

KEVIN O'REILLY—MLA FRAME LAKE
Local Education Authorities' Funding
Committee of the Whole—2018-2019 Operating Budget Review
Dept. of Education, Culture and Employment—February 10, 2021

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair, and thanks to the Minister for that clarification. In the last Assembly, the department was talking about developing a policy so that, if there was a decline in enrolment over a certain percentage, that an education authority wouldn't see a huge drop in their funding right away. It would be transitioned over maybe two or three years just to make sure that they didn't have to cut a whole bunch of teachers loose and lose programs right away. I think that's how they do it in Ontario and Manitoba and maybe one other jurisdiction that was being looked at. Did the department ever complete work on that policy, and if so, can the department or the Minister commit to share it with us as Regular MLAs? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. The big drop off in financial support occurs when a school board falls below, I think, 500 students enrolled. There are no schools right now who are facing that. That work isn't as urgent as, perhaps, it was a couple of years ago. What we are doing is undertaking a review of the entire funding formula, and that will be part of it. That is part and parcel of the Education Act modernization. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. If I read between the lines of what the Minister said, then the policy was never finished, and it's being rolled into the larger review of formula funding for the DEAs? Is that correct? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. Schools are funded according to the funding framework, and that is essentially the funding policy. There was some work done to look at different jurisdictions and how they fund schools, and that work was shared with Members. The funding formula is what it was, and it will be reviewed as part of the Education Act modernization. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Maybe I'm not getting it, but I remember seeing a discussion paper on this. They looked at three jurisdictions, I think Ontario, Manitoba, and somewhere else, and they were looking at changing it so that there wouldn't be this big drop off. Was that policy work ever finished, or is the Minister saying that that's now being rolled into the larger review of the overall funding formula for DEAs? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. There is often research done that doesn't result in a new policy. What the Member is referencing is research that was done. It didn't result in

a new policy. In that sense, yes, that policy work has ended, and we have moved onto a much larger review of the funding framework. That work will, of course, inform the funding framework review, so perhaps in that sense, it's not complete. Thank you.