with access to an AMEC meteorologist.

Transportation and Works Sale of Government Assets

UPDATED April 5, 2017

Summary: A CBC story is raising questions as to why government has not met its platform commitment to realize savings of \$50 million annually through the sale of government assets and crown lands. Potential questions: Why haven't you met this commitment?

Key messages:

- Government is making significant progress to find efficiencies related to government assets and crown lands.
- This past fall we were successful in divesting of the *MV Sir Robert Bond* which was sold for \$615,000. We are also realizing savings by avoiding the costs of security and upkeep for the vessel which are considerable at just over \$1 million from April 2014 to December 2016 alone.
- The sale of the Hoyles Escasoni complex was recently finalized for \$650,000. This will also result in savings of \$100,000 annually for basic heat and light and security and we are also avoiding an estimated cost of \$4 million if we were to demolish the building.
- There also known environmental liabilities with the property such as soil contamination. Through the sale of the property, we are avoiding these costs which are considered to be substantial.
- Since December 2015, we have sold and leased approximately \$16 million of Crown land – about \$13 million has been in grants.
- We have also fulfilled the commitment to reduce government leased space which has resulted in just over \$1.6 million in savings. We have also set a new and more ambitious target to reduce our footprint by 110,000 square feet by 2020 from 2016 levels.
- Government continues to seek out efficiencies, to find ways to achieve the best value for money, reduce waste, and increase revenue to help get the province's fiscal house in order.

EECD

- In 2016 The NL English School District sold the former I.J. Samson Junior High for \$189,000 through public tender.
- This will result in annual savings of approximately \$100,000 for operating costs, such as basic heat and light.
- It also avoids significant cost for Government should the building need to be demolished, noting that there are known environmental liabilities associated with the property such as soil contamination, which were disclosed as part of the sale.
- The new property owner has publicly stated that the cost of remediation is estimated at over \$1 million. This was taken into consideration by the owner in establishing the new sale price when the property was re-listed in September 2016 for \$1.89 million.

Education and Early Childhood Development

April 5, 2017

The following statement was given today in the House of Assembly by the Honourable Dale Kirby, Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development

Minister Highlights Continued Support for Early Childhood Development Throughout Province

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to reiterate our government's continued commitment to working with the early childhood development sector for the benefit of children and families throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

Last week we were pleased to distribute \$6.5 million in annual funding for family resource centres from St. John's to the Torngat Mountains. We have approximately 150 centres that offer a variety of community-based activities and resources for early childhood development and parenting support.

The centres provide a friendly and informal setting where families can access programs and resources specifically tailored to meet their needs, including parent education, interactive parent and child programs, and healthy baby clubs.

Our government is dedicated to providing the necessary supports to our children and the early childhood educators who make such an impact on their lives. As announced in the Throne Speech, Budget 2017 will include measures to support early childhood educators and families.

We will enhance the Early Learning and Child Care Supplement for early childhood educators. We are proud to deliver on this mandate letter commitment.

We will also see new investment to ensure more low to middle income families have access to crucial supports for reducing child care costs under the Child Care Subsidy Program.

Mr. Speaker, as a government we recognize that family resource centres, early learning and child care play vital roles in the healthy development of children and the well-being of families throughout our province.

Thank you.

Service NL School Bus Inspections

April 10, 2017

Summary

A CBC article details the circumstances surrounding the NLESD's suspension of a busing contract in January 2017. The bus company owner says his buses were delayed on one occasion because Service NL inspectors ordered his drivers to report to an inspection location. Question: Why are Service NL inspectors delaying buses?

Key Messages

- In the cases where formal charges were laid this school year, the matters are still before the courts, so we are unable to discuss specifics.
- Bus companies are obligated to notify the school district when their buses are delayed, regardless of the reason for the delay.
- Service NL inspectors are tasked with carrying out inspections to ensure that school buses are safe.
- Inspectors do not pull buses off their runs unless there is an immediate safety concern.
- Service NL is confident that the current inspection program is working as designed, to detect the small fraction of operators who try to circumvent the rules without penalizing those who operate with professionalism and integrity.

Secondary Messages

- All school buses are inspected multiple times each school year.
- Service NL inspects 100 per cent of buses in the fall and a minimum of 30 per cent of each operator's fleet in the spring.
- The spring inspections are now underway.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Regional Librarian Position

April 10, 2017

Summary:

Budget 2017 has restored the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board (PILRB) operating grant funding of \$652,500 for 2017-18 to allow the system to continue normal operation until the review process is completed. A report from EY is expected in spring 2017 and will be made public. CUPE Local 2329 have indicated they are outraged that, one day after Budget 2017 PILRB created a new, non-union Regional Librarian position in St. John's while the future of public libraries remains uncertain.

Key Messages:

- Operating grant funding for all public libraries operating in the province is being maintained until PILRB and Provincial Government have reviewed EY's report and considered options for the future of the provincial public library system.
- The decision to fill positions required for day-to-day operations rests with PILRB.
- The position will be filled utilizing a PSC approved process as the PILRB has a delegated staff agreement with the PSC.

Secondary Messages/Background Information:

- A non-bargaining, non-management **Regional Librarian** position was recently advertised (as a Librarian IIB). It has been identified as a gap and the Board had been trying to fill the gap on and off for the past number of years, and is consistent with similar positions in other operating divisions.
- Due to the ongoing review, this position has been advertised as a temporary position to provide support to the Manager and for staff in the three branches in St. John's, and the funding for the position is not permanent.
- Over the past few years PILRB has had Temporary Appointments for Assistant Managers in Provincial Libraries with the most recent being April 2016 through July 2016, at which time CUPE agreed to place an employee into this non bargaining position.
- When Assistant Managers were removed from the system in 2014, Regional Librarians were installed in 2015 as replacement for the Assistant Managers in Central, Western, and Eastern regions. St. John's still did not have a Regional Librarian to offer support and assistance to the Division as in other regions
- There is no Regional Librarian focused solely on the Provincial Regional Libraries Division and its libraries.

**Statement by
Honourable Dale Kirby
Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development
April 11, 2017**

O'Donel High School Student Named 2017 Lester B. Pearson Scholar

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in this Honourable House to congratulate Zoey Davis of Mount Pearl, who is this year's recipient of the Lester B. Pearson Scholarship for Newfoundland and Labrador.

Zoey is currently a Level II student at O'Donel High School in Mount Pearl. She was selected based on her outstanding academic achievement, her involvement in extra-curricular activities and her dedicated volunteerism within the community. Zoey has also won awards in public speaking and drama.

Mr. Speaker, the Lester B. Pearson Scholarship offers a life-changing opportunity for exceptional young people and will provide incredible support in helping Zoey fulfill her long-term goals.

The scholarship is valued at \$80,000 over two years for pre-university study in the International Baccalaureate Program at Pearson College, a United World College in Victoria, British Columbia. The Provincial Government contributes \$34,000 to the scholarship.

I congratulate Zoey and hope her time at Pearson College enriches her life, solidifies the foundations for her academic future and opens doors to new and exciting opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, I also congratulate three other students who, on the strength of their applications and their performance in the selection process, have been offered and have accepted United World College placements. I am pleased to announce that Jack Kenny, a level II student at Exploits Valley High in Grand Fall-Windsor, has been accepted at the United World College of the Atlantic in Wales, United Kingdom.

Manish Benuen, (*Man Ish Ben Win*) a level II student at Mealey Mountain Collegiate in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, has been accepted at Pearson College, in Victoria, British Columbia.

As well, Andree Gaudet, a level II student at Gonzaga High School in St. John's, has accepted at the United World College in Changshu, China.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Honourable members to join me in congratulating Zoey, Jack and Manish and wish them every success in their respective studies.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Education and Early Childhood Development

April 11, 2017

The following statement was given today in the House of Assembly by the Honourable Dale Kirby, Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development

O'Donel High School Student Named 2017 Lester B. Pearson Scholar

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in this Honourable House to congratulate Zoey Davis of Mount Pearl, who is this year's recipient of the Lester B. Pearson Scholarship for Newfoundland and Labrador.

Zoey is currently a Level II student at O'Donel High School in Mount Pearl. She was selected based on her outstanding academic achievement, her involvement in extra-curricular activities and her dedicated volunteerism within the community. Zoey has also won awards in public speaking and drama.

Mr. Speaker, the Lester B. Pearson Scholarship offers a life-changing opportunity for exceptional young people and will provide incredible support in helping Zoey fulfill her long-term goals. The scholarship is valued at \$80,000 over two years for pre-university study in the International Baccalaureate Program at Pearson College, a United World College in Victoria, British Columbia. The Provincial Government contributes \$34,000 to the scholarship.

I congratulate Zoey and hope her time at Pearson College enriches her life, solidifies the foundations for her academic future and opens doors to new and exciting opportunities.

I also congratulate three other students who, on the strength of their applications and their performance in the selection process, have been offered and have accepted United World College placements. I am pleased to announce that Jack Kenny, a level II student at Exploits Valley High in Grand Fall-Windsor, has been accepted at the United World College of the Atlantic in Wales, United Kingdom. Manish Benuen, a level II student at Mealey Mountain Collegiate in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, has been accepted at Pearson College, in Victoria, British Columbia. As well, Andree Gaudet, a level II student at Gonzaga High School in St. John's, has been accepted at the United World College in Changshu, China.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Honourable members to join me in congratulating Zoey, Jack and Manish and wish them every success in their respective studies.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development NLESD CEO Moving to NLTA

April 13, 2017

Summary: The Board of Trustees for the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District has informed the Provincial Government that Mr. Darrin Pike has resigned from his position as Chief Executive Officer/Director of Education of the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District. Mr. Pike will be taking a position with the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association.

Key messages:

- The English School District has informed the Provincial Government this week that its CEO/Director of Education, Mr. Darrin Pike, has resigned from his position.
- Given Mr. Pike's position with the district over the past four years, we have concern about the potential for conflict of interest and have sent a letter to the chair of the board of trustees indicating the importance of informing Mr. Pike in writing of his obligations with respect to any potential conflict of interest, and asked them to ensure that this letter be copied to the NLTA to ensure that they are aware of potential for a conflict of interest.
- Government remains committed to working through collective bargaining negotiations with the NLTA and other labour groups. We believe we have put forth a fair and reasonable package to the NLTA.
- The board of trustees has indicated that they will put an interim plan in place in the coming days to ensure the executive responsibilities associated with the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District are being met.
- The relationship between the department and the district has been positive, with productive and consistent engagement. We value this relationship and will continue to work with the district on a daily basis.

1. Why has Mr. Pike resigned his position?

- That question should really be directed to Mr. Pike or the Board of Trustees. It is not ours to answer. We recognize Mr. Pike for his service as CEO.

2. Mr. Pike will be taking a position with the NLTA. Coming from his previous role, does this create a conflict of interest?

- Whenever a CEO of a public entity resigns there are legal considerations and contractual obligations that may arise. Officials with the Department of Justice and Public Safety are available to assess these kinds of cases to determine if there are any informed considerations that Government should be aware of. We have sent a letter to the chair of the board of trustees indicating the importance of informing Mr. Pike of his obligations with respect to any potential conflict of interest, and asked them to ensure that this letter be copied to the NLTA to ensure that they are aware of potential for a conflict of interest.

3. Do you think that Mr. Pike's move to the NLTA will impact the collective bargaining process?

- We believe that we have put forth a fair and reasonable package to the NLTA. Government remains committed to working through negotiations with the NLTA and other labour groups.

4. When will Mr. Pike finish his position as CEO of the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District?

- The conclusion of Mr. Pike's role as Director/CEO with the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District will be determined by the board of trustees in consultation with Mr. Pike.

5. Is there a plan in place to replace Mr. Pike?

- The board of trustees will put an interim plan in place in the coming days to ensure the executive responsibilities associated with the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District are being met.

6. Was there a positive working relationship with Mr. Pike and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development?

- The relationship between Mr. Pike and the Minister and staff at the department has always been seen as positive, with productive and consistent engagement. We value this relationship and will continue to work with the district on a daily basis.

7. Did the Department receive any advanced notice that Mr. Pike was not satisfied with his position or seeking other opportunities?

- Mr. Pike's decision to leave his position has come as a surprise to the department and was communicated to Government earlier this week.

8. What position is Mr. Pike taking on with the NLTA?

- Mr. Pike or a representative from the NLTA are the best people to answer that question.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development New *Child Care Act* and Regulations

April 26, 2017

Summary:

The

Key messages

- We are proud to deliver a modernized and strengthened Child Care Act for the benefit of children, families and child care providers in our province.
- This new legislation replaces the former Child Care Services Act, which had not been revised in over a decade and was in need of updating.
- The new Act is in line with other Canadian jurisdictions and ensures more consistent interpretation and enforcement, enhances transparency, and improves flexibility of operations for child care service providers.
- As a government, we recognize that child care plays a vital role in the healthy development of children and the well-being of families throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. We remain committed to creating healthier communities as part of The Way Forward.

Secondary messages

- We recognize the transition to this new legislation has many implications throughout the child care sector. That is why we have committed to a mandatory five-year legislative review with public consultation to allow the opportunity to gather feedback and fine-tune if necessary.
- The length of time between Royal Assent and official proclamation of the new Child Care Act was necessary to allow time to complete a number of important processes for implementing the new legislation.
- This work included completion of a new child care policy, standards and procedures manual based on the new Child Care Act and Regulations, as well as orientation sessions to familiarize regional licensing staff with their responsibilities under the new legislation.
- Training sessions for the child care sector must also be completed prior to the Act and Regulations coming into force.
- Our government remains committed to providing high-quality early childhood education in Newfoundland and Labrador, and this new legislation reflects that commitment.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Child Care

April 27, 2017

Key messages:

Child Care Spaces

- It is important to note that regulated child care is a parental choice and not all parents choose to use it.
- Citing that only 18 per cent of all eligible children can be placed into regulated child care in the province assumes that all parents with access to it would decide to do so.
- In fact there are child care centre licensees in the province who are reporting empty spaces.

Affordability of Child Care

- Our government is maintaining its commitment to the affordability of child care, most recently with our Budget 2017 initiatives to increase annual funding for the Child Care Subsidy by an additional \$2 million annually.
- This will ensure more families with low to middle incomes will have access to crucial supports for reducing child care costs.
- The Child Care Subsidy, in conjunction with the Operating Grant Program, increases access to affordable child care spaces.
- In the 2016 report by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, St. John's child care costs have been determined as being near the middle of the list of Canadian cities surveyed. This is a drop from second highest in the 2014 and 2015 reports. Fees dropped \$315/month placing St. John's, NL in 12th place.

Family Child Care Initiatives Pilot

- Family Child Care Initiative was a pilot project scheduled to end March 31, 2017. The start-up grants were a component of that project. To continue to address the affordability of infant spaces in family child care, the Infant Stimulus Grant component continues to be funded.
- It is important to note that fewer than 40 applications for start-up grants were received in 2016-17.
- No eligible family child care provider who had completed the licensing process prior to March 31, 2017 was denied funding. Anyone who had signed a start-up grant agreement before March 31, 2017 will receive their full grant.

Multilateral ELCC Framework *[Need to be very careful about public messaging in this section as much of it is contained in the framework and it has not yet been signed by the PTs – we have not yet had approval to sign on the CP sent over]*

- Our province has been involved with our provincial and territorial counterparts in discussions with the Federal Government regarding a National Early Learning and Child Care Framework. \$400M dollars has been allocated to the Framework, of which NL will receive a portion.
- We will be engaging with our provincial early learning and child care key stakeholders about how the federal funding should be used. This will help to inform bilateral discussions with the Federal Government.

Budget 2017 Overall

- Budget 2017 includes measures to address the immediate need for greater access to child care services for low to middle income families and enhanced compensation for early childhood educators.
- This includes an additional \$1.3 million in annual funding for the Early Learning and Child Care Supplement Program, as well as an additional \$2 million in annual funding for the Child Care Subsidy Program.
- Enhancing compensation for Early Childhood Educators is a commitment outlined in the ministerial mandate letter, and we proud to deliver on that mandate for Budget 2017.
- As a government we recognize that child care plays a vital role in the healthy development of children and the well-being of families throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. We remain committed to creating healthier communities as part of The Way Forward.

ELCC Supplement Increase

- Budget 2017 commits an additional \$1.3 million in annual funding for the Early Learning and Child Care Supplement Program.
- Enhancing compensation for early childhood educators is a commitment outlined in the ministerial mandate letter, and we proud to deliver on that mandate for Budget 2017.
- The department provides a number of additional supports for early childhood educators that are designed to support professional development. These include the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Graduate Bursary Program, the Early Childhood Education (ECE) On-Campus Field Placement Bursary and the Early Childhood Educator Trainee Bursary.

Child Care Subsidy Budget Increase

- Budget 2017 commits an additional \$2 million in annual funding for the Child Care Subsidy Program.
- This will ensure more families with low to middle incomes will have access to crucial supports for reducing child care costs.
- As a government we recognize that child care plays a vital role in the healthy development of children and the well-being of families throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. We remain committed to creating healthier communities as part of The Way Forward.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Child Care

April 27, 2017

Key messages:

Child Care Spaces

- It is important to note that regulated child care is a parental choice and not all parents choose to use it.
- Citing that only 18 per cent of all eligible children can be placed into regulated child care in the province assumes that all parents with access to it would decide to do so.
- In fact there are child care centre licensees in the province who are reporting empty spaces.

Affordability of Child Care

- Our government is maintaining its commitment to the affordability of child care, most recently with our Budget 2017 initiatives to increase annual funding for the Child Care Subsidy by an additional \$2 million annually.
- This will ensure more families with low to middle incomes will have access to crucial supports for reducing child care costs.
- The Child Care Subsidy, in conjunction with the Operating Grant Program, increases access to affordable child care spaces.
- In the 2016 report by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, St. John's child care costs have been determined as being near the middle of the list of Canadian cities surveyed. This is a drop from second highest in the 2014 and 2015 reports. Fees dropped \$315/month placing St. John's, NL in 12th place.

Family Child Care Initiative Grant Pilot

- Family Child Care Initiative was a pilot project scheduled to end March 31, 2017. The start-up grants were a component of that project. To continue to address the affordability of infant spaces in family child care, the Infant Stimulus Grant component continues to be funded.
- It is important to note that fewer than 40 applications for start-up grants were received in 2016-17.
- No eligible family child care provider who had completed the licensing process prior to March 31, 2017 was denied funding. Anyone who had signed a start-up grant agreement before March 31, 2017 will receive their full grant.

Multilateral ELCC Framework

- Our province has been involved with our provincial and territorial counterparts in discussions with the Federal Government regarding a National Early Learning and Child Care Framework. \$400M dollars has been allocated to the Framework, of which NL will receive a portion.
- The framework was signed by Minister Kirby on behalf of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador on June 12, 2017. This will bring \$7.5M per year for the next three years under the bilateral agreement to be negotiated. Ongoing funding over the 10 years will not be less than the amount allocated in 2017-2018.
- We will be engaging with our provincial early learning and child care key stakeholders about how the federal funding should be used. This will help to inform bilateral discussions with the Federal Government.

Budget 2017 Overall

- Budget 2017 includes measures to address the immediate need for greater access to child care services for low to middle income families and enhanced compensation for early childhood educators.
- This includes an additional \$1.3 million in annual funding for the Early Learning and Child Care Supplement Program, as well as an additional \$2 million in annual funding for the Child Care Subsidy Program.
- Enhancing compensation for Early Childhood Educators is a commitment outlined in the ministerial mandate letter, and we proud to deliver on that mandate for Budget 2017.
- As a government we recognize that child care plays a vital role in the healthy development of children and the well-being of families throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. We remain committed to creating healthier communities as part of The Way Forward.

ELCC Supplement Increase

- Budget 2017 commits an additional \$1.3 million in annual funding for the Early Learning and Child Care Supplement Program.
- Stakeholder engagement sessions have been completed and are being analyzed.
- Enhancing compensation for early childhood educators is a commitment outlined in the ministerial mandate letter, and we proud to deliver on that mandate for Budget 2017.

- The department provides a number of additional supports for early childhood educators that are designed to support professional development. These include the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Graduate Bursary Program, the Early Childhood Education (ECE) On-Campus Field Placement Bursary and the Early Childhood Educator Trainee Bursary.

Child Care Subsidy Budget Increase

- Budget 2017 commits an additional \$2 million in annual funding for the Child Care Subsidy Program.
- This will ensure more families with low to middle incomes will have access to crucial supports for reducing child care costs.
- As a government we recognize that child care plays a vital role in the healthy development of children and the well-being of families throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. We remain committed to creating healthier communities as part of The Way Forward.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Inclusive Education

April 27, 2017

Summary:

Issues of teacher training and resources for facilitating inclusive education have been raised in the media and have been brought to the Minister's attention during school visits. Questions may include, *what is government doing to ensure all children's educational needs are met? What is being done to ensure teachers have the resources they need?*

Key messages:

- Our government remains committed to the principles of Inclusive Education, which extend far beyond the simple placement of certain students in classroom environments.
- Government spends approximately \$120 million annually to support inclusive education in the public school system in this province.
- To further support inclusive education, Budget 2017 commits an additional \$500,000 in annual funding to increase available student assistant hours.
- Inclusive education promotes the right of all students to attend school with their peers, and to receive appropriate and quality programming. It involves a continuum of supports and services in the most appropriate setting – from large groups to individualized instruction – respecting the dignity of the child.
- This involves working with educators and the districts to ensure proper planning and resources are in place to facilitate this inclusion. It is more complex than simply placing students physically into classrooms with peers.

Secondary messages:

- There have been no recent changes in the allocation formulas for Guidance Counsellors or Instructional Resource Teachers.
- Further, there have been no recent reductions in the allocation of Educational Psychologists, Speech Language Pathologists, teachers who support students with Autism or those who require English as a second language support and teachers for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Blind and Visually Impaired.
- We are concerned whenever parents or teachers express concern about safety, and all reported incidents are taken seriously.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Infrastructure Projects – Witless Bay-Mobile Area Intermediate School

April 27, 2017

Summary:

A new intermediate school was approved in Budget 2015 to address student capacity in the Witless Bay-Mobile area. As part of the 2016-17 budget process, government needed to reduce provincial expenditures while at the same time reduce borrowing and among other measures announced in Budget 2016, a number of capital projects were cancelled or deferred across various departments. Recent media coverage noted that Witless Bay was the fastest growing community in the province. Questions may include, *what is the status of the intermediate school for the Witless Bay area? Why has government reversed the decision to provide a new school?*

Key messages:

- While it is recognized that additional school capacity is required for the Mobile Central High school system, based on analysis of projections a more practical and cost effective solution was required given the province's fiscal capacity.
- As such, in 2016-17 the Provincial Government replaced the new school project with an extension to Mobile Central High.
- In November 2016, a request for proposals for planning and design services for the extension was awarded to SNC-Lavalin Inc. Planning is well underway.
- This extension project will address future enrolment growth at St. Bernard's Elementary in Witless Bay and Mobile Central High in Mobile.
- The project will be going to tender this year with completion anticipated in the fall of 2018.

Secondary messages:

- Predicted population increases in the area were considered in making the decision for the school extension.
- Continuing to invest in education infrastructure is a mandate letter directive, and our government will continue to make strategic investments to support high quality learning environments for students and teachers throughout our province.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development NLESD CEO Moves to NLTA

April 27, 2017

Summary: The Board of Trustees for the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District has informed the Provincial Government that Mr. Darrin Pike has resigned from his position as Chief Executive Officer/Director of Education of the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District. Mr. Pike's resignation will be effective as of April 25 and he will be taking a position with the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association. The Board has appointed Mr. Tony Stack as Interim CEO and Director of Education. Mr. Stack has worked as a teacher and a principal at St. Peter's Junior High School in Mount Pearl, and most recently as associate director of programs for the school district. Questions may include, *is there a conflict of interest? What is being done to ensure the executive duties of the English School District are being carried out?*

Key messages:

- The English School District has informed the Provincial Government that its CEO/Director of Education, Mr. Darrin Pike, has resigned from his position.
- The board of trustees has appointed Mr. Tony Stack as interim Director/CEO to ensure the executive responsibilities associated with the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District continue to be met.
- Given Mr. Pike's position with the district over the past four years, we have concern about the potential for conflict of interest and have sent a letter to the chair of the board of trustees indicating the importance of informing Mr. Pike in writing of his obligations with respect to any potential conflict of interest, and asked them to ensure that this letter be copied to the NLTA to ensure that they are aware of potential for a conflict of interest.
- Government remains committed to working through collective bargaining negotiations with the NLTA and other labour groups. We believe we have put forth a fair and reasonable package to the NLTA.
- The relationship between the department and the district has been positive, with productive and consistent engagement. We value this relationship and will continue to work with the district on a daily basis.

Secondary messages:

- Interim CEO/Director Mr. Tony Stack has worked as a teacher and a principal at St. Peter's Junior High School in Mount Pearl, and most recently as associate director of programs for the school district.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development PILRB Funding Maintained

April 27, 2017

Summary:

Budget 2017 has restored the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board (PILRB) operating grant funding of \$652,500 for 2017-18 to allow the system to continue normal operation until the review process is completed. A report from EY is expected in spring 2017 and will be made public. CUPE Local 2329 have indicated they are outraged that one day after Budget 2017 PILRB created a new, non-union Regional Librarian position in St. John's while the future of public libraries remains uncertain. Questions may include, *has government reversed its position on the public library system? When will a decision be made?*

Key messages:

- Operating grant funding for all public libraries operating in the province is being maintained until the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board and the Provincial Government have reviewed EY's report and considered options for the future of the provincial public library system.
- We want to have a clear and transparent overview of our provincial library system to inform the next steps in our decision making process. EY's independent review will help in this process.
- To inform the review, EY held eleven consultations across the province from October 5 to November 8 of last year. Feedback was also gathered through staff and public surveys and written submissions.
- The final library review report will be presented to the review Steering Committee very soon and will be released publicly.
- We do not want to pre-determine the outcome of the review. The recommendations put forward in the report will inform next steps in the decision-making process, both for the Provincial Information Library Resources Board and our government.

Secondary messages:

- The decision to fill positions required for day-to-day operations rests with PILRB.
- The position will be filled utilizing a PSC approved process as the PILRB has a delegated staff agreement with the PSC.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

PILRB Funding Maintained

April 27, 2017

Summary:

Budget 2017 has restored the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board (PILRB) operating grant funding of \$652,500 for 2017-18 to allow the system to continue normal operation until the review process is completed. A report from EY is expected in spring 2017 and will be made public. CUPE Local 2329 have indicated they are outraged that one day after Budget 2017 PILRB created a new, non-union Regional Librarian position in St. John's while the future of public libraries remains uncertain.

Key Messages:

- Operating grant funding for all public libraries operating in the province is being maintained until the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board and the Provincial Government have reviewed EY's report and considered options for the future of the provincial public library system.
- We want to have a clear and transparent overview of our provincial library system to inform the next steps in our decision making process. EY's independent review will help in this process.
- To inform the review, EY held eleven consultations across the province from October 5 to November 8 of last year. Feedback was also gathered through staff and public surveys and written submissions.
- The final library review report, which will be presented to the review Steering Committee, will soon be released publicly.
- We do not want to pre-determine the outcome of the review. The recommendations put forward in the report will inform next steps in the decision-making process, both for the Provincial Information Library Resources Board and our government.

Secondary Messages:

- A non-bargaining, non- management **Regional Librarian** position was recently advertised (as a Librarian IIB). It has been identified as a gap and the Board had been trying to fill the gap on and off for the past number of years, and is consistent with similar positions in other operating divisions.
- The decision to fill positions required for day-to-day operations rests with PILRB.
- The position will be filled utilizing a PSC approved process as the PILRB has a delegated staff agreement with the PSC.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Listening Component on English 3201 Public Exam

May 3, 2016

Preamble: CBC has written a story about a Hard of hearing student being upset with listening part of English 3201 public exam. Possible questions: *How can deaf or hard of hearing students “listen”? What Accommodations are available to hard of hearing students? Is there more information available for students and parents?*

Key Messages:

- A listening component is included on the English 3201 public examination because the examination assesses how well a student meets the curriculum outcomes of the course and assesses a student’s ability to understand, analyze and then respond to a non-written text. It tests a student’s ability to receive and interpret oral cues.
- Listening is one of six main categories that the Kindergarten to Grade 12 English Language Arts curriculum is built upon. These strands are recognized internationally as being key components for language arts curriculum.
- Accommodations for assessing listening should be in place for a deaf or hard of hearing student long before the public exam is administered in Grade 12.
- The Department’s position is supported by Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA), the leading authority of support services for deaf and hard of hearing students in Atlantic Canada.
- Deaf and hard of hearing teachers, ASL interpreters, and Student Supports Services Program Specialists were involved in the development of the listening component and provided support and guidance to ensure that the needs of deaf and hard of hearing students were addressed.
- The Department will continue to work with the school districts to ensure the proper accommodations for deaf and hard of hearing students are identified and implemented early in the student’s schooling.

Secondary Messages

- This decision was approved by the Minister at that time, and signed off by the DM. The districts were first informed in the spring of 2015.
- The six key categories of the English Language Arts curriculum are: reading and viewing, writing and representing, and speaking and listening. These are recognized internationally as being key components for language arts curriculum.
- Providing a written text to a student for assessing listening is not an acceptable accommodation because it changes the focus of the assessment from listening to reading and does not measure the same outcomes.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
Listening Component on English 3201 Public Exam
QAs

Q. What Accommodations are available to hard of hearing students?

Any accommodation that a student has documented in his/her record of accommodations and/or IEP will be available during the listening assessment.

These may include but are not limited to:

- extra time
- alternate setting within the school
- American Sign Language (ASL)
- speech reading
- live reader
- quiet space
- assistive technology

Providing a student the written text of the listening portion is not an acceptable accommodation for a listening assessment because it changes the focus of the assessment from listening to reading.

Q. How can deaf or hard of hearing students “listen”?

The purpose of the listening strand of English 3201 is to evaluate a student’s ability to understand, analyze and then respond to a non-written, oral text. Most students listen through hearing. For deaf or hard of hearing students the process of understanding, analyzing and responding to a non-written, oral text happens in other ways, such as ASL, speech reading, and assistive technology. Students with hearing loss should be availing of such modes of communication as part of their educational program.

Q. Is there more information available for students and parents?

- FAQs are available on the Departments website:
http://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/k12/evaluation/english3201/eng3201_public_exam_listening_componen_faqs.pdf

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

EY Library Report

May 4, 2017

Summary:

An access to information request was received by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Education on April 26, 2017 seeking a copy of the EY report on the public library system. A decision was made by the Deputy Minister that access to these records be refused in accordance with Section 29 regarding exceptions to disclosure specified in the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act:

29. (1) The head of a public body may refuse to disclose to an applicant information that would reveal

(b) the contents of a formal research report or audit report that in the opinion of the head of the public body is incomplete and in respect of which a request or order for completion has been made by the head within 65 business days of delivery of the report;

Questions may include: *Why has the department refused to disclose contents of the report? Is there a firm date when the report will be available?*

Key messages:

- A draft report has been submitted by EY, reviewed by the steering committee and feedback was provided for consideration.
- In adherence to section 29 of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the department has decided not to release the draft report as it is not a final document and will release the final report within 65 business days of having received the request.
- A final library review report from EY is expected in spring 2017 and upon review by the Steering Committee it will be made public.
- We want to have a clear and transparent overview of our provincial library system to inform the next steps in our decision making process. EY's independent review will help in this process.
- Recommendations put forward in the report will inform next steps in the decision-making process for the Provincial Information Library Resources Board and our government.

Secondary messages:

- Budget 2017 restored the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board (PILRB) operating grant funding of \$652,500 for 2017-18 with public libraries operating in the province being maintained until the PILRB and the Provincial Government have reviewed EY's report and considered options for the future of the public library system.

Embargoed Until Minister Begins Reading

Education and Early Childhood Development

May 4, 2017

The following statement was given today in the House of Assembly by the Honourable Dale Kirby, Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development:

Minister Recognizes National Physical and Health Education Conference

Mr. Speaker, I rise in this Honourable House to acknowledge the National Physical and Health Education Conference which begins this evening at the Sheraton Hotel in St. John's.

This year's theme, Rock Solid Foundations...Energizing Futures, recognizes the importance of active living and the lifelong value of maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Delegates at the national conference are people involved with the health, physical activity and education needs of children and youth, including educators, public health professionals, researchers, administrators, recreation leaders, physical education specialists and others who want the opportunity to network with colleagues, increase their knowledge and skills and foster healthy active living for our children and youth in our schools, families and communities.

Our government is committed to supporting increased physical activity in schools through Active Schools, Participation Nation and school-based sport programs offered by School Sport Newfoundland and Labrador.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we are part of the Joint Consortium for School Health which models, supports and encourages partnerships between health and school health. It works across provincial, territorial and federal governments to better coordinate and integrate efforts that champion improved health and learning for children and youth.

I ask all members of this Honourable House to join me in thanking members of the Newfoundland and Labrador Physical Education Special Interest Council, and Physical and Health Education Canada for hosting such an important and productive event. The dedication of physical education professionals throughout our province has played an essential role in ensuring that our children and youth have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to lead active and healthy lives.

Thank you.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Supports

May 8, 2017

Summary:

The Autism Society is calling for an increase in core funding from the Provincial Government, citing a 120 per cent increase in the incidence rate of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) since 2002. Core funding to the society is provided through the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development and the Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour.

Key messages:

- Students with autism have access to a wide range of services within the education system.
- In addition to classroom teachers, students with autism may have access to: speech language pathologists; educational psychologists; guidance counsellors; instructional resource teachers; itinerants for autism; student assistants; alternate transportation; and, iPads for communication.
- Educators can avail of a number of professional learning opportunities related to autism, such as the online *ASD and Behavioral Interventions* program. This is an Atlantic Provinces initiative coordinated through the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority.
- By the end of this school year, approximately 900 teachers and student assistants in Newfoundland and Labrador will have completed the training since it was first introduced in April 2015.
- This past fall, our government signed a memorandum of agreement with the Public Health Agency of Canada to support the development of a National Autism Surveillance System. The agreement will allow for the sharing of information provincially and nationally to help improve the lives of those living with ASD.

Secondary messages:

- Government spends approximately \$120 million annually to support inclusive education in the public school system in this province.
- To further support inclusive education, Budget 2017 commits an additional \$500,000 in annual funding to increase available student assistant hours.
- Inclusive education promotes the right of all students to attend school with their peers, and to receive appropriate and quality programming. It involves a continuum of supports and services in the most appropriate setting – from large groups to individualized instruction – respecting the dignity of the child.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Ambassador Award Eligibility

May 9, 2017

Summary:

Following Regional Heritage Fairs in the province, the president of a private school in St. John's is questioning why students who in private schools are ineligible for the Ambassador Award Program, which includes an international trip to trace the steps of the Newfoundland Regiment during the First World War.

Questions may include: *Should the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador allow at least one or two spaces on the trip for private students? What is the rationale for private students being excluded from consideration for the program?*

Key messages:

- The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador launched the Ambassador Award Program and a series of curriculum-based enhancements concentrating on Newfoundland and Labrador's First World War story in 2015-16. The joint projects were developed by the Honour 100 Commemorations program and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.
- Under the *Schools Act, 1997*, money allocated under section 91, must be used by school boards for operation and maintenance of schools, including the transportation of students, school supplies and equipment and other money allocated for the purpose of or connected with education in schools.
- The Department of Education and Early Childhood Education provides funding to the public school boards and does not have the authority under the *Schools Act, 1997* to fund private schools or programs.
- To be eligible for the Ambassador Award Program, students must not have been awarded previously, have completed their Heritage Fair project on Newfoundland and Labrador's role in World War I, and be attending a public school in Newfoundland and Labrador in grades 7 to level III.
- Private schools may not participate in events or activities which are funded directly through the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and which are administered directly by the department, unless the private school is taking part in a non-competitive event such as the Provincial Theatre Arts Festival and Arts Smarts Program.
- Private schools may participate in extra/co-curricular activities administered by non-governmental and not-for-profit outside agencies, provided that a minimal amount of the Provincial Government funding supports the core activity such as science fairs, heritage fairs, various sports tournaments, skills competitions and music festivals.

**Statement by
Honourable Dale Kirby
Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development
May 9, 2017**

Minister Recognizes 20th Anniversary of Heritage Fairs

Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 20th anniversary of Heritage Fairs in our province.

This year's theme, *Keeping our Stories Alive: Celebrating 20 Years of Heritage Fairs in Newfoundland and Labrador*, presents valuable opportunities for our youth to connect with our respected history and culture.

I had the pleasure last weekend of attending the the Regional Heritage Fair at Waterford Valley High School which featured over two hundred projects by students from across the Avalon Peninsula. Projects included many inspiring and creative topics that ranged from The Blue Puttees, our role in world wars, the value of women in war-time, aboriginal traditions, local fishing techniques, Viking visitors, and a winning project on Outhouses in Newfoundland and Labrador with the tagline: To Go or Not to Go.

I am especially pleased to say that 19 outstanding Heritage Fair projects about Newfoundland and Labrador's role in the First World War will receive accolades this month through the Ambassador Award Program. Award recipients will have the opportunity to visit First World War battlefields of Western Europe where many of our soldiers gave their lives.

Mister Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the preparation and organization of the fair's program that involves many hours of dedication by hundreds of volunteers throughout our province. I would also like to thank the Historic Sites Association of Newfoundland and Labrador and Historica Canada for their constructive partnership and for continuing to successfully offer these opportunities for the benefit of students.

Mister Speaker I ask all members of this Honourable House to join me in congratulating all participants and wishing luck to all students who will represent our province in Western Europe.

Thank you.

**Statement by
Honourable Dale Kirby
Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development
May xx, 2017**

Mr. Speaker I rise today to this year marks the 20th anniversary of Heritage Fairs in Newfoundland and Labrador.

This year's theme, Keeping our Stories Alive: Celebrating 20 Years of Heritage Fairs in Newfoundland and Labrador, presents valuable opportunities for personal growth and expands ways of connecting our youth to the past.

Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Government provided \$20,000 to support the Heritage Fair Program, which helps to enable involvement from about 100 schools across Newfoundland and Labrador and includes the participation of approximately 7,000 students.

I am especially pleased to announce that 19 outstanding Heritage Fair projects on Newfoundland and Labrador's role in World War 1 will be awarded this month through the Ambassador Program. The chosen students will visit the First World War battlefields of Western Europe where so many Newfoundlanders gave their lives.

Mr. Speaker, it is events like the Ambassador Program that complement and enhance the education curriculum by allowing students to explore and connect to their individual, provincial and national heritage.

During the school year, students work with many museum and heritage organizations while learning valuable research and presentation skills.

Mr. Speaker, the dedication and commitment of students, educators and volunteers to this rewarding project has not gone unnoticed. The preparation and organization of the Fair's program involves an average of 1200 volunteers who contribute almost 5000 hours of their personal time.

I would also like to take this opportunity to wish good luck to all the students participating in this year's Ambassador Award Program. I would also like to thank the Historic Sites Association of Newfoundland and Labrador and Historica, Canada for its continued partnership and for making this event a success.

Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

Statement by
Honourable Dale Kirby
Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development
May xx, 2017

Minister Recognizes 20th Anniversary of Heritage Fairs

Mr. Speaker, I rise in this Honourable House to announce this year marks the 20th anniversary of Heritage Fairs in our province.

This year's theme, *Keeping our Stories Alive: Celebrating 20 Years of Heritage Fairs in Newfoundland and Labrador*, presents valuable opportunities for our youth to connect with the past.

The Provincial Government provided \$20,000 annually to support the Heritage Fairs Program, which helps to enable involvement from more than 100 schools across Newfoundland and Labrador and includes the participation of approximately 7,000 students.

I am particularly pleased to say that 19 outstanding Heritage Fair projects about Newfoundland and Labrador's role in the First World War will receive accolades this month through the Ambassador Award Program. Award recipients will have the opportunity to visit First World War battlefields of Western Europe where so many of our soldiers gave their lives.

These kinds of offerings enhance the education curriculum by allowing students to explore and connect with provincial and national heritage.

During the school year, students work with many museum and heritage organizations while learning valuable research and presentation skills. I had the pleasure last week of attending the Central Region Heritage Fair in Gander – where ??? participants took part with more than ??? presentations on display.

The dedication and commitment of students, educators and volunteers to this rewarding project has not gone unnoticed. The preparation and organization of the fair's program involves an average of 1,200 volunteers who contribute almost 5,000 hours of their personal time.

I would also like to take this opportunity to wish good luck to all students participating in this year's Ambassador Award Program. I would also like to thank the Historic Sites Association of Newfoundland and Labrador and Historica, Canada for its constructive partnership and for continuing to successfully offer these opportunities for the benefit of students.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Whitbourne Elementary Court Challenge

May 10, 2017

Preamble: A court challenge by the Help Whitbourne Elementary Committee against the closure of Whitbourne Elementary School goes to the Court of Appeal tomorrow.

Key Messages:

- Under the *Schools Act, 1997*, the Newfoundland and Labrador English School Board is responsible for the organization and administration of primary, elementary, and secondary education within its district, which includes reviewing and reorganizing school systems as necessary. Questions regarding the reorganizing of school systems should be directed to the Board.
- In the July 2016 Supreme Court decision related to closure of Whitbourne Elementary, Justice Marshall confirmed the authority of the Board to make school closure decisions.
- A vote on the notice of motion for the closure of Whitbourne Elementary in June 2017, with students being rezoned to attend Woodland Elementary, effective September 2017, was held by the former Board of Trustees on Tuesday, September 20, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. at the District Conference Centre. The motion to close the school passed.
- A decision to close a school falls within the jurisdiction of the Newfoundland and Labrador English School Board, subject to the legislative requirement to consult parents. The decision to pursue the process of bringing the populations of Whitbourne Elementary and Woodland Elementary together was made by the Newfoundland and Labrador English School Board.
- Government respects the appeals process and will continue to monitor any developments in this case.

Secondary messages:

- On November 22, 2016, the Provincial Government held school board elections for the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District and le Conseil scolaire francophone provincial de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Bus Contract Cancelled

May 11, 2017

Summary:

As a result of concerns for the safety of students, in January, 2017 the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District suspended student transportation services provided by Kelloway Investments Ltd. Following an investigation, more than 50 Highway Traffic Act charges were laid against Kelloway Investments Ltd. related to vehicle inspections. NLESD has now cancelled its busing contract with Kelloway Investments, citing a lack of confidence that safe and reliable student transportation could be provided.

Key messages

- After first suspending its busing contract with Kelloway Investments to investigate the company's failure to meet safety inspection requirements, the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District has since decided to completely cancel the contract.
- We understand from the school district that the decision to cancel the contract was made due to a lack of confidence that the provider in question can deliver safe and reliable student transportation.
- The initial decision to suspend the contract was made to allow time to further investigate the company's failure to meet inspection requirements.
- Since that decision, it has become clear that the company has a number of concerns affecting safety, ranging from failures to meet inspection requirements and insufficient driver training to poor reporting and communication with the district and schools.

Secondary Messages

- The decision to cancel the busing contracts was made by the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District.
- The Newfoundland and Labrador English School District indicated that it could no longer permit service to continue without the confidence that it is being provided in a safe manner for students.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Listening Component on English 3201 Public Exam

May 15, 2017

Preamble: CBC has written a story about a Hard of hearing student being upset with the listening part of English 3201 public exam. Possible questions: *How can deaf or hard of hearing students “listen”? What accommodations are available to hard of hearing students? Is there more information available for students and parents?*

Key Messages:

- A listening component is included on the English 3201 public examination because the examination assesses how well a student meets the curriculum outcomes of the course and assesses a student’s ability to understand, analyze and then respond to a non-written text. It tests a student’s ability to receive and interpret oral cues.
- Listening is one of six main categories that the Kindergarten to Grade 12 English Language Arts curriculum is built upon. These strands are recognized internationally as being key components for language arts curriculum.
- Accommodations for assessing listening should be in place for a deaf or hard of hearing student long before the public exam is administered in Grade 12.
- The Department’s position is supported by Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA), the leading authority of support services for deaf and hard of hearing students in Atlantic Canada.
- Deaf and hard of hearing teachers and ASL interpreters were involved in the development of the listening assessment and provided support and guidance to ensure that the needs of deaf and hard of hearing students were addressed.
- The department will continue to work with the school districts to ensure the proper accommodations for deaf and hard of hearing students are identified and implemented early in the student’s schooling.

Secondary Messages

- This decision was approved by the Minister at that time, and signed off by the DM. The districts were first informed in the spring of 2015.
- The six key categories of the English Language Arts curriculum are: reading, viewing, writing, representing, speaking and listening. These are recognized internationally as being key components for language arts curriculum.
- Providing a written text to a student for assessing listening is not an acceptable accommodation because it changes the focus of the assessment from listening to reading and does not measure the same outcomes.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
Listening Component on English 3201 Public Exam
QAs

Q. What Accommodations are available to hard of hearing students?

These may include but are not limited to:

- extra time
- alternate setting within the school
- American Sign Language (ASL)
- speech reading
- live reader
- quiet space
- assistive technology

Providing a student the written text of the listening portion is not an acceptable accommodation for a listening assessment because it changes the focus of the assessment from listening to reading.

Q. How can deaf or hard of hearing students “listen”?

The purpose of the listening strand of English 3201 is to evaluate a student’s ability to understand, analyze and then respond to a non-written, oral communication. Most students listen through hearing. For deaf or hard of hearing students the process of understanding, analyzing and responding to a non-written, oral communication happens in other ways, such as ASL, speech reading, and assistive technology. Students with hearing loss should be availing of such modes of communication as part of their educational program.

Q. Is there more information available for students and parents?

- FAQs are available on the Departments website:
http://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/k12/evaluation/english3201/eng3201_public_exam_listening_componen_faqs.pdf

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Release of EY Report on Provincial Public Libraries System

May 17, 2017

Summary:

Budget 2017 restored the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board (PILRB) operating grant funding of \$652,500 for 2017-18 to allow the system to continue normal operation until EY completed its review. The final report has been submitted and released to the public. The EY report is comprehensive and includes recommendations for improving the system, as well as identifying challenges with the current funding model and the inefficient geographical distribution of libraries versus the demand for services.

Key Messages:

- We have received EY's report on the provincial public library system and we have begun to review its contents.
- The recommendations put forward in the report will inform next steps in the decision-making process for the Provincial Information Library Resources Board and our government.
- EY was engaged to conduct an independent, comprehensive and transparent review of our provincial public library system.
- To inform the review, EY held eleven consultations across the province from October 5 to November 8 of last year. Feedback was also gathered through staff and public surveys and written submissions.

**Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
Release of EY Report on Provincial Public Libraries System**

May 17, 2017

Q&A:

1. Based on the report, will government reverse the decision to close public libraries throughout the province?

- Ultimately, decisions related to the administration and service delivery model of the public library system are the Board's to make.
- The Budget 2017 restoration of funding for libraries was to allow time for EY to complete its review of the system, as well as to allow the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board time to review its contents and determine next steps.

2. How much did the Provincial Government pay EY to conduct this review?

- It was decided that a comprehensive review of the provincial public libraries system was necessary to inform the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board's decision making process for improving the public library system.
- The total cost of the review was approximately \$250,000 (actual \$253,363). For a system that costs our government in excess of 11 million annually, this was an investment to ensure an independent and transparent review process for finding the right balance for meeting the needs of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in a sustainable way.

3. The EY report states that Newfoundland and Labrador's public library system is "significantly underfunded" at 42 per cent below the national average. What does this say about the value government places on the system?

- Our government highly values the provincial public library system. In fact, while identifying that the system is underfunded, the report itself highlights that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador funds the province's library system at more than twice the national average.
- The gap that exists results largely from municipalities not providing the same degree of direct financial support to libraries as other provinces.

4. Municipal governments in the province are 92 per cent below the national average in terms of funding the provincial library system. Shouldn't municipalities be contributing more to the public library system, as they do in other provinces?

- We have to focus on what works for us in Newfoundland and Labrador. We remain committed to working collaboratively with municipalities and the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board as it works to determine the right balance for meeting needs in our communities in a way that is economically sustainable.
- It is important to note that there are many examples of municipalities providing “in kind” contributions to public libraries. These include instances of donating space as well as providing valuable services such as snow removal and custodial services.
- As a government we have been focused on lessening costs for municipalities while stimulating economic growth.

5. The report notes that significant changes to how libraries are governed, funded and staffed are required in order to achieve acceptable performance and maintain its relevance. What changes will be made and when will we see them?

- Budget 2017 included a specific investment to maintain normal operation of the public libraries system until the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board and the Provincial Government have reviewed EY's report and considered options for the future of the system.
- The report is comprehensive and there is much to consider with respect to its recommendations. Considerable work remains before decisions can be made about next steps for the system. To suggest a specific course of action would be premature at this time. The report does recommend taking time to properly consider recommendations.
- Implementation of some of the recommendations in the report would require legislative changes and longer-term governance changes/transitions, representing multi-year undertakings.

6. The report states that the provincial public library system should be a partnership between the Provincial Government, municipal governments and other community partners. Who might these partners be?

- It would be premature to speculate on any potential changes to the system's funding, governance or service delivery models. Both the Board and the Provincial Government must first review the report before any further deliberation can take

place. Implementation of some of the recommendations in the report would require multi-year undertakings.

7. The report's suggested timeline notes decisions should be made by the fall of this year, with a multi-year strategy for meeting its recommendations by Spring 2018. Will this be the case?

- We are committed to working with the Board through its decision-making process and are focused on developing a strategic plan as soon as possible. While the report is comprehensive and there is much to consider with respect to its recommendations, we believe EY's suggested timeline for establishing a plan is reasonable, barring any unforeseen factors. Considerable work remains before decisions can be made about next steps for the system. We will be meeting with the Board regularly to discuss recommendations and future options.

8. What about library staff? Will they be affected and when will they be informed?

- Any decisions with respect to staff would be communicated by the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board. It is worth noting that the Board has only just received the report and will likely need time to review its contents before beginning to plan any future actions.
- Budget 2017 included a specific investment to maintain normal operation of the public libraries system until the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board and the Provincial Government have reviewed EY's report and considered options for the future of the system.

9. How will the Provincial Government respond if the Board requests additional provincial funding to meet recommendations of the EY report?

- The Provincial Government already funds the provincial public library system at more than twice the national average, however, we will continue to consider all recommendations and potential requests as part of the usual process for budget decisions.
- Budget 2017 included a specific investment to maintain normal operation of the public libraries system until the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board and the Provincial Government have reviewed EY's report and considered options for the future of the system.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Release of EY Report on Provincial Public Libraries System

May 17, 2017

Summary:

Budget 2017 restored the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board (PILRB) operating grant funding of \$652,500 for 2017-18 to allow the system to continue normal operation until EY completed its review. The final report has been submitted and released to the public. The EY report is comprehensive and includes recommendations for improving the system, as well as identifying challenges with the current funding model and the inefficient geographical distribution of libraries versus the demand for services.

Key Messages:

- We have received EY's report on the provincial public library system and we have begun to review its contents.
- The recommendations put forward in the report will inform next steps in the decision-making process for the Provincial Information Library Resources Board and our government.
- EY was engaged to conduct an independent, comprehensive and transparent review of our provincial public library system.
- To inform the review, EY held eleven consultations across the province from October 5 to November 8 of last year. Feedback was also gathered through staff and public surveys and written submissions.

**Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
Release of EY Report on Provincial Public Libraries System**

May 17, 2017

Q&A:

1. Based on the report, will government reverse the decision to close public libraries throughout the province?

- Ultimately, decisions related to the administration and service delivery model of the public library system are the Board's to make.
- The Budget 2017 restoration of funding for libraries was to allow time for EY to complete its review of the system, as well as to allow the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board time to review its contents and determine next steps.

2. How much did the Provincial Government pay EY to conduct this review?

- It was decided that a comprehensive review of the provincial public libraries system was necessary to inform the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board's decision making process for improving the public library system.
- The total cost of the review was approximately \$250,000 (actual \$253,363). For a system that costs our government in excess of 11 million annually, this was an investment to ensure an independent and transparent review process for finding the right balance for meeting the needs of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in a sustainable way.

3. The EY report states that Newfoundland and Labrador's public library system is "significantly underfunded" at 42 per cent below the national average. What does this say about the value government places on the system?

- Our government highly values the provincial public library system. In fact, while identifying that the system is underfunded, the report itself highlights that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador funds the province's library system at more than twice the national average.

4. Municipal governments in the province are 92 per cent below the national average in terms of funding the provincial library system. Shouldn't municipalities be contributing more to the public library system, as they do in other provinces?

- We have to focus on what works for us in Newfoundland and Labrador. We remain committed to working collaboratively with municipalities and the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board as it works to determine the right balance for meeting needs in our communities in a way that is economically sustainable.
- It is important to note that there are many examples of municipalities providing “in kind” contributions to public libraries. These include instances of donating space as well as providing valuable services such as snow removal and custodial services.
- As a government we have been focused on lessening costs for municipalities while stimulating economic growth.

5. The report notes that significant changes to how libraries are governed, funded and staffed are required in order to achieve acceptable performance and maintain its relevance. What changes will be made and when will we see them?

- Budget 2017 included a specific investment to maintain normal operation of the public libraries system until the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board and the Provincial Government have reviewed EY’s report and considered options for the future of the system.
- The report is comprehensive and there is much to consider with respect to its recommendations. Considerable work remains before decisions can be made about next steps for the system. To suggest a specific course of action would be premature at this time. The report does recommend taking time to properly consider recommendations.
- Implementation of some of the recommendations in the report would require legislative changes and longer-term governance changes/transitions, representing multi-year undertakings.

6. The report states that the provincial public library system should be a partnership between the Provincial Government, municipal governments and other community partners. Who might these partners be?

- It would be premature to speculate on any potential changes to the system’s funding, governance or service delivery models. Both the Board and the Provincial Government must first review the report before any further deliberation can take place. Implementation of some of the recommendations in the report would require multi-year undertakings.

7. The report's suggested timeline notes decisions should be made by the fall of this year, with a multi-year strategy for meeting its recommendations by Spring 2018. Will this be the case?

- We are committed to working with the Board through its decision-making process and are focused on developing a strategic plan as soon as possible. While the report is comprehensive and there is much to consider with respect to its recommendations, we believe EY's suggested timeline for establishing a plan is reasonable, barring any unforeseen factors. Considerable work remains before decisions can be made about next steps for the system. We will be meeting with the Board regularly to discuss recommendations and future options.

8. What about library staff? Will they be affected and when will they be informed?

- Any decisions with respect to staff would be communicated by the Public Information and Library Resources Board. It is worth noting that the Board has only just received the report and will likely need time to review its contents before beginning to plan any future actions.
- Budget 2017 included a specific investment to maintain normal operation of the public libraries system until the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board and the Provincial Government have reviewed EY's report and considered options for the future of the system.

9. How will the Provincial Government respond if the Board requests additional provincial funding to meet recommendations of the EY report?

- The Provincial Government already funds the provincial public library system at more than twice the national average, however, we will continue to consider all recommendations and potential requests as part of the usual process for budget decisions.
- Budget 2017 included a specific investment to maintain normal operation of the public libraries system until the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board and the Provincial Government have reviewed EY's report and considered options for the future of the system.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development French School District to Use Former Holy Cross Junior High School

May 26, 2017

Summary:

The French school district (Conseil scolaire francophone provincial/CSFP) has been advocating for a new school in the metro region and has made regular requests for additional infrastructure resources, often citing their entitlement to equitable facilities under Section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Government has facilitated the CSFP's request to temporarily avail of the former Holy Cross Junior High school, working with the English School District and the property owner (Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation).

Key messages

- We are pleased to have helped facilitate the French school district's request to temporarily avail of the former Holy Cross Junior High School for the benefit of its students and teachers.
- We thank the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation as property owner and the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District for their cooperation and assistance in making this arrangement.
- A committee including representatives of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, the Department of Transportation and Works, and the English and French school districts has begun work to assist the Board in its efforts to ready the facility for the 2017-18 school year.

Secondary messages

- The French school district will have temporary use of the former Holy Cross Junior High school for a term of up to five years.
- All infrastructure funding requests from both the English and French school districts are carefully evaluated based on a number of key factors, including the state of any aging infrastructure, changing demographics and balancing the needs of the rest of the provincial K-12 school system.
- We are continuing to work with the French school district to ensure students' needs are being met and that they receive equitable opportunities, respect and consideration as is outlined in Section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Release of EY Report on Provincial Public Libraries System

May 29, 2017

Summary:

The final report by EY on the Public Library System in Newfoundland and Labrador has been submitted and released to the public. The EY report is comprehensive and includes recommendations for improving the system, as well as identifying challenges with the current funding model and the inefficient geographical distribution of libraries versus the demand for services. Budget 2017 restored the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board (PILRB) operating grant funding of \$652,500 for 2017-18.

Key Messages:

- We have received the EY report on the provincial public library system and we have been reviewing its contents.
- The recommendations put forward in the report will inform next steps in the decision-making process for the Provincial Information Library Resources Board and our government.
- Decisions related to the administration and service delivery model of the public library system are the Board's to make.
- While identifying that the system is underfunded, the report itself highlights that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador funds the province's library system at more than twice the national average.

Secondary Messages:

- The report is comprehensive and there is much to consider with respect to its recommendations. We believe EY's suggested timeline for establishing a plan is reasonable, barring any unforeseen factors. We will be meeting with the Board regularly to discuss recommendations and future options.
- EY held eleven consultations across the province from October 5 to November 8, 2016. Feedback was also gathered through staff and public surveys and written submissions.
- The cost of the review was approximately \$250,000 (actual \$253,363). For a system that costs our government in excess of 11 million annually, this was an investment to ensure an independent review process for finding the balance for sustainably meeting the needs of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.
- Budget 2017 included a specific investment to maintain normal operation of the public libraries system until the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board and the Provincial Government have reviewed EY's report and considered options for the future of the system.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Release of EY Report on Provincial Public Libraries System

May 29, 2017

Summary:

The final report by EY on the Public Library System in Newfoundland and Labrador has been submitted and released to the public. The EY report is comprehensive and includes recommendations for improving the system, as well as identifying challenges with the current funding model and the inefficient geographical distribution of libraries versus the demand for services. Budget 2017 restored the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board (PILRB) operating grant funding of \$652,500 for 2017-18.

Key Messages:

- We have received EY's report on the provincial public library system and we have been reviewing its contents.
- The recommendations put forward in the report will inform next steps in the decision-making process for the Provincial Information Library Resources Board and our government.
- Decisions related to the administration and service delivery model of the public library system are the Board's to make.
- While identifying that the system is underfunded, the report itself highlights that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador funds the province's library system at more than twice the national average.

Secondary Messages:

- The report is comprehensive and there is much to consider with respect to its recommendations, we believe EY's suggested timeline for establishing a plan is reasonable, barring any unforeseen factors. We will be meeting with the Board regularly to discuss recommendations and future options.
- EY held eleven consultations across the province from October 5 to November 8, 2016. Feedback was also gathered through staff and public surveys and written submissions.
- The cost of the review was approximately \$250,000 (actual \$253,363). For a system that costs our government in excess of 11 million annually, this was an investment to ensure an independent review process for finding the balance for sustainably meeting the needs of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.
- Budget 2017 included a specific investment to maintain normal operation of the public libraries system until the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board and the Provincial Government have reviewed EY's report and considered options for the future of the system.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
Release of EY Report on Provincial Public Libraries System
May 29, 2017

Q&A:

1. Based on the report, will government reverse the decision to close public libraries throughout the province?

- Ultimately, decisions related to the administration and service delivery model of the public library system are the Board's to make.
- The Budget 2017 restoration of funding for libraries was to allow time for EY to complete its review of the system, as well as to allow the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board time to review its contents and determine next steps.

2. How much did the Provincial Government pay EY to conduct this review?

- It was decided that a comprehensive review of the provincial public libraries system was necessary to inform the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board's decision making process for improving the public library system.
- The total cost of the review was approximately \$250,000 (actual \$253,363). For a system that costs our government in excess of 11 million annually, this was an investment to ensure an independent and transparent review process for finding the right balance for meeting the needs of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in a sustainable way.

3. The EY report states that Newfoundland and Labrador's public library system is "significantly underfunded" at 42 per cent below the national average. What does this say about the value government places on the system?

- Our government highly values the provincial public library system. In fact, while identifying that the system is underfunded, the report itself highlights that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador funds the province's library system at more than twice the national average.
- The gap that exists results largely from municipalities not providing the same degree of direct financial support to libraries as other provinces.

4. Municipal governments in the province are 92 per cent below the national average in terms of funding the provincial library system. Shouldn't municipalities be contributing more to the public library system, as they do in other provinces?

- We have to focus on what works for us in Newfoundland and Labrador. We remain committed to working collaboratively with municipalities and the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board as it works to determine the right balance for meeting needs in our communities in a way that is economically sustainable.
- It is important to note that there are many examples of municipalities providing “in kind” contributions to public libraries. These include instances of donating space as well as providing valuable services such as snow removal and custodial services.
- As a government we have been focused on lessening costs for municipalities while stimulating economic growth.

5. The report notes that significant changes to how libraries are governed, funded and staffed are required in order to achieve acceptable performance and maintain its relevance. What changes will be made and when will we see them?

- Budget 2017 included a specific investment to maintain normal operation of the public libraries system until the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board and the Provincial Government have reviewed EY's report and considered options for the future of the system.
- The report is comprehensive and there is much to consider with respect to its recommendations. Considerable work remains before decisions can be made about next steps for the system. To suggest a specific course of action would be premature at this time. The report does recommend taking time to properly consider recommendations.
- Implementation of some of the recommendations in the report would require legislative changes and longer-term governance changes/transitions, representing multi-year undertakings.

6. The report states that the provincial public library system should be a partnership between the Provincial Government, municipal governments and other community partners. Who might these partners be?

- It would be premature to speculate on any potential changes to the system's funding, governance or service delivery models. Both the Board and the Provincial Government must first review the report before any further deliberation can take

place. Implementation of some of the recommendations in the report would require multi-year undertakings.

7. The report's suggested timeline notes decisions should be made by the fall of this year, with a multi-year strategy for meeting its recommendations by Spring 2018. Will this be the case?

- We are committed to working with the Board through its decision-making process and are focused on developing a strategic plan as soon as possible. While the report is comprehensive and there is much to consider with respect to its recommendations, we believe EY's suggested timeline for establishing a plan is reasonable, barring any unforeseen factors. Considerable work remains before decisions can be made about next steps for the system. We will be meeting with the Board regularly to discuss recommendations and future options.

8. What about library staff? Will they be affected and when will they be informed?

- Any decisions with respect to staff would be communicated by the Public Information and Library Resources Board. It is worth noting that the Board has only just received the report and will likely need time to review its contents before beginning to plan any future actions.
- Budget 2017 included a specific investment to maintain normal operation of the public libraries system until the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board and the Provincial Government have reviewed EY's report and considered options for the future of the system.

9. How will the Provincial Government respond if the Board requests additional provincial funding to meet recommendations of the EY report?

- The Provincial Government already funds the provincial public library system at more than twice the national average, however, we will continue to consider all recommendations and potential requests as part of the usual process for budget decisions.
- Budget 2017 included a specific investment to maintain normal operation of the public libraries system until the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board and the Provincial Government have reviewed EY's report and considered options for the future of the system.

Education and Early Childhood Development

May 29, 2017

The following statement was given today in the House of Assembly by the Honourable Dale Kirby, Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development:

Minister Kirby Recognizes Early Childhood Educators' Week

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize May 28 to June 3 as Early Childhood Educators' Week. It was a pleasure to join members of the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Newfoundland and Labrador earlier today to sign the official proclamation.

This week presents a valuable opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the crucial role our early childhood educators play in the lives of our children. They are critical to the provision of quality child care. Their knowledge and expertise guide children's early learning and development through play-based learning, and they provide essential support for families.

As a government, we remain committed to supporting the important work of early childhood educators. Budget 2017 included a \$1.3 million increase to the annual Early Learning and Child Care Supplement to enhance financial support for regulated child care services. In fact we just recently concluded consultations with sector stakeholders to find out how the increase can be best administered, and will provide an update in the near future. Budget 2017 also added \$2 million to the Child Care Subsidy program to make child care more affordable for families.

We have approximately 2,200 certified early childhood educators in this province. Every day, these individuals work in child care centres, family child care homes, family resource centres, educational institutions, businesses, and not-for-profit organizations to help our children learn and grow.

While there is special acknowledgement of early childhood educators during Early Childhood Educators' Week, we should recognize their dedication and hard work every week of the year. I ask members of this Honourable House, and all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, to join me in recognizing the outstanding work of early childhood educators in communities throughout our province.

Thank you.

Education and Early Childhood Development

May 30, 2017

The following statement was given today in the House of Assembly by the Honourable Dale Kirby, Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development:

Minister Kirby Congratulates Eastern NL Team on Successes at Canada-Wide Science Fair

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the members of our province's very own Eastern NL team for their outstanding performances at the 56th annual Canada-Wide Science Fair, held at the University of Regina. The competition is the largest of its kind in Canada.

Six students from the Husky Energy Eastern Newfoundland Science and Technology Fair represented the province at the event earlier this month. These students are: Nora Boone, Clara Phillips and Noha Shehata from Holy Heart, Nisarg Dave from Gonzaga, Kurtis Collins from Waterford Valley and Aaron Sarkar from MacDonald Drive Junior High.

All participants presented remarkable work and represented our province with pride.

Mr. Speaker, level three student Nora Boone won a gold medal for designing a training tool for emergency brain surgery.

Ms. Boone's simulation tool is meant to train medical staff in rural areas to safely perform emergency surgery when intracranial hematomas need to be treated before a patient can be transferred to neurosurgical care in a larger centre.

In addition to her gold medal, Ms. Boone also brought home an Innovation Challenge award and a Youth Can Innovate award valued at \$1,000.

The scope and complexity of the remaining Eastern NL team members' individual projects are truly impressive as well. Aaron Sarkar won a silver medal and Kurtis Collins, Nisarg Dave and Noha Shehata each brought home a bronze medal.

These young people clearly have bright futures ahead of them and their extraordinary work deserves to be recognized. I ask that all members of this Honourable House join me in congratulating Nora Boone, Clara Phillips, Noha Shehata, Nisarg Dave, Kurtis Collins and Aaron Sarkar on their tremendous successes on the national stage. I know we can look forward to more great things from these young people in the future.

Thank you.

Education and Early Childhood Development

May ??, 2017

The following statement was given today in the House of Assembly by the Honourable Dale Kirby, Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development:

Minister Highlights Success of Online Professional Learning for Educating Students with ASD

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to applaud educators in our province for their participation in an online professional learning course that develops skills and awareness for educating students with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

By the end of this school year, approximately 900 teachers and student assistants in Newfoundland and Labrador will have completed the training since it was first introduced in April 2015.

Developed under the Autism in Education partnership between the four Atlantic Provinces, the 40-hour course is available in English and French and is offered twice a year to educators.

This training offers educators an opportunity to take advantage of a wealth of knowledge shared amongst the provinces for developing skills, strategies and confidence in the classroom for educating students with ASD.

The training also provides teachers and student assistants with information regarding communication systems, social skills training, and data collection methods to support behavioral programming. Teachers are reporting positive experiences in implementing new strategies learned in this training.

I am proud to say that as a member of the Autism in Education partnership, our government covers all costs related to registration, licensing and program facilitation for educators in the province.

I ask all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to join me in thanking our teachers and student assistants who have dedicated their time to learning how they can improve their skills and expertise for the benefit of students with ASD.

Thank you.

Statement by
Honourable Dale Kirby
Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development
May xx, 2017

Minister Kirby Recognizes Diversity in Schools

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in this Honourable House to recognize diversity in our schools our communities, our workplaces and our homes.

Last week, I was fortunate to participate in a diversity celebration at Holy Heart of Mary High School. As part of the celebration, students paraded with flags representing 67 countries. I was amazed at the enthusiasm and level of understanding on display.

Mr. Speaker, students from all over the world enhance our individual lives, our schools and society as a whole. Within an inclusive society, diverse experiences and perspectives enrich the entire school.

Fostering multi-cultural collaboration and creating an appreciation for diversity is an educational way for all of us, especially students, to learn from one another. A diverse learning environment improves education for all students and promotes respect -- for each of us as individuals.

Mr. Speaker, ensuring the students of Newfoundland and Labrador have a positive, safe and caring environment in which to learn is a key priority for this government.

As we look around our world and see some of the challenges that exist – injustice, famine, war, it becomes especially important that we all take a moment to remind each other: We are all welcome in Newfoundland and Labrador. We all belong.

Mr. Speaker, as we said in *The Way Forward*, our government recognizes that immigration contributes to the social and cultural vibrancy of this province. Welcoming more people, from an even greater diversity of backgrounds, is something we can all agree offers tremendous benefits for our province's future.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our educators. Their commitment to educating our students has played an essential role in building a better understanding of diversity in our schools and our communities.

Mr. Speaker, as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, we pride ourselves on celebrating our culture – through our hospitality, music and art, our food and our family traditions. But as we expand, and become more diverse and welcome people from all reaches of the world, we have more to celebrate.

Thank you Mr. Speaker.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
Key Messages – Full Day Kindergarten
June 6, 2017

Preamble:

In September 2016, Full Day Kindergarten was launched in schools across Newfoundland and Labrador. With the school year winding down, feedback from administrators, teachers and parents has been very positive.

Full Day Kindergarten

- Full Day Kindergarten was implemented in schools across Newfoundland and Labrador in September 2016.
- Feedback from administrators, Kindergarten teachers and parents of Kindergarten students has been very positive.
- The base curriculum for full-day Kindergarten has not changed. *Completely Kindergarten*, the curriculum for Kindergarten has been used by teachers since 2010 (2012 in FI and FFL).
- Implementing Full Day Kindergarten has been a significant progressive step to support the educational foundation of our youngest students as they learn and develop.
- The success and benefits of this programming are being seen in provinces across the country and our students now have access to this opportunity.

Secondary Messages:

- Kindergarten teachers and administrators participated in professional learning sessions co-facilitated by department and district staff in spring 2016.
- Full Day Kindergarten required significant investment of infrastructure, teachers, and resources.
- A full day program provides opportunity for students and teachers to have more time to explore different concepts.
- Full Day Kindergarten has provided a strong focus on oral language, demonstrated through stories, songs, rhymes, poetry, plays and wordplay, among other activities.
- Research supports the many benefits of FDK such as stronger academic outcomes including reading skills and better social and emotional development.

Facts:

- The Provincial Government prepared to implement full-day Kindergarten with an investment of over \$30 million that included:
 - Creating over 140 new teaching positions and adding an additional 115 hours per day for student assistant time;
 - Overseeing approximately 100 renovations to classrooms in schools across the province to address space requirements;
 - Increasing capacity with four schools receiving extensions and 12 schools receiving modular classrooms adding in total an additional 27 classrooms;
 - Providing professional learning to approximately 700 teachers and administrators.
 - \$2 million in educational supplies for Full Day Kindergarten. These supplies went to 184 schools in a total of 355 classrooms.

Quotes from parents:

My child benefits from the extra learning time and from the continuity of full day kindergarten. Prior to kindergarten, he was in full-day child care and the full day kindergarten provides more consistency than part day would. (Conception Bay North)

Many benefits...my child has already started to read at an early level. She has learned appropriate behaviour during structured time. (South coast)

My child seems to be learning many science, math and reading concepts. (South coast)

My child is making wonderful progress with reading - I feel he is more advanced at this time than my older child was at this point in the Kindergarten year. (Western region)

I find that she has been reading at a higher level. I know we should never compare children, but she is more advanced in reading than what her sister was in the same grade with the same teacher. (Labrador)

My daughter has a fun day of learning and playing with friends - what could be better?! (Eastern region)

Before my child started school she was not interested in anything...but since full day school she is improving and progressing so much. Yes at first it's a big adjustment to them but it's definitely a good choice. (Northwestern region)

My child is having an amazing year. They are learning so much and having so much fun every day. My child loves school and loves going every day. I could not ask for a better experience. (Western region)