

ORAL QUESTION—KEVIN O'REILLY, MLA FRAME LAKE

QUESTION 520-18(2): JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN IMPLEMENTATION

February 6, 2017

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Nailing down this junior kindergarten funding issue is almost as slippery as a dead fish. Congratulations to the Minister; he had a good statement today about full funding. That full funding for junior kindergarten, is it going to include two things, inclusive schooling money for junior kindergarten students and bussing costs? Will it include those two things? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned, we have staff at the department, after this announcement was made, reaching out to the superintendents as well as the school boards to start having those discussions about safety, about bussing. Those discussions, as I mentioned, are happening right now, so we are going to have to wait to see what comes out of that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Can the Minister tell us, this magical mystery meeting of ECE staff and the education authority chairs, has this actually been scheduled? What is the date of this meeting?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Just day-to-day operations. We always meet with our organizations that we do fund. This is just day-to-day operations and meetings. Once the announcement came out, we had to go out and talk to superintendents to get input on this new budget announcement that was addressed earlier on in this sitting. They are just day-to-day operations that we always have, meetings with superintendents.

MR. O'REILLY: I believe I heard the Minister say last week in this House that he was going to personally attend this meeting. Is that the case anymore?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Yes, when we have time, I will be getting out and having discussions with the superintendents as well as the boards to make sure we do have that smooth transition and roll-out of junior kindergarten.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister. It doesn't sound like there is going to be one meeting where everybody is in the same room. I will try it one more time: how can the Minister say that junior kindergarten is going to be fully funded by GNWT when there are still these two outstanding issues, whether there is going to be inclusive funding for junior kindergarten students and the bussing issue has not been resolved? How can the Minister say that it is fully funded? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: As I mentioned, we give out about \$152 million to all the boards. Those budgetary items that the Member is bringing up, those are decisions made by the school boards themselves on how they allocate the dollars that we give to them. Those are decisions made by the school boards. As I mentioned, our staff is

meeting on an ongoing basis with the superintendents to make sure that this roll-out of junior kindergarten is as smooth as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.