

**Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters**

**BILL 2:  
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT (INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),  
NO. 3, 2017-2018**

**(JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN FUNDING)**

**October 19, 2017**

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I am here to present Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures) No. 3, 2017-2018. This document provides for an increase of \$5.9 million to the operations budget.

Major items in these supplementary estimates include:

- \$3.6 million for projected fire suppression costs; and
- \$2.3 million for costs associated with increased student enrolment and implementation of junior kindergarten in NWT schools.

That concludes my opening remarks. I am prepared to respond to the committee's questions. Thank you.

...

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can someone explain to me the figure of \$2,283,000 for junior kindergarten? What does that cover? Is this additional, unanticipated enrolment, or are there additional things that are covered in there? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. Minister McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The \$2.3 million is made up of \$741,000 for increased school enrolment, and full funding for JK in 2017-2018 of \$1.542 million. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. So yes, some of it's for unanticipated enrolment, but the \$1.542 million for JK, how is that calculated and what does it actually get us? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I would like to refer to Minister Moses.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Minister Moses.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Yes, and it's based on the funding formula of 12:1 that we have mentioned when we were rolling junior kindergarten in terms of pupil-teacher ratios. That goes directly to the education authorities based on their enrolments. We are still finalizing some of the enrolment numbers for junior kindergarten at the moment, so that's how it is rolled out. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Just to be clear here, that \$1.542 million, that's based on the current formula funding for district education authorities; is that correct? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the Member is correct. That is for the enrolment of 12:1, I believe. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Earlier, I guess, in the last session, I had asked the department to calculate the additional costs -- I shouldn't say "additional costs." What would be the additional costs if junior kindergarten was included in all the formulae that are used to help fund our district education facilities? That additional cost came to about \$1.7 million. Just to be clear, that shortfall in funding for the district education authority, that is not covered in the supplementary appropriation. Is that the case, Mr. Chair? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, it is not.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the very clear answer from the Minister there. I don't really expect a response here. It is more of a comment that we are still underfunding our district education authorities for 2017-2018 by about \$1.7 million, asking them to deliver programs and services within their authority for JK students and it is not fully funded. No matter what the Minister has said on this topic, or his Cabinet colleagues, junior kindergarten is not fully funded. Our district education authorities have to make up this shortfall themselves in some way to provide programming for our junior kindergarten students. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Comment noted. Anything further from committee? Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Minister talked about 12:1. That 12:1, that is territorial? That is just not schools. It is not jurisdictions. It is 12:1 average across the Northwest Territories. Correct? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** It is for junior kindergarten. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you. I apologize. Yes, 12:1 for junior kindergarten. I guess, my concern is: have we looked at how it is having an impact on some of the larger schools that -- in my riding, I have a number of schools that are smaller that are calculated into this 12:1. Has this increase of money here, the \$1.542 million, is that actually coming to address some of those concerns, as well, with the larger classroom sizes instead of the 12:1? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. I will direct this to Minister Moses.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. As I mentioned in previous communications with standing committee Members, we are still early on in the implementation of junior kindergarten in all of our communities across the Northwest Territories. We did commit to continue to monitor and evaluate this implementation. Previously, we had 20 communities in the Northwest Territories that were successful in half-a-day, full-day junior kindergarten. We are going to continue to monitor and make any adjustments that need to be done as we roll out junior kindergarten throughout the Territories. It is still pretty early on in the process. The school year just started. Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister Moses. Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** I thank Minister Moses for that answer. When can the schools that have these larger classroom sizes expect the department to come back with additional funds if that is what is required? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. Once again, Minister Moses.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Yes. We are keeping in close communications with the education authorities. Through this process of implementation at junior kindergarten, we have also provided additional funding so that schools can hire additional education assistants to support the implementation of junior kindergarten. We are continuing to work with our education authorities. Usually, midpoints of the school year, if there are deficiencies as I mentioned in the standing committee, we can look at adjusting some of those budgets with the education authorities.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister Moses. I see nothing further from Mr. Thompson. I will call this page. Mr. O'Reilly, you have already spoken to this. I will let you speak briefly, if you would like.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that. My colleague's questions made me think of one additional one. I spoke earlier about the \$1.7 million shortfall of funding to the district education authorities. If they were fully funded for all the JK students using the formula that the department now uses, is there a commitment on the part of this government to actually make up that shortfall at any point or to change the formulae themselves? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. Minister McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think the Minister of Education made

a commitment on the evaluation of the process. We are also willing to work with committee to see if anything needs to change. We will go through the regular process as we do that. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. Anything further, Mr. O'Reilly?

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I am not sure that was a really clear commitment. If there was an effort to try to make up that shortfall, I think it would only be in the best interest of our children. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Nothing further.