

KEVIN O'REILLY—MLA FRAME LAKE
Student Financial Assistance
Committee of the Whole—2017-2018 Operating Budget Review
Dept. of Education, Culture and Employment—February 20, 2017

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I am looking at the line for student financial assistance on page 40. It actually shows a decrease between 2016-17 and 2017-18. Even when I look at the revised estimates, there is a decrease. Can someone from the department explain what is going on here, why we are decreasing our funding for student financial assistance? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister Moses.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is due to less uptake in the program. Historically, student financial assistance, we have always seen about \$1.3 million that lapsed every year, and so this year we just decided to look at taking that \$1.3 million out. It is not always fully utilized, and, historically, we have always seen that \$1.3 million over-lapsed, around there. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Moses. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I am just trying to understand what would happen here if all of our TEP and social work students have to go south because Aurora College is winding down their program. If student financial assistance was actually maxed out under the 2017 main estimates, what would happen? Would students be denied financial assistance? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister Moses.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, we don't want to hinder the education of any students who want to go and take post-secondary education or training, focusing on skill development. If that was the case, that we went over budget on this line item, we would probably have to come back to government with a supplementary appropriation so that all students who wanted to take post-secondary have that opportunity. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Moses. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the commitment, then, by the Minister that he would bring forward a supplementary appropriation if student financial assistance gets maxed out. I hope we don't have to go there, but I think I have got a firm commitment from the Minister to do that. Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is it.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister Moses, did you want to add to that?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If it does get maxed out, I guess you could say that is good news because you've got more students taking post-secondary. So even though we don't want to get there, it is great that we do have over 1,200

students right now who we are currently funding. Hopefully, we get more in the future.
Thank you, Mr. Chair.