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## **Official Report of Debates (Hansard)**

**Tuesday 24 June 2003**

## **Journal des débats (Hansard)**

**Mardi 24 juin 2003**

**Standing committee on  
estimates**

Ministry of Education

**Comité permanent des  
budgets des dépenses**

Ministère de l'Éducation

Chair: Gerard Kennedy  
Clerk: Trevor Day

Président : Gerard Kennedy  
Greffier : Trevor Day

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
ESTIMATESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES  
BUDGETS DES DÉPENSES

Tuesday 24 June 2003

Mardi 24 juin 2003

*The committee met at 1549 in room 151.*

## MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

**Clerk of the Committee (Mr Trevor Day):** Honourable members, it is my duty to call upon you to elect an Acting Chair. Are there any nominations?

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** I nominate Mr Crozier as the Chair.

**Clerk of the Committee:** Are there any further nominations? Seeing none, I declare the nominations closed. Mr Crozier is the Acting Chair.

**The Acting Chair (Mr Bruce Crozier):** Good afternoon, Minister. Welcome to the committee.

It's my understanding that the rotation will begin with the Liberal caucus. You'll have 20 minutes.

**Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London):** Mr Chairman, a week and a half ago I asked the minister about the review of governance. It was an issue that is out there in rural Ontario right now. There are individuals who are concerned about the makeup of school boards and a concern that rural Ontario is losing out as far as representation is concerned. I also asked you about a resolution that had been passed by the Thames Valley District School Board asking for a review. I just wondered if you had any update for me regarding those issues at this time.

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education):** No. I do know that obviously governance is a big issue on the minds of trustees and school boards in Ontario, particularly as we approach another election where they will be re-elected for three years.

But we will be setting up a review of governance, as we have indicated we would. We will certainly involve the stakeholders in that consultation because I think it's really important that we review what's there now and make sure the system we have in place is as responsive as it possibly can be to the needs of the students and obviously the constituents who elect those individuals and that school boards are able to work in a co-operative manner with the staff and the stakeholders they serve.

On the issue specific to Thames Valley, yes, we have received a letter from them expressing their concerns. I guess that's one of the big issues we need to address. We need to make sure that those people who live in rural Ontario feel their views are heard and not overshadowed by those who may be in urban centres that have greater

numbers. We will be following up, and I appreciate that you brought it to my attention.

**The Acting Chair:** Mr Kennedy.

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park):** Madam Minister, I'm just wondering, we had asked for a number of items earlier, but specifically last time or the time before we asked about a list that the ministry may have prepared, how your announcements may match or respond to the Rozanski report. Is there any written material that the ministry's bringing forward today?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Certainly I am in a position where I can respond. I would still ask you, Mr Kennedy, for the copy of the resolution regarding private school funding that you said—

**Mr Kennedy:** It's in my hand, Minister, but I won't take my time with it. Maybe if you'd like to ask me a question during your time, I'd be happy to give it to you.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I'd be happy to see that resolution of that—

**Mr Kennedy:** I asked in fact about a month ago of the ministry for a summary of the Rozanski report recommendations. Is that forthcoming today?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I understand ministry staff are still doing the preparations.

**Mr Kennedy:** That's unfortunate, Minister. It's the singular report you received this year. There are 33 recommendations in that report. You have used language saying that you endorse the report, but on the public record you're not accepting, ratifying, sanctioning or approving the report because you're not doing it. I think the people of the province have a right to know. The ministry received this report in December. Do you mean to tell me you don't have a summary of what you've done on the Rozanski report? Is that what you're telling us here today?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** The member knows that's not true. In fact, we have been following a very orderly and very balanced implementation plan. We certainly appreciated the recommendations made by Dr Rozanski and he recommended that over three years we implement his recommendations. We're doing that, and we are moving forward. He probably remembers that our first announcement included money for salaries, transportation and special education.

**Mr Kennedy:** I'll take that as a no because I'm asking a specific question. You don't have a report. You have nothing to share with the committee that has the over-

sight for your expenditure. The major report you had on funding the education system and the ministry doesn't have a single piece of paper to put forward about the progress you've made against the report.

That's unfortunate and really is a poor reflection. I find it hard to believe frankly because the staff told us a month ago that such a document existed and it could be shared. This is games-playing, simply not to put information on the table for the benefit of all the members.

Now, Minister, you've already decided that we're not going to have that, but I want to know then if you would give us your number, the total amount of money that you, as Minister of Education, believe you and your government have pledged toward Rozanski reforms. How much money do you think you have put toward the recommendations? Dr Rozanski said, "You've taken this money out of education; put it back." Here's the recommendation for \$1.8 billion. If I can modify my question: in your estimation, how much of that \$1.8 billion specifically have you now returned to the school system?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** As the member knows full well, we were thrilled with the recommendations brought forward by Dr Rozanski and also that he validated the funding formula and told us it was working and was providing equity, stability and fairness to students in the province.

We have committed to implementing it over three years, as he recommended. He has indicated that there's a need for an investment of \$1.8 billion, and we've endorsed those proposals. We'll be moving forward to invest at least that much money over three years.

I think it's sometimes important that people keep in mind that he did make it quite clear that these investments were to happen over three years; the recommendations could be implemented over three years.

**Mr Kennedy:** Sure, Minister, but since you're not bringing us anything today—no specific numbers and no specific list of what you've done against the Rozanski report—the public is well within their rights to draw the conclusion that you're hiding your response, and frankly, I can understand that.

In your government platform, *The Road Ahead*, it does specify a little bit—we'd prefer to have ministry documents here today, but in their absence—you talk about \$895 million in announcements. In that list, you include the \$340 million for cost increases. So I just want to find out from you whether or not you believe the cost increases are part of the \$1.7 billion that Dr Rozanski asked for from your ministry. It seems to be what your political document is saying. I'm wondering if you as the Minister of Education draw the distinction between the \$340 million or not.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Dr Rozanski actually recommended that we implement the report, including the updating of the benchmarks, over three years, and that's precisely what we are doing.

I would repeat again that we're following a very orderly and balanced implementation plan for updating the benchmarks. In some cases, we actually updated the

benchmarks immediately for 2003-04, as we did with the benchmarks for the geographic circumstances grant. In other cases, we've publicly committed to benchmark increases in 2004 and 2005. For example—

**Mr Kennedy:** Minister, again, I really must ask you to answer the question. The question was quite different than what you're addressing. The question was very, very clear. In your political document—because you have no ministry documents to table with us today on the Rozanski report; shamefully, I think—there's \$340 million referred to as part of the response to Rozanski. I'm asking you as the Minister of Education if you consider it to be part of it, and you go on talking about something else.

I just want to refer, for you and for the record, to what Dr Rozanski said. He says, "I estimate that the ... benchmark costs ... will total \$1.08 billion ... excluding the additional cost of updating salaries and benefits." You'll find that on page 23 of his report.

Further, you'll find that in his report he says, "As far as I am able to calculate," the cost "is \$1.769 billion. This ... does not include all the costs."

On page 59, he goes on to say, "These salary and benefits costs will not be known, of course, until the current round of collective bargaining is complete. When they are known, they will have to be added to my estimated total."

So it seems very clear to me that your political document is misleading people by pretending that the \$340 million is part of that. If the members opposite object to "misleading," then at least that it doesn't square with what Dr Rozanski has asked for. He has said clearly that annual cost increases for salaries—and I note that you provided no money for non-salary cost increases, which he also asked for—he says on page 23, again on page 59 and again on page 24 that they're supposed to be excluded.

In your absence, I asked you that question, but I want it to be seen for the record that these dollars haven't been provided and that in fact, by your own calculation, once you take that out, you're right around the \$530 million or 31%. That's all you've done against Dr Rozanski.

I will say again for the record that we have produced a table here. We gave it to you last time, and in the absence of your providing any numbers—and if any of the members opposite lost their copy, we have it here. It's only 31% of what Dr Rozanski asked for over the next three years that you've pledged to do. This is all you've pledged to do.

**1600**

Minister, I've looked all over your campaign document and it says nothing about more announcements. You told us last time there would be more announcements coming. Now, I want to ask you a question and I'd like you to respect this committee by answering it directly: will there be any more announcements in this school year for Dr Rozanski's recommendations? Do you anticipate making any further announcements this school

year with respect to implementing Dr Rozanski's recommendations?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I thought we were doing estimates and not looking at our political documents. The race hasn't quite started—

**Mr Kennedy:** Well, Minister, you've refused to provide any—

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I think it's important that we review the announcements that we've made of \$1.2 million in response to the recommendations of Dr Rozanski. We have, as you know—and by the way, the member was incorrect. We have set money aside for non-teaching staff as well as teaching. The \$340 million—

**Mr Kennedy:** But not for non-salary. That's what I said. Minister on that point, please, could you address the point of non-salary?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** —is for salaries for teaching and non-teaching staff. There was also \$250 million for special education. There was \$50 million for the students at risk of not meeting the curriculum requirements.

**Mr Kennedy:** With all respect, I've asked five times for written documentation. It's what this committee deserves. I have provided mine. You don't respect this committee, this process or the public enough to tell them your official response to the Rozanski report. Rather than waste time reading into the record, I wonder if you could instead answer the question: do you anticipate any further new announcements this year respecting the Rozanski report? As the Minister of Education, could you share that information with the committee?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I just would like to quote from Dr Rozanski. I will tell you that in March of this year he said, "Within four months the government has taken seriously the recommendations and moved to implement more than \$1.8 billion in funding over three years."

Dr Rozanski also praised the government's plan to regularly review its spending. I don't think there is any better endorsement of the work the government has done in implementing the recommendations than from the mouth of the individual who actually chaired the committee who made the recommendations.

**Mr Kennedy:** You may wish that to be the case, that all you've got to do is get half of a quote of Dr Rozanski, but his report speaks for itself. You're mixing apples and oranges. He said the \$1.8 billion you talk about includes a lot of money, in fact, that is excluded from his principal recommendation. Minister, you've been out in the public, the Premier has been out in the public, your members have been out in their ridings trying to persuade people that apples and oranges are mixed together, and you hope people don't look. But the difference can be told right in the schools. That's the unfortunate thing about not having the election right away: this stuff will be known all around the province, that you haven't supplied the dollars, in fact, that Dr Rozanski asked for.

There are 33 recommendations and so far you have only addressed six of them publicly. You are here in this committee saying things like you endorse the report, but

there are 33 recommendations and you haven't responded to 27 of them.

I think it's actually quite apparent that it's not your version of the Rozanski response we're dealing with here, it's the Premier's. The Premier decided in October of last year, before he even saw the report, that that's all the money there was going to be and that's all the response there was going to be. It seems fairly clear that, for whatever reason, you have failed to get the additional dollars from the caucus. That's very unfortunate.

I would like to ask you now about this year's funding as a case in point. If we could, I want to ask you about the student-focused funding, which these estimates support. Looking at the 2003-04 allocations under the student-focused funding, your officials have this information put out. They have also provided some information in briefing. Quite simply put, the only money that can be seen going to boards is \$322 million. That's the difference between the amount of money you're allocating this year and the amount of money you were allocating last year.

I have, for members of the committee, if they would like, and for yourself, Minister, a copy of the student-focused funding page and I'd be happy to have that brought over to you if you like, if I could get the clerk to do that.

What I'm asking your attention to, in case it's not in your notes, is the fact that the difference between the amount of dollars that are being made available this year and the amount of dollars being made available last year for operating is \$322 million. When you include capital it goes to \$471 million. Minister, the point is that you've made promises that exceed that amount. You've made promises that are quite significantly in excess of the amount of extra dollars that you're allocating both to operations and to capital. So what I want to ask you is, can you or one of your officials reconcile for us how it's possible that if you're only increasing operating funds by \$322 million, but that you've promised \$358 million in just salaries alone, and then another \$255 million in other types of grant increases—you've got \$600 million in promises and only a \$322-million increase. I'm wondering if you, as minister, could tell us what the essential gap is made up of.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Since the member chooses not to listen to the answers, I'm going to ask my staff to come up.

**Mr Kennedy:** You mean you don't know the answer?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Mr Hartmann, a very knowledgeable man, will respond and I'm sure he'll try again to let the questioner have some facts.

**Mr Kennedy:** Minister, your lack of co-operation is noted.

**The Acting Chair:** Mr Hartmann.

**Mr Kennedy:** It's Mr Gooch, actually.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Mr Gooch is going to come up.

**Mr Kennedy:** Mr Gooch, if I could then draw your attention to the student-focused funding sheet for this year and to the reconciliation that you handed out earlier

this year concerning in-year salary costs, which totalled approximately \$358 million: you would acknowledge, would you not, that the operational increase, the difference between \$14 billion, \$247 million and the prior figure for the previous year, is approximately \$322 million, is the difference in operating this year, not including the \$114 million that you haven't given out yet? Is that correct?

**The Acting Chair:** I would remind you that we have two minutes in this round.

**Mr Kennedy:** OK.

**Mr Peter Gooch:** My name is Peter Gooch. I'm the director of the education finance branch.

Mr Kennedy, it's very difficult to divide up the funding. You know how it works with funding: you could slice it this way and slice it that way. I think you're looking for all the increases announced for Rozanski in operating funding. However—

**Mr Kennedy:** Let's go to all funding, then. You've made promises that are larger. I've got two minutes. I wonder if I could ask you this specific question—

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** Let him finish.

**Mr Kennedy:**—before the two minutes are up, Mr Gooch, and I'll come back and give you a chance to do the longer answer.

**The Acting Chair:** I'll stop the clock.

**Mr O'Toole:** On a point of order, Mr Chair: On two occasions I've been listening he has accused the minister of lying. He should actually withdraw the question and his statements and he has refused to allow ministerial staff to respond. You, as the Chair, should take some control. I'm quite surprised at your inability to control the member on the other side.

**The Acting Chair:** You may want to antagonize Mr Kennedy, but you don't want to antagonize the Chair.

**Mr O'Toole:** I'm asking the Chair to make a ruling.

**The Acting Chair:** I heard one word of misleading—

**Mr O'Toole:** You didn't rule on it, though.

**The Acting Chair:** Will you please listen? I heard one word of misleading. I checked with the clerk because I feel we should use the same rules here that we do in the House. The point wasn't raised and I let it go at that. I was quite prepared to bring that up again. I have not heard the word "lie," in which case I would. Thank you, Mr O'Toole.

Point of order, Mr Arnott?

**Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington):** Thank you, Mr Chair. You've given us some time to raise these issues. I would just ask you, as Chair, to use your good offices to ensure that all members of the committee treat the witnesses with due respect. I find that Mr Kennedy's behaviour is from time to time extremely boorish and his constant interruptions are very annoying I think for all members who are sitting here and for the members on this side of the House. I would ask you to call him to order when he continues to interrupt and not listen to the answers that are forthcoming.

**The Acting Chair:** I certainly will take your advice. I think the minister is quite capable of answering the ques-

tions. The time is allotted to the opposition and, as you know, these committee meetings are often free-flowing. I'll take your advice under consideration.

**Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe):** On the same point of order, Mr Chair: you did address the misleading part. I would ask, now that it has been brought out, that Mr Kennedy withdraw that comment.

1610

**The Acting Chair:** If Mr Kennedy chooses to, he can withdraw it.

**Mr Kennedy:** I made the modification at the time, Minister.

**The Acting Chair:** Thank you.

**Mr Kennedy:** Again, if they want to waste their constituents' time, I'd rather not. I'd rather ask Mr Gooch the question within the time allowed.

**The Acting Chair:** Let's move on, please.

**Mr Kennedy:** Mr Gooch, I wonder then if I could ask you a simpler question. I'll come back to the longer question. I do apologize. I know that would take more than the two minutes.

Can you tell this committee, when it comes to adding up the promises the government has made, how much of the money is coming from the double cohort? In other words, how much in savings is realized—not net, but actual savings from the combining of grade 12 and grade 13—how much does the ministry estimate then becomes available to boards that was there as savings? Do you have a number to share with us today?

**Mr Gooch:** I do not have that number with me, sir.

**Mr Kennedy:** Could I suggest—

**The Acting Chair:** Thank you.

**Mr Kennedy:** I'll have to get back to you with that.

**The Acting Chair:** We'll move on to Mr Marchese.

**Mr Marchese:** Madam Minister, I'm still interested in Mr Christie, not because I know him and not because I dislike him—

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Good, because I don't know him.

**Mr Marchese:** I have not much reason to dislike him, really. I may have met him once or twice, possibly; I don't know. I just wanted to ask you a couple of questions about him and what is going on at the Toronto board. Do you have a sense of when Mr Christie might be leaving?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** As the member knows, the reason that Mr Christie is there in the first place is because the trustees, unfortunately, did not choose to submit or pass a balanced budget. As a result, when the law was broken, we appointed a supervisor to help bring some financial stability to the board. That, as you well know, is a challenge.

**Mr Marchese:** Right.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** We'll take a look at the audited statements in November and obviously go from there.

**Mr Marchese:** Did Mr Christie bring about the financial stability that you were looking for last year?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I think Mr Christie, in conjunction with Mr McVicar and Mr Reid, has endeavoured to provide equity throughout the geographical area that is

served by the Toronto board. As you know, the Toronto board, like other boards in the province, is part of the amalgamation of several boards. As you probably know as well, there was a lot of inequity within the system. There were services provided in Toronto that maybe were not provided in other parts of the city. So I think they've really focused their attention on providing equity to all students.

**Mr Marchese:** Would you say the trustees were trying to do the same as well, or not?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Do you know what? I don't have a lot of information on the trustees. I know there are a lot of hard-working people there.

**Mr Marchese:** But the trustees didn't balance the budget, and you said that was naughty.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** They actually didn't even submit a budget.

**Mr Marchese:** OK. But then your Mr Christie was supposed to balance the budget and didn't. Why didn't he do that? That's what you asked him to do.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** We gave the trustees an opportunity to move toward a balanced budget. As you know, there was a projection of some funding that they could have used originally. The objective that we gave Mr Christie was to submit a plan to arrive at a balanced budget.

**Mr Marchese:** So trustees didn't use some funding that could have been available to them. Why didn't Monsieur Christie use the same opportunities?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Again, Mr Christie's objective has been to work with the people on the board, the board staff, Mr Reid and others, to develop a plan that would restore the board to financial health.

**Mr Marchese:** Did it disturb you that he didn't balance the budget?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I think it's really important, Mr Marchese, that you take into consideration how you can provide equity of opportunity and services to all of the students that are served by the board. So I think we talk about a plan. Obviously, in the case of the other two boards under supervision, there wasn't the size of deficits. So we look forward to working with people who have a plan to, at the end of the day, get us there.

**Mr Marchese:** But if Mr Christie had a problem in terms of being able to balance the budget because he was trying to achieve some equity, do you think the trustees might have had the same problem?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I would go back and I would say to you that there was not even the submission of a budget to the Ministry of Education.

**Mr Marchese:** OK. So they didn't submit a balanced budget or even submit whatever; therefore, that was bad.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** The Education Act does require that those steps be taken.

**Mr Marchese:** But does the Education Act require the supervisor to balance the budget when you asked him to?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** What we look for in all cases, Mr Marchese, is that people would work with us, if there are

financial challenges, to develop a plan that would ensure financial stability within the system.

**Mr Marchese:** Were you prepared to work with the trustees to work on a plan?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** We were. There are certainly many trustees within that board who know that we were quite prepared to do that. As you know, Mr Marchese, that board has had some difficulty internally and has been very divided.

**Mr Marchese:** Yes.

If the supervisor doesn't submit a balanced budget, is he breaking the law, by any chance? Do you know?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I could ask the ministry staff. I think the goal at the present time is to work toward a plan that would bring the board to a position where there would be a balanced budget. That might take one year, it might take two years, it might take three. But obviously you need to develop a plan that is going to get you to a situation where the budget is balanced.

**Mr Marchese:** Deputy, is he breaking the law?

**Ms Sue Herbert:** My understanding is that the supervisor has to bring forward a plan to the minister.

**Mr Marchese:** Does he have to balance the budget or does he have to just bring you a plan?

**Mr Norbert Hartmann:** For the purposes of Hansard, Norbert Hartmann, assistant deputy minister.

Under the Education Act, the supervisor has a lot broader discretion. The supervisor must bring in a plan as to how to balance the budget but has the opportunity to do it over a number of years as opposed to one year.

**Mr Marchese:** Does it seem unfair to any one of you at the table that the supervisor had discretion to bring a plan within three years, and possibly longer, versus the board not having the opportunity or versus the elected trustees saying, "We can't submit a balanced budget because to do so would be to create inequity in the system that would be hurtful"? Does it seem unreasonable to you?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Again, Mr Marchese, I did meet with the chair of the board on several occasions. I met with different trustees on the board. As you know, there was a division within the board. There were some who were anxious to come forward on behalf of the students and to work and present us with their attempt at a balanced budget, and there were others who simply made a decision that they were not prepared to submit a budget to the ministry.

I really think that the division within the board contributed to the situation where it became necessary to appoint a supervisor to ensure financial stability and also get the board back on track.

**Mr Marchese:** I understand your point. That's not what I was saying. Do you find it unfair that the supervisor is given ample time—whatever time he needs, and well paid, I might add—to be able to submit some plan that could take a year, possibly two, possibly three? Do you find it unfair? Why do you give him such leeway?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I think we need to keep in mind that right now we have not seen any of the audited

statements from last year. As you know, he is presently reviewing what has happened this past year and looking ahead to what is going to happen in the future, so I think it would be premature for us to speculate as to what may or may not be.

As I say, it's regrettable that the trustees couldn't and didn't submit a balanced budget because of division within the board. We have a responsibility, then, to ensure stability and appoint a supervisor.

1620

**Mr Marchese:** Sure. I appreciate that too. But don't you find it unfair—forget the question of unfairness, because you haven't answered it twice. But do you find that giving Mr Christie so much leeway is a good thing? Why so much leeway?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Well, do you know what? The trustees actually had a lot of leeway. If you go back to the period of time when boards were amalgamated and the student-focused funding formula was introduced, in 1998, they actually had five years and were given \$900 million in mitigation funding to balance their budget. Boards of education throughout the rest of the province also went through an amalgamation experience, had the same five years and were given mitigation funds—none as much as \$900 million—and were able to move forward. So I think it demonstrates that five years and \$900 million were given, and they were still were not able to balance their budget at the end of the day.

**Mr Marchese:** And here's my question. With all this money the board was getting, why isn't the supervisor solving this quickly?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Again, we've not seen any of the final figures, so I can't speculate on what may or may not be.

**Mr Marchese:** Right. But you said the boards received so much money. The money's there. Christie should be able to just chop it, no time. What's going on?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I think it's also important to keep in mind that this \$900 million that I mentioned to you is available in mitigation funding over five years had already been spent by the board.

**Mr Marchese:** Right. But if it's spent unwisely—

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** So obviously there was not \$900 million more for the supervisor or for anyone else to spend. That money had been spent.

**Mr Marchese:** OK. But if it's been spent unwisely, why isn't Christie able to sort of just get rid of those bad programs that you don't like or think shouldn't be there?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Well, it really makes no difference as to our personal opinion. It really is up to the people who are part of the Toronto school board to make decisions as to how programs are funded and where programs are going to be provided. Let's keep in mind that this deficit that the trustees have created over many, many years.

**Mr Marchese:** OK, but I don't—

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** And to this day, despite the fact that they got the mitigation funding, there is still not

equality of services and programming provided to the students.

**Mr Marchese:** OK. That's a good point you make, and we could discuss that. I have no problem discussing issues of equity, because that interests me. Most of my life has been based on that kind of issue. But we'll put that aside for a few moments.

The job of the supervisor is to balance the budget, is it not? That's his job. That's why you hired him, right? That's why you put him there.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** His job is to come up with a plan which will lead to financial stability and a balanced budget.

**Mr Marchese:** And in your view, what kind of leeway would you give to this man to balance the budget? Six months? A year? A year and a half? Two? Two and a half? Three? Would you be happy with someone sitting there for three years, with a board elected and not being able to do very much? Why are you happy with him having to take so long to balance this budget?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Well, do you know what? I'm not going to speculate about how long it's going to take him to get there. As I say, we still need to see the audited statements from last year. We need to take a look at what the budget will look like for the coming year. What is important is that we arrive at a point where there is a plan that will successfully see this board come out of the deficit situation that's been created as the result of many years and bring us to a place of financial stability, as the Education Act requires.

**Mr Marchese:** Right. How much money is this group costing us, Christie and company?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I don't have those figures.

**Mr Marchese:** Deputy, do you know?

**Ms Herbert:** No, I don't.

**Mr Marchese:** Assistant Deputy? So far?

**Mr Hartmann:** The two together are costing us approximately \$300,000.

**Mr Marchese:** And "the two together" is who and who?

**Mr Hartmann:** The supervisor and his advisor.

**Mr Marchese:** And what about all the other folks who are still there? Are these two people the only ones working there?

**Mr Hartmann:** Those are the only two who are there at this point.

**Mr Marchese:** And the other media folk who were there, are they gone?

**Mr Hartmann:** I believe they may have hired some media folk, but I don't know what arrangements they have made with the people they have hired directly.

**Mr Marchese:** They can just hire and—you don't keep track of how much money they cost the taxpayers, do you, by any chance?

**Mr Hartmann:** They have the power that any school board has to hire any staff that they feel they need in order to—

**Mr Marchese:** Sure, of course. I understand that.

Elizabeth, does it worry you in terms of the costs to the taxpayer for the folks there, the supervisor and the other folks that they're hiring? Does it worry you in terms of what the taxpayer is picking up to fix this problem?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I think what worries me most, Mr Marchese, is that despite the fact that there were five years and \$900 million in mitigation funding, the trustees were not able to balance the budget, despite the fact that other boards in the province of Ontario in similar situations did move forward and attempt to do so. I think the board has sometimes been described as dysfunctional because of the division—

**Mr Marchese:** So you want to punish them for a long while, really, don't you? Beat them up a bit?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** No. They broke the law. They chose to refuse to pass a balanced budget. As you know, they were split. They were probably split as evenly as you can be split. I think it's regrettable; however, I'm confident that as we move forward, we will come into a position where there will be a plan to achieve a balanced budget.

**Mr Marchese:** Yes. How long has he been there now, Mr Christie et al?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I think he arrived on the scene last summer.

**Mr Marchese:** Last summer. So in a month or so—was it June? Do you know? Anybody?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I think we had gone away for—I think it must have been July, because the House wasn't sitting.

**Ms Donna Marafioti:** August 30.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** August 30, there we go.

**Mr Marchese:** August 30. We're almost there. Can you believe it, a year? He must be enjoying himself, I would think. It's a good job. By the way, how much is he getting, Assistant Deputy?

**Mr Hartmann:** I think he's getting \$180,000.

**Mr Marchese:** God bless. I like that. I wish I could get a job like that for a couple of years. It's not a hard job, I don't think. All he has to do is submit a plan. He's been there almost a year. He still doesn't have a plan.

**Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** It's the same job as the entire board.

**Mr Marchese:** Yes, he's managing the whole thing. He's "le roi" of the board.

**Mr Chudleigh:** He's doing a better job too.

**Mr Marchese:** Yes, I bet. If you give him another year, he's going to do a superb job. I think he's breaking the law, by the way. I really do. He really should be balancing his budget. I think he's breaking your laws and ours. I really do. What, \$180,000? Is he going to have a pension after this?

**Mr Hartmann:** Not under the terms of the appointment.

**Mr Marchese:** He must have been sad about that.

**Mr O'Toole:** What does a director make on that board?

**Mr Marchese:** What, the director? He's well paid too, I think.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** Yes, \$220,000 or something. God bless him too.

In the last board meeting, I understand people were so anxious—

**The Acting Chair:** Excuse me, Mr Marchese, two minutes?

**Mr Marchese:** Two minutes—see how time always flies?

In the last board meeting, the board that "le roi" had, people were expecting him to give his balanced budget plan and, as far as I know, he didn't submit anything. Does that worry you? It's the end of the year. This Thursday, school's out for the summer. Teachers don't know what's going on. Parents won't know what's going on. Marchese doesn't know. Maybe even the minister doesn't know. Christie, before the end of the year, still, at \$180,000 a pop, doesn't have a clue what the plan is for the next year. When do you think we might know, from the note you're about to get? I love those little notes.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Well, I'm going to discard the note.

**Mr Marchese:** Yes, who needs it. Speak from the heart.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I would just remind the member that the Toronto school board this year has received an increase of 5%, despite the fact that their population has declined by 4.2%. Also, you should keep in mind that they have settled the two contracts with the teachers. So they're actually in a very stable position.

**Mr Marchese:** So we don't need this Mr Christie fellow there for \$180,000 a pop. Why do we need him? The board is doing so well. They're getting so much money. What gives? It troubles me. It's the end of the year. He hasn't announced what it's going to look like for next September. Does he talk to you? Does he call you? No? Deputy, does he call you every now and then and say, "This is my plan"? Don't you call him saying, "Hey, Christie, where's the plan?" Assistant Deputy, do you call him every now and then and say, "Where's the plan, Christie?"

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**Mr Hartmann:** Only to communicate the requirements for the submission.

**Mr Marchese:** What's that—

**The Acting Chair:** Thank you, Mr Marchese.

**Mr Marchese:** We'll get back to that.

**The Acting Chair:** The government—I think they would understand—has three minutes.

**Mr Arnott:** I want to compliment the minister on her sincere and continuing interest in trying to identify the needs of our at-risk students and trying to find solutions to assist them to achieve their full potential. I know the minister, in her professional career, spent many years as a teacher in the classroom choosing to work with many of these students who were struggling at times and helping

them to achieve their maximum potential. Again, I think that's something, Minister, that you've carried through in your opportunity to serve the people as Minister of Education, and you deserve a lot of credit for that.

I know that a few months ago you appointed a working group for at-risk students to determine the best professional advice you could receive as to what we might be doing in the short, medium and long term to assist these students with the goal of allowing them to achieve their full potential. I was hoping you might be able to outline for the committee members some of the strategies that you've employed in that respect.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** First of all, I want to pay tribute to Barry O'Connor, the director of the Limestone board, and all the educational stakeholders who contributed to helping make recommendations as to how we could best support students at risk in the grade 7 to 12 area.

We have \$50 million that we have now committed to invest in those young people. I want to tell you that we will have at-risk leaders in September—they have been identified already—who are going to work with these students throughout the province, work with the teachers and administrators. They're going to improve the teaching methods in numeracy and literacy across the curriculum. These are extra resources and they are going to share their best practices.

We're going to have enhanced workplace preparation programs, better pathways that will allow these students to transition from school to work, additional remedial programs within the school day and flexible school timetables to accommodate these young people. All of this is part of the recommendations brought forward by Barry O'Connor, and we're going to continue to make sure that every student in this province who has a problem and who may be considered at risk has the opportunity, as Mr Arnott has said, "to achieve their full potential."

When they leave school, they can go directly to work, into apprenticeships, college, or university. We've now provided the tools and strategies to the school boards in order to make sure that our students can achieve the success that they deserve. I think it's pretty exciting.

These same students are going to be able to take a grade 12 course that will allow them to demonstrate their competency in literacy, and if they have not yet passed the grade 10 literacy test, they can do it in a grade 12 course and they will get the OSSD diploma. I think this is an exciting time in the lives of these young people. We're going to have more young people than ever before being able to stay in school and not drop out because of the flexibility and the additional curriculum and staff who are going to be hired to support these young people.

**The Acting Chair:** We'll move now to the Liberal caucus, and they have 20 minutes.

**Mr Kennedy:** I would like to ask Mr Gooch a question, if possible, Minister, or if you'd like, I'd be happy to try to put it to you. I'm looking for an explanation of the apparent discrepancy between the amount of money that funding is increasing this year—some \$471 mil-

lion—and about \$613 million worth of promises that have been made. I'm wondering if I could relate these to some specific documents for you, Mr Gooch. In your technical briefing, you show in-year salary costs on a line-by-line basis and then I believe you show a total of approximately \$358 million in your salary increases. Is that correct?

**Mr Gooch:** Not \$358 million.

**Mr Kennedy:** What would be the total, then, approximately?

**Mr Gooch:** The number we have estimated for school boards is about \$340 million for salaries for 2003-04, after the in-year changes.

**Mr Kennedy:** So about \$340 million. I have a technical briefing document that adds up a little bit differently. Maybe I could get that from you some other time.

Secondly, I have a listing here of the other specific changes emanating from the Rozanski report that the government has committed to do in this fiscal year. I know we couldn't get a list of them from the government, but I'm wondering if you could advise us—you did in the technical briefing but I just want to validate with you. They add up to approximately \$255 million. Does that number sound about right, or do you have a different number to share?

**Mr Gooch:** The number we have talked to school boards about for total enhancements for 2003-04, announced so far, is \$551 million.

**Mr Kennedy:** The \$551 million you're referring to—I did get a slightly different number, and I'll just bring you back again because I really would like to understand this. Approximately \$340 million in salary increases for 2003-04—

**Mr Gooch:** Right.

**Mr Kennedy:**—and then I guess you'd be saying that the balance of that \$551 million, approximately \$211 million, would be distinct from salaries and relate to other specific promises the government has made?

**Mr Gooch:** Would you like me to enumerate them for you?

**Mr Kennedy:** I would be happy to have them in writing. Do you have them in writing to share with everyone?

**Mr Gooch:** I have them right here. They're not that long.

**Mr Kennedy:** Sure. Why don't you go ahead? I'll check them off against the list we have from the briefing.

**Mr Gooch:** Transportation, \$20 million.

**Mr Kennedy:** Yes.

**Mr Gooch:** Students at risk, the GOALS program, \$50 million.

**Mr Kennedy:** Right.

**Mr Gooch:** School renewal, the initiative to repair schools, and where repair costs are prohibitive, to replace those schools, \$25 million; school renewal, added to all school boards for the most pressing needs, another \$25 million; classroom supports, that is, the benchmark increases for textbooks, one third of the \$66 million promised, \$22 million.

**Mr Kennedy:** Yes.

**Mr Gooch:** The rural education strategy, \$50 million; and changes for small, rural and northern schools, \$19 million. Those things together come to \$551 million.

**Mr Kennedy:** I guess the distinction I was trying to understand is the amount of money for special education. There was approximately \$201 million that flowed last year.

**Mr Gooch:** Yes.

**Mr Kennedy:** I understood from the briefing that the full \$250 million, or even more, would flow this year, depending on the number of applications.

**Mr Gooch:** Yes, as a result of the ISA review.

**Mr Kennedy:** That wasn't on your list.

**Mr Gooch:** That's correct, because we don't double-count our increases. We announced an approximate \$250 million last year.

**Mr Kennedy:** But it didn't flow last year.

**Mr Gooch:** Not all of it.

**Mr Kennedy:** Right.

**Mr Gooch:** But we haven't double-counted it in our \$551 million either.

**Mr Kennedy:** OK.

**Mr Gooch:** So when the government talks about \$1.1 billion, we haven't double-counted special ed.

**Mr Kennedy:** There was a member of the minister's staff who said the \$250 million was flowing at the end of the month in April. We'll come back to that, actually.

So you're saying there is \$50 million in special-ed money that is new this year; is that not correct—the rest of the \$250 million?

**Mr Gooch:** There will be an additional allocation for special education as a result of the ISA review.

**Mr Kennedy:** Let me go with your number, because we don't have it in writing, strictly speaking. But that's the difference: I'm saying \$611 million and you're saying \$551 million.

**Mr Gooch:** Right.

**Mr Kennedy:** If you look at the number change from the prior year on the student-focused funding, even with the money you haven't allocated to the boards yet, the almost \$115 million, there's a \$471-million increase from last year.

**Mr Gooch:** No. In total dollars there's a \$531-million increase from last year.

**Mr Kennedy:** Just help me through this; we won't spend too much time on numbers that may not benefit other people. But \$15.325 billion is your current number, correct?

**Mr Gooch:** Yes.

**Mr Kennedy:** And this is a change of \$14.2 billion against the projections for last year; is that right?

**Mr Gooch:** There was a projection last year—

**Mr Kennedy:** Pardon me. I've got the wrong—

**Mr Gooch:** —from May, before we get to the Rozanski in-year enhancements. That was \$14.2 billion. It was then amended to \$14.794 billion. The difference between the \$15.2 billion that we're discussing and the \$14.8 billion is \$531 million, with rounding.

**Mr Kennedy:** Given that, how much implication is there—is it the difference between what you're saying, and I'll take your figures for the moment, \$530 million and \$550 million? Is that the only implication for double cohort savings?

**Mr Gooch:** No.

**Mr Kennedy:** What are the other implications, and where would we find them?

**Mr Gooch:** We're making a comparison between operating and funding. You used the line there about the total allocation for operating purposes, and you were quite reasonably looking for the salary increases and the other changes to the benchmarks for learning resources, operating and so forth. This gets a little bit complicated, but there is, as you said, about a \$323-million difference in year over year in operating, and we're talking about a \$550-million increase. So where's the difference?

The first place to look is, that \$50 million of that \$551 million is not in operating funding; it's for school renewal.

**Mr Kennedy:** Yes.

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**Mr Gooch:** Further, we haven't allocated \$50 million for the rural allocation strategy. So that takes us to about a \$423-million difference. We've accounted for \$100 million. We've added \$100 million to the \$323 million. There's the \$323-million difference, and you're wondering where the \$551 million is. Fifty million dollars hasn't been allocated, so it doesn't show up in the 2003-04 number yet, and \$50 million isn't in operating. So we still only have to account for the difference between \$551 million and \$423 million. That number is about \$130 million. You asked earlier what the savings are from enrolment changes in student-focused funding, and that's your answer. It's about \$130 million.

If you look at the enrolment changes and do the calculation, you would see that student-focused funding is providing funding for approximately 2% fewer students, in our projections, compared to last year.

**Mr Kennedy:** Thank you for that.

There is a number anomaly that I think you might be able to help us with. Declining enrolment: quite apart from everything else we've discussed, although that is there as part of the change, it's not part of the salary increase and it's not part of the Rozanski commitment, per se. I see the declining enrolment was put off to the year after. Is that correct? So the three years won't apply until next year, until 2004-05?

**Mr Gooch:** As Dr Rozanski recommended, precisely as he recommended; we only introduced the declining enrolment adjustment in the current school year, the one we're in right now, 2002-03. We had made a commitment at that time to extend the adjustment for a second year. He recommended that we add a third.

**Mr Kennedy:** But the \$83-million increase there is still on the two-year basis. Is that correct?

**Mr Gooch:** Yes.

**Mr Kennedy:** In other words, you'll fund approximately half of that next year.

**Mr Gooch:** It depends—

**Mr Kennedy:** Well, it depends on how much of it came from the year before and so on.

**Mr Gooch:** It depends on the government's decisions about what the third-year adjustment looks like.

**Mr Kennedy:** OK. But suffice it to say that \$83 million is a new cost arising from the double cohort. Yes?

**Mr Gooch:** It offsets the impact.

**Mr Kennedy:** Some of the impact; about 25%, 27% of the cost of a student leaving.

**Mr Gooch:** We're talking about a 2% decline in enrolment.

**Mr Kennedy:** That's \$300 million.

**Mr Gooch:** Most of the funding is driven, so it would be a significantly higher number than \$130 million. There are two reasons for that. One is that the declining enrolment adjustment offsets some of the revenue loss.

**Mr Kennedy:** Yes, that's what I'm trying to understand.

**Mr Gooch:** The other reason is that there are many elements of student-focused funding that are not on a one-to-one correspondence with enrolment.

**Mr Kennedy:** Can I ask you about that? Again, it would have been better if we'd been able to get a few of the items I asked for in writing. In essence, you've got an in-year salary cost in the document you handed out of around \$226 million just in the foundation grant alone—\$340 million overall.

**Mr Gooch:** I believe that's correct. I don't have the numbers in front of me.

**Mr Kennedy:** But there has only been about a \$48-million change in the foundation grant and then another \$8 million in what's called local priorities—about \$55 million. So obviously there are two offsetting things happening: there is less eligibility for a foundation grant because of declining enrolment, and there is some increase to reflect the fact that you're giving at least the salary portion this year. Correct?

**Mr Gooch:** Right.

**Mr Kennedy:** Other than declining enrolment, obviously that foundation grant goes down, net, for quite a number of boards. Only the high-growth boards would stay even.

**Mr Gooch:** Yes.

**Mr Kennedy:** I just wanted to double-check that that's a fair inference to draw.

I wonder then, in terms of the amount of money that's being spent this year—it's \$551 million, and approximately \$340 million of that is for salary increases. I wonder if I can ask you—and if it's an unfair question, just let me know—the \$340 million is for cost increases, and you do recognize that Dr Rozanski says on page 23 and elsewhere that that's not part of his structural recommendation, that that's a cost in addition. Do you recognize that, as the person responsible for totting these things up and keeping records of where money is being spent?

**Mr Gooch:** I believe the minister has answered that question.

**Mr Kennedy:** So you're declining to answer. OK.

I think it's strange. The fact that you and the minister and the whole ministry assembled can't answer a straightforward question that is there clearly in the book I think shows very clearly why the government keeps interrupting, why the government is so afraid of things, because this is apples and oranges.

**Mr Gooch:** I could provide the answer I gave to the school boards, which is that you have \$340 million more now than you did last year.

**Mr Kennedy:** With all respect, Mr Gooch, if a politician had said that, I would take some umbrage at it. I think the ministry is probably glad to see there is a cup of water going out to people who haven't had it.

Let me just put forward a perspective to you. If you can respond to it, particularly in writing, because maybe there are some materials you brought with you, if you calculate the CPI from 1995, in other words the cost of inflation, and if you calculate the change in enrolment, including the reduction in the most recent year, you get the approximate value of today's funding versus the funding back in 1995.

The figures I have for that would show that approximately \$2 billion had gone missing from the current dollar funding of education, and then with the double cohort and some of the little bits of injections we've had, that number today stands at about \$1.6 billion. In other words, if you took inflation in enrolment and added it to the funding in 1994, and brought it forward to today, there's about \$1.6 billion missing from what would have been a comparable board education dollar today. Do you have any studies or analyses that could speak to that? Do you have a different perspective you could put forward here today? One of the findings in Dr Rozanski's report was that since 1997, benchmarks hadn't been kept up, but specifically he's speaking to enrolment and inflation. Would you agree or do you have any other studies on that?

**Mr Gooch:** I don't have that information in front of me. I can't verify those numbers. I would comment that Dr Rozanski was charged with looking at the benchmarks, among other things. He did a more finely grained analysis than simply comparing—

**Mr Kennedy:** He did, but it's interesting that he came out with a number of \$1.7 billion from 1997. In other words, he said there's a billion dollars in benchmarks, which is almost exactly—if you look at his work at the back, he basically says he didn't apply inflation, and then on salaries we're going to put less than inflation back in, so he's putting back less than this.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Kennedy:** I want to be clear. Is there any document the ministry keeps that would tell us the impact, every year since 1995, of inflation in enrolment on the ability of boards to pay their bills? I want to give you one quote from Dr Rozanski where he says very clearly that he finds the gap, the amount of money boards have to spend versus the 1997 spending guidelines, to be a problem. To me, that's the root issue, that he says this is

a problem. Far from what has been said, he didn't say everything was fine. He said this was a big problem. He raises adequacies on several occasions. Does the ministry not keep its own records of whether the boards are struggling with the costs of inflation or of increased enrolment?

**Mr Gooch:** The ministry spends a great deal of effort and time collecting data and also speaking with senior officials on the school boards about those very issues, of what their costs are and what concerns they have about ongoing costs.

**Mr Kennedy:** Dr Rozanski said \$1.7 billion was missing. The government is proposing to put back, by our estimate, about \$529 million. You don't have, by the minister's account, any other list to bring to us today. Inflation would say there's a higher number still missing, because we concede that some of that \$529 million has found its way in. But it would seem that there's still a very large gap, a lot of money missing from students in this province compared to the money that was being used to provide them with education services in 1995. Does the ministry have an outlook on that? Do they independently analyze Dr Rozanski's recommendations in that regard? Anything at all?

**Mr Gooch:** We don't do inflation analysis because we don't believe it's an accurate reflection of school board costs.

**Mr Kennedy:** OK, but you acknowledge that it is impacting, that Dr Rozanski says it impacts and that Dr Rozanski quantified that number?

**Mr Gooch:** Yes, we do.

**Mr Kennedy:** And you acknowledge that the total number impact, plus what he thought were missing parts of the formula or investments, was about \$1.7 billion, but you aren't prepared to say how much of that the government has already committed to or not. Is that correct?

**Mr Gooch:** I think the government's public materials reiterate over and over again what—

**Mr Kennedy:** I think you know the minister says \$1.8 billion, which is not about the money they've put back; it's about how much money they put in the budget last year before Dr Rozanski even reported. They're comparing the numbers going backwards. In fact, when the Premier came out with a \$2 billion—

**Mr Gooch:** I assure you, Mr Kennedy, that every dollar attributed to a response to the Rozanski report was added after—

**Mr Kennedy:** OK. Can we have the response to the Rozanski report in writing from the minister? We would be quite interested to have that. Do you have that with you?

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**Mr Gooch:** I believe you could go to the Web site after every announcement and find—

**Mr Kennedy:** OK, I've done that and this is the report that I've tabled. It's called Failing Rozanski. It's available to any member of the public and it shows the distinction between the catch-up, which Dr Rozanski

said—there's this much money less happening. As I say, some estimates put it as high as \$2 billion, but he says there's \$1.7 billion needed to catch up, and then he said you have to keep up. Every year there's \$340 million that you decline to give an opinion about, but he was very clear: that's not included in the \$1.7 billion. Your minister includes it. Your deputy and your Premier include it, and perhaps you may have to as well today.

But I'm wondering, is there no corresponding document? The ministry has had this for a week. Does the ministry not have any corresponding document to show us, maybe in a more positive light, what exactly they are doing for the students of this province vis-à-vis Dr Rozanski?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Mr Chair, I said at the outset that the government was following an orderly, balanced implementation plan for updating the benchmarks, and did review. We believe that it is important that the benchmarks be kept current, so we are following the recommendation made by Dr Rozanski whereby he says that we need to work with the sector to develop mechanisms for annually reviewing and updating the benchmarks and the funding formula and for conducting a more comprehensive overall review of the funding formula every five years. That process will begin very shortly.

I think it's also important to put on the record that—

**Acting Chair:** Minister, with respect, I have two minutes.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** —the budget announced a floor for education that our partners can count on.

**Mr Kennedy:** Minister—

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** It did not announce a funding ceiling. So we are moving forward.

**Mr Kennedy:** But this year it is a ceiling. We heard from Mr Gooch that exactly what's in the budget, approximately \$500 million, is all that the students of the province can get. They're not going to get any money for more teachers; no increase in the foundation grant that Dr Rozanski asked for, except for a little bit of money for teaching materials. That's all they're going to get this year: \$22 million. He asked for \$477 million. Do you agree—

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Please keep in mind—

**Mr Kennedy:** Minister, I want to ask you a question.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** —that it's over three years.

**Mr Kennedy:** Yes, he did, but you are giving zero. You're giving zero this year for the teaching component, the foundation grant.

In your budget it says \$500 million for next year and \$400 million the year after that. Your election document doesn't say you're going to give any more money. There's no reason to believe that you're going to announce more money. You don't have any for this year. You would have to come up with \$1.2 billion on top of inflation over the next two years. There's no feasible way to believe that's something that you're going to find.

I want to ask you a specific question, though. Do you agree, very specifically—and I want to ask you and enjoin you that there were people here, Pan Kanagaretnam

from the Tamil Parents Association, and some others that I will mention. They were here last week when our session was cancelled. They want to know whether you agree with the ESL recommendation. They want to know why there is zero money. Some \$90 million in total is recommended, and zero is coming from you to help their children learn to speak English in a manner that would stop them from being left behind. They want to know if you agree with Dr Rozanski's recommendation.

**Acting Chair:** Minister, you could save that for the next round, please.

Mr Marchese?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Toronto.

**Mr Marchese:** Yes. These budget things, these numbers, aren't they painful?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Not at all. It's too bad that we spend so much time on money when we take into consideration that our students are at the top of the class when it comes to results internationally, nationally and provincially. We've made a lot of improvements. We have to thank our teachers and students for bringing us to where we are today. I think sometimes we focus too much on money and not on the excellent results and hard work of our teachers.

**Mr Marchese:** Yes, I get the same impression. You guys have been cutting billions out of the education system. I think you've been focusing too much on cutting money out of the system rather than focusing on what makes schools better. Quite right.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Our schools are doing better.

**Mr Marchese:** By taking more money out of the system.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** The results are dramatically improved from seven and eight years ago, Mr Marchese.

**Mr Marchese:** You know what I think, Elizabeth? If you take out \$2 billion more, our students will produce even more and better results. That's what I think you should do. Because you've done so well by taking \$2 billion out, you could take another \$2 billion out and the results would probably be incredible.

No? It doesn't work that way?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I don't know. I didn't know anybody took \$2 billion out.

**Mr Marchese:** That's what Rozanski said you did.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I don't remember Dr Rozanski saying that anywhere.

**Mr Marchese:** He didn't actually say you guys—

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** No, he actually didn't say that. I think it's important that we keep that in mind. He did not ever say that.

**Mr Marchese:** Yes, but do you get the impression that when he says, "You've got to put back \$1.8 billion"—he doesn't say "put back"—but when he says you've got to restore \$1.8 billion, perhaps he's saying you pretty well took that out?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Do you know what you have to keep in mind?

**Mr Marchese:** Actually, I didn't want to ask those questions, because I asked them last week. I'm tired of them.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** We were the ones who decided that we would do the review of the funding formula. We introduced it in 1998. We do believe it needs to be reviewed on a regular basis. The benchmarks need to be updated.

**Mr Marchese:** Yes. I think so too.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Folks, the results we got were the results that we were looking for: how could we make sure we have the provision of funding that was going to equitable and fair for all students?

**Mr Marchese:** Very good, yes. So you believe in a regular review of funding.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I do.

**Mr Marchese:** So it was introduced in 1998 and reviewed when, when Rozanski did that? What's the lapse between those: 1998 and 2002, 2003?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Yes.

**Mr Marchese:** That's four years.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** That's why we're going to follow his recommendation that we work with the sector to develop a mechanism for annual reviews.

**Mr Marchese:** You like annual reviews?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I personally believe that's important.

**Mr Marchese:** We didn't like them then but we like them now.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** And we're going to update the benchmarks in the funding formula.

**Mr Marchese:** Of course, because we were talking about the floor; it's not the ceiling.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** And every five years we'll have a comprehensive review.

**Mr Marchese:** And a new ceiling?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Well, we've announced the floor.

**Mr Marchese:** I didn't want to get into financial stuff. It's just so boring, it really is, and painful.

Can I get back to Mr Hartmann just for a sec?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** You should read the headlines in the paper this year about the additional teachers that have been hired.

**Mr Marchese:** I know. Things are great. Things are getting so much better.

I was just going to ask you, Mr Hartmann—because I want to get back to the other question. You said you only communicate with the supervisor on the basis of the requirement of the submission. What is that again, for the benefit of those who are watching?

**Mr Hartmann:** Our support to the supervisor is basically technical support in terms of knowledge required in order to administer the act, the requirements for submissions and those kinds of things.

**Mr Marchese:** That's it? Holy cow.

**Mr Hartmann:** Under the terms of the appointment, he was granted the full powers.

**Mr Marchese:** But 180,000 bucks and we just give him all that leash? It's a long leash, right? The guy can do what he wants. I'm sure you don't like that.

**Mr Hartmann:** Within the Education Act.

**Mr Marchese:** Yes, but the Education Act presumably says that he's supposed to give you a plan, and the only requirements are the technical requirements, whatever help he might need, a "Call us when you need us" kind of thing. I don't know for what. What would he be calling you for?

**Mr Hartmann:** The same kinds of things that a school board would call us for.

**Mr Marchese:** Which would be?

**Mr Hartmann:** Help with the interpretation of various sections of the act, assistance with getting exceptions to various cases that might be required—

**Mr Marchese:** Questions like, "Can I stick around for a couple of years, three or four years? Is that OK? Does the act say that that's okay?" That kind of thing?

**Mr Hartmann:** No, those wouldn't be the kinds of questions that he would pursue.

**Mr Marchese:** I'm worried, because the parents that I've been talking to are very worried that Mr Christie—it's not necessarily to you, Mr Hartmann—hasn't submitted a plan. They're worried about the implications of not having this plan a year later, and \$180,000 just for him. I'm concerned, and I believe you are concerned too. Isn't that true?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Let me respond this way. I think there has been significant progress made this year in moving towards a balanced budget but also in—

**Mr Marchese:** How do you know? He doesn't talk to you.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:**—investing in the classroom. This year, Mr Christie has been able to add new textbooks, hall monitors, classroom teachers. I think some very significant steps have been taken. He was also able to achieve settlements with the two teacher groups. I think that is very significant. I think we are moving forward within that board in a very satisfactory manner, and we will now await the results of the budget process that they are presently going through.

**Mr Marchese:** I'm sure taxpayers are very impatient about him not presenting a clear sense of where we're going at the end of this year. I think they are. I'm talking about the taxpayers. You are a very taxpayer-minded kind of person. So are the others. I'm concerned that you're not concerned as much as I am about this.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Well, the regulations in the act do provide some flexibility.

**Mr Marchese:** Is that what you say to the taxpayers, that the act provides flexibility and let's drop it?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** No. I am very confident that in the not-too-distant future we're going to have that information for Mr Marchese.

**Mr Marchese:** Mr Hartmann gave me the sense that he doesn't have knowledge of what Mr Christie is paying for, what we commonly speak of as spin doctors, the ones that work for Enterprise Canada Group Inc?

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**Hon Mrs Witmer:** They actually worked for the school board before Mr Christie arrived on the job. You probably know that Enterprise Canada was actually hired by the Toronto board.

**Mr Marchese:** Right. Well, all I know is that they've donated big bucks to you folks.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I'm afraid that they were there before we ever got involved with putting a supervisor in place.

**Mr Marchese:** How do we get them to donate money to me? It's not fair. You're a fair-minded person. How come they just donate to the Tories? I don't know if they donate to the Liberals. I find that so not equitable; it's just not right.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** That firm had been hired by the Toronto board prior to the supervisor arriving on the scene.

**Mr Marchese:** Right. But do you know how much Christie is giving these folks to help him out?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I have no idea. As I say, they were there before, and I guess I hear you saying they're still there now.

**Mr Marchese:** Right. See, I'm concerned. I think it's costing us taxpayers a whole lot of money; I really do. I think he's been there for a whole year, him and the gang. For the two of them, it's \$300,000—we're talking about McVicar—\$300,000 already just gone out of taxpayers' pockets, because their pockets are so deep, plus all these other spin doctors. I think already we've spent \$600,000 or \$700,000, you would estimate, more or less, give or take a couple of pennies?

**Mr Hartmann:** Give or take a couple of hundred thousand.

**Mr Marchese:** A couple of hundred thousand? So we are close to \$600,000 or \$700,000 maybe?

**Mr Hartmann:** I think less. They've been there for a year.

**Mr Marchese:** Wow, that's a lot of money, I think.

**Mr Hartmann:** It would be in the neighbourhood of \$300,000.

**Mr Marchese:** For the others, the spin doctors?

**Mr Hartmann:** Oh, for the spin doctors, I have no idea. I'm sorry, I misunderstood the question.

**Mr Marchese:** I don't know, but if I were the Deputy Minister and the assistant deputy, I would want to know. I really would. If I were the minister, I would want to know too, in case I had to answer some questions.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I think I said at the outset, Mr Marchese, the people you refer to were hired by the previous board when the trustees still had responsibility for the decision-making. So if Mr Christie has chosen to continue to hire that company, obviously that's a decision which that individual makes.

**Mr Marchese:** School boards have to plan for the following year in terms of having a sense of what they would have to do, whether there are going to be cuts, whether there are going to be cuts by way of attrition or through some other formula—who knows? They're

worried that they don't know. Do you think there is some kind of plan not to announce it now, while parents are still awake, fighting you because they believe you made cuts, and that if you do it in July when people are asleep or at cottages—who knows where they might go, because July is a difficult month—that that's the time Christie might make some announcements? That's the impression I get; I could be wrong. Do you think there's a plan like that?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I think there's a plan that will deliver the best quality education to the people and students in the city of Toronto. As I said to you, their funding has been enhanced by 5%, their enrolment has declined by 4.2%. They're going to be getting this year about \$2.1 billion, so there's more for salaries, classroom support, transportation, students at risk and school renewal. I suspect that we're going to see a budget that responds to the needs of the students.

**Mr Marchese:** But he's not reporting to you directly?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** At the end of the day we will get the budget plan.

**Mr Marchese:** By that you mean that indirectly you will get whatever plan.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** We will get the plan.

**Mr Marchese:** But he doesn't report to you directly at any other time.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** No.

**Mr Marchese:** Do you remember me asking you about Rozanski's recommendation that says boards should have 5% of the foundation grant to give them the flexibility they need? And do you remember me saying to you that if you did that I think it's been estimated that the Toronto board would get 120 million bucks just with that grant alone?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** You did make reference to that, Mr Marchese.

**Mr Marchese:** What was your answer again? Because I forgot.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I'd have to check the record.

**Mr Marchese:** What would you say today about that?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I would have to check the record. And I would just—

**Mr Marchese:** Forget the record. I don't mean to put you on the spot, really.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I think we need to keep in mind that, as I've said before, we have now made available money which is a funding floor in order that our education partners can do planning over the next three years. This was a very significant step that the government took this year to try to provide some stability and announce funding over the next three years. But of course we have not announced a funding ceiling, as you know.

**Mr Marchese:** That's a different—we touched on that last week.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** That's really important to keep in mind. So people know at least how much they will be getting.

**Mr Marchese:** No, I understand that.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** But not how much more.

**Mr Marchese:** Yes, we went over that chart, remember? There's no point repeating that. It's just so boring.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Was that from the document?

**Mr Marchese:** Yes. We're going to get the same answers. So what's the point of asking the same questions?

But I really do believe that if you kept that promise that Rozanski made and that you're committed to, the board would be spared. It would save some bucks by not paying Christie a hundred and eighty thousand bucks. The board would have the flexibility they've been looking for, and it would be over.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I think the other thing the board needs to continue to do—and I think they've been doing it this year—is to find efficiencies within the board and also to make sure that the services and programs are equally provided throughout the board.

**Mr Marchese:** Sure. But that's their job. Let them do it. That's what they were elected to do, right?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** They did get the \$900 million in mitigation funding.

**Mr Marchese:** But if they were to get this \$120 million that Rozanski recommended, they'd have the flexibility to do their job as elected trustees.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Well, I think there were those who thought that with the \$900 million they would have that type of flexibility.

**Mr Marchese:** So you don't want to give them this \$120 million that Rozanski—

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** No, I'm just saying that I think people have to use taxpayer money wisely.

**Mr Marchese:** Oh, for sure. But they were elected, right, Elizabeth? And if they're elected, they have to do their job. We might disagree with them, just like so many people disagree with you. You would probably say, "We're elected. Let us do our job. At the end of the day, they'll elect us or not elect us on the basis of our competence or incompetence, whatever the case may be."

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** That's right. There's no job security.

**Mr Marchese:** Yes, exactly. But the trustees are saying, "That's what we're doing. We got elected to do our job."

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** You need to keep in mind, though, that the board has been split. Half of the board wanted to pass a balanced budget, the other half didn't, so we really had a unique situation in the city of Toronto, unlike any other situation.

**Mr Marchese:** No, no. I agree. But you know, it's so hard. You've been there as a trustee. So have I. It's not a homogeneous political party. We've got Tories. There's plenty of them. We've got Liberals, lots of them too. Then you've got a few New Democrats. That means there's no homogeneous body of trustees.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** But you know, that's regrettable.

**Mr Marchese:** I agree. But that means—so what you're saying is, if we got rid of the Conservative Party,

or at least amalgamated all three of us together into one party, then it would work better. Is that what you're saying?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** No. Do you know what? I regret very much that there is party politics—

**Mr Marchese:** —at the board level.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** —in the school boards, because I'll tell you, it was not there when I served as a trustee. I think you need to be there to serve kids, regardless of your political affiliation. You shouldn't be playing party politics.

**Mr Marchese:** Right. So you're saying that as long as you hide your party affiliation, that's OK?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I think you need to be working there on behalf of the students that you serve. That needs to be your priority.

**Mr Marchese:** OK. But I'm telling you, even Ann Vanstone, who ran for you, when she went out of the Toronto board to make speeches, told me and others, "They think I'm a socialist."

Can you believe that? She went out making speeches, and they thought she was a socialist. She's a card-carrying Conservative. And it's not because socialists infected her. It's because, I don't know, the politics at the board might have just communicated to the world that we're all left-leaning people, even though she, for example, was a Tory. She wouldn't say, "I do this because I'm a Tory," or "It's all party affiliated," but "I do this because I love kids." We all did that.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I served with Ann. I was there at the same time she was, and that was how people did their job. They did their job because they loved kids, they wanted to do what was right for kids—

**Mr Marchese:** Yes, we all do.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** —and they never brought party politics into it.

**Mr Marchese:** Yes, we did, Elizabeth, in my time and yours.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Maybe in Toronto—

**Mr Marchese:** It doesn't matter where. I don't think it matters where you are. I think a lot of people hide their politics. In Toronto David Moll, a nice Tory, one of yours, would say, "Party affiliation? We're not party affiliated." Of course, he's a Tory. He doesn't have to put his party card on the table for me to know he's a Tory, for God's sake. I can tell by the way he thinks. You would say, "That's not party politics," but it is. How you think affiliates you to a party.

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Anyway, I'm getting off base. It's not important. I'm just thinking that Rozanski is trying to help us out. He's reaching out to us and saying, "Here's a recommendation. Take it," and then we get rid of Christie. I don't want him to be there any more. I'm tired of him. He's costing me too much money. I don't like that. I'm wondering why you haven't taken that recommendation and said, "That's a reasonable recommendation. I'm going to implement that."

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** We have three years to implement the recommendations.

**Mr Marchese:** But you're out soon. You're going to be out in September, I hope, and then what? It would have been better to implement that recommendation before you call the election and might not be there. No? No comment.

Here's what a parent said about this thing, because these things worry me. "We think Christie is going to make some cuts. He's going to make these announcements in July. That's what I believe."

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** You know, you might be fooled because people also said that Christie was going to lock out the teachers, and guess what? He didn't do it.

**Mr Marchese:** That's because I think you and Ernie said, "Don't you dare." You guys called him up and said, "Don't you dare call this." That's what I think happened.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** As I've just said to you, Mr Hartmann communicates with the supervisor when necessary. I've seen a lot of fearmongering; I've seen a lot of speculation. At the end of the day, a lot of these things have not happened.

**Mr Marchese:** Elizabeth, I just want to say before the Chair ends our nice discussion here that I want to share my time with the Tories the next time around, because I really believe in equity; I really do. I think it's so profoundly unfair that the other members are not getting their opportunity to ask questions, so I want to share my next round with them.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** That's kind.

**Mr Marchese:** Do you think that's nice?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** But you are a kind person. You and I could run the Toronto school board together, Rosario.

**Mr Marchese:** In my 10 minutes we'll talk about safe schools again.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** OK.

**The Acting Chair:** We then will move to the government. Three minutes, Mr Arnott.

**Mr Arnott:** We appreciate the magnanimous kindness of the NDP critic. Thank you very much. I know there are a lot of questions on our side.

I want to continue with the minister the dialogue that I initiated in the previous round about assistance for at-risk kids. I know that the government has, through its new funding model, set aside enveloped funding for special education for the first time, which is something that I think we all agree in the Legislature is a positive development.

In fact, I'm told that at one point one of the Liberal members was quoted as saying in the House, "It's the first time that they"—meaning the government—"mandated special services, and I applaud the government for that." We don't often hear those kinds of non-partisan statements in the House. It was notable that this member—the member, I believe, from Hamilton Mountain—made that point.

We have what we call the intensive support amount, the ISA, in terms of our special education funding. I

know there is a working group and of course the process for funding the ISA. The working group was charged with the responsibility of trying to provide the government with assistance in proving how this money was spent so as to benefit students.

I want to engage the minister on the ISA working group and ask her questions about that. When was it formed? What was its mandate? Can you inform the committee what the findings were of the ISA working group and how the government is responding to it?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I'm going to ask Mr Gooch to come forward since he has been quite involved.

**Mr Gooch:** In answer to your questions, the ISA working group was formed in the fall of 2000. In January 2001 it delivered a series of recommendations to the government.

The then-minister of the day, Mrs Ecker, gave the group a mandate to do three things. She asked the group to come forward with recommendations that would make special education funding more stable and predictable. She asked it to come up with an approach that would significantly reduce the administrative burden on school boards for making funding applications for special education. The final thing she requested was that it continue to ensure that the approach it recommended would make funding responsive to different levels of need that school boards had demonstrated.

The working group came up with a comprehensive series of recommendations. The core idea of the group was that the ministry needed to do a number of things. It needed to clarify eligibility criteria for what's called the intensive support amount. It needed to give school boards a significant amount of time to compile the information that's needed in order to demonstrate the level of need. The ministry needed to provide a supportive environment for that, where it was not treating boards punitively but helping them understand what the eligibility criteria were and doing the work they needed to do in order to do that.

The core idea was that we would take almost a school year and a half, an 18-month period, to give boards a number of opportunities to bring forward eligible files and the documentation, and that's what we set out to do.

**The Acting Chair:** Thank you, Mr Gooch. Now we move on to the Liberal caucus.

**Mr Kennedy:** I just wanted to introduce for the record that I believe last Tuesday we had with us the head of the Tamil Parents Association, Alimamy Bangura from the Muslim Education Network, Yuen Chen from the North York Mandarin Speaking Parents' Association and Mahendra Gupta from the South Asian Education Liaison Committee. All of them were unanimous in saying you're hurting the education of their children by choosing to not act, by choosing to leave their children behind by not providing adequate funding.

Minister, the question I asked was, do you agree with Dr Rozanski's report? He says you should be funding at least five years' worth of support for children under language. He also recommends that you get a better handle on what it takes. He quotes, and many other peo-

ple quote, your own ministry planning program assessment document for grades 9 and 10 that says, "It may take up to seven years for an ESL or an ELD student to require a level of proficiency in reading, writing and abstract thinking that is on a par with speakers as a first language." Right now, you're only funding three.

All of these parents came down here because they believe you're shortchanging their kids. You talked about results. In the EQAO scores, results for English-as-a-second-language students haven't budged at all, like most of your results. The only thing that's budged is math in the first year and, after that, we've got numbers like: 76% in grade 3 not reaching the provincial standard in reading; 70% not reaching the provincial standard in writing; 60% not getting there in math; grade 6: 78% not meeting the provincial standard in reading; 78% not meeting the provincial standard in writing; 65% in math.

Minister, also here last week was the chair of the Peel board, who indicates they're missing 132 English-as-a-second-language teachers.

Again, in your response to Dr Rozanski there have been no dollars—not 10 cents put toward his recommendation on English as a second language. These parents, and many other boards out there besides Peel, would like to know: do you support Dr Rozanski's recommendation about English-as-a-second-language services being improved so those kids can have a fair chance to learn?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I personally have always supported ESL funding. As an immigrant to this country myself and having had to learn English, I think it's really important that students have either strong English or French-language skills.

I know that our government shares in that particular commitment. That's one of the reasons we have increased funding to English as a second language every year since the introduction of the formula in 1998-99. In fact, I'm pleased to say that this year, 2003-04, it will be rising to over \$190 million. That's an increase of almost \$79 million or 71% since 1998-99.

I would go back to what I have said to the member before. We have endorsed the recommendations of Dr Rozanski. I would remind him that Dr Rozanski has asked that they be implemented over the course of the next three years, and that's exactly what we plan to do. I've just pointed out to you that we are increasing support each and every year.

**Mr Kennedy:** Minister, you haven't supplied 10 cents of the \$90 million. You did not change the policy. Your words are not going to help the Tamil kids, the Mandarin kids or the others who are falling behind. They're all wondering what kind of—in fact, this is what they said to me last time when we were de-convened by the conflict in the House. They said it's wrong for Canadians to invite people here on the false premise that they're going to be able to participate. That's how strongly they feel about it. Mr Rozanski evaluated your program and said it was wanting, \$90 million worth of wanting. You're saying to us that it's okay for these kids to be left behind

this year and presumably next year because somehow you're going to find \$900 million a year, when you could barely get \$500 million this year, and you're going to implement this report.

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Minister, I want to ask you very plainly and very clearly: how can you justify making these kids wait? They're not getting better results. Why are you saying to them that they should have to wait and not get the benefit of what Dr Rozanski says they badly need? He said to get started on all of these things. You have not gotten started on the ESL recommendation. These parents have a right to know what's wrong. Why are their kids not counting as much as other kids? Why are they still being cut back? That's what they're reporting. That's what Peel is reporting; that's the report we're getting out of Toronto, that there are fewer and fewer—I'll just give you a quick quote. The ESL coordinator in Toronto is saying that a school has cut back from two full-time ESL teachers to just one for next year. That means they're going to cut out ESL A, which means that the kids who go to that particular school who don't speak English will not get any courses whatsoever. They will have to find another school.

A school in my riding that I visited not long ago, Western Technical, is the only one in the western half of Toronto that takes kids mid-year, and it's losing funding as well.

Again, can you address the question directly for these parents? Why are their kids losing out? Why are they being left behind? Why are you not providing any of the money Dr Rozanski said these kids deserve?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I'd just like to share with you that in 1998 this program was receiving \$111.3 million—

**Mr Kennedy:** Mr Chair, through you—

**The Acting Chair (Mr Steve Peters):** Let her finish her answer.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** —and today it's receiving \$190.1 million. There has been an increase. We are going to be following through with Dr Rozanski's recommendations. I would remind the member that he said it's a three-year implementation. We've endorsed the recommendations and we will be following through—

**Mr Kennedy:** Well, Minister, I'm happy to let your words speak for you, because you're really failing those parents.

**The Acting Chair:** Let her finish her answer, please, Mr Kennedy.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I also hope that the federal government in the future will see fit to provide some additional funding. I think it's extremely important, when Ontario receives so many immigrants, that we continue to see the federal level of support increase as well.

**Mr Kennedy:** Well, that is pathetic that that would be a reason. The only reason you gave us is that it's the federal government's job. These kids get to wait and get behind so you can use the typical Tory provincial excuse that it's somebody else's work. It's your responsibility to advocate for these kids and all the other kids on Dr

Rozanski's consideration list, and you failed them. They're not getting anything. There's no money for any of the kids who are struggling without adequate assistance. You have no justification for that. You did a very bad job in 1998. You're doing a very poor job now of supporting the teachers. They are scrambling like crazy, after hours, in all manner of ways. This is the least excusable thing that you're doing, Minister, in terms of instruction. All these children need to do is learn English and they will advance in school. You want to cite test results. Your test results are not moving. They are stuck there. You've left them behind. You've cut them out of your calculations. We'll make sure that people realize that these are the kinds of calculations that you and your government are prepared to make.

Well, because you're not answering that question, I want to move you on to something else that might be more attractive for you.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Mr Speaker—

**The Acting Chair:** Madam Minister, he didn't ask a question; he was making a statement.

**Mr Kennedy:** I want to ask you about school closings. I want to ask you specifically about your track record. I have here some legislative research material which shows that you're the only government to net close schools in the last number of years. In fact, you guys in your government have closed approximately a net 170 schools under your watch compared to a net gain of 140 under the two previous governments. You're closing schools at a record rate. There are numerous school closings out there. I'm wondering if you could tell them why you didn't address what Dr Rozanski said about small schools, specifically about adjusting the drivers that make schools close for factors other than the viability of the schools themselves.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** We'll certainly take that under advisement and—

**Mr Kennedy:** Yes, that's good that you will.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** —provide the answer in due course.

**Mr Kennedy:** I'm sure you will. Let me ask you about rural funding. You have a committee out there that some of us have met with. You've said that Dr Rozanski's recommendation on single-school communities isn't good enough, you're not implementing that. You haven't given any of the money to the school boards. Instead, you have commissioned Dr Downey to do a report by the end of this month. You've only given him the money that Dr Rozanski said should fund single schools, and you've said to him, "Come up with an answer for that."

I want to ask you a clear question. If Dr Downey indicates there is a need to improve on the \$50 million in order to increase the viability of rural education, where you have had this devastating impact in terms of school closings—your policies have contributed to that, your support for private schools and the huge increases in enrolment there have contributed to that. But you seem to have found religion; you finally want to have a rural school policy. I want to know, if Dr Downey comes back

and says he needs more than \$50 million, will you provide it?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I'm not going to speculate on what Dr Downey may or may not say. He's certainly a very capable person. He co-chaired the New Brunswick Commission on Excellence in Education, and I can tell you that we eagerly await the recommendations he's going to bring our way in order that we can provide the best quality education to students in rural and northern Ontario.

**Mr Kennedy:** Is he allowed to make a recommendation that goes above the \$50 million?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I'm not going to speculate on what he—

**Mr Kennedy:** You've given him a mandate, though. Does your mandate permit him to do that or not?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I know he'll do an excellent job no matter what he does.

**Mr Kennedy:** Just for the record, Mr Chair, Dr Downey said that he has been told that's all the money there is, so I wanted to check with the minister. I was hoping I could be more hopeful for him. He says it's a very big problem, because he doesn't have the resources, in fact, to be able to address the rural question. There are many issues to the rural problem out there; it's not just the single-school-communities guarantee. On the one hand, Dr Rozanski says it will cost \$50 million just to keep single schools open.

You're holding out the prospect to a lot of rural folk out there who have quality problems, curriculum issues, distance learning problems in terms of senior curriculum and so on that this will all get fixed by Dr Downey, and he has pretty much told us that it will be unfair. I'm sorry you couldn't see fit to give him some more flexibility here today.

Earlier we heard you talk about the Toronto board and hide behind some of the things you were saying about it being confused. You've got supervisors in Hamilton and Ottawa. They've all failed their assignments to balance the budgets. They're all going about usurping the business of elected boards. Under what timetable are you going to take the supervisor out of Ottawa, first; and then, second, when will you remove the supervisor out of Hamilton? Can you tell us that today?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I'd just like to go back to the last issue we talked about. I think it's important that we be accurate in here. I have to question some of the allegations that are being made, I will tell you.

**Mr Kennedy:** You're welcome to answer the question, Minister.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** If we take a look at the rural strategy, we've been accused in here by the opposition member presently speaking of not providing funding for this and providing funding for that. In the case of the rural strategy, the recommendation by Dr Rozanski was \$50 million. I'm very pleased to say that that money is all going to be provided in one year as opposed to over three years. Those were some of the decisions the government has made. So I go back to the fact that we endorsed his

recommendations, and here is a case where we're doing it all in one year.

**Mr Kennedy:** He did not ask for a study. He did not ask for a task force, and you have submitted a task force. Not one cent of your money has gone to school boards. They have said in Avon-Maitland that they are going to go ahead and make cuts because they don't believe the money is coming. That's exactly what the board members out there said. So you say you're doing something, but in fact no money has flowed and Dr Rozanski did not ask for a task force. He said you should at least do the single-school communities portion of the needs of rural communities, do it now and here's how much it costs. You haven't done that yet, and as a result there are schools being shut down because, frankly, there isn't much credibility left for you.

I know you've avoided the question. I'd like to bring you back to it. Will you tell us—

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Did you have another putdown?

**Mr Kennedy:** —very specifically when you will be removing the Ottawa supervisor? Is that something you'd like to share with this committee here today?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I have no comment.

**Mr Kennedy:** No comment at all? So as the Minister of Education your message back to the Ottawa parents, who have an unelected person making decisions about their children, is that you have nothing to say to them about when they might have the supervisor removed and an elected board brought back? Is that correct?

1730

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I'm sure that after we get the audited statements, decisions will be made.

**Mr Kennedy:** Minister, does that imply, or would you like it to imply, that if the books are balanced or the audited statements are in order, then you'll restore trustees?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I don't think it really much matters what we say. You tend to draw your own conclusions. You make the same types of allegations. Decisions will be made once audited statements are submitted.

**Mr Kennedy:** Minister, I'll ask you the question again. Even though you prefer not to answer, people need to have these questions asked.

In Hamilton, when will you be removing the supervisor and when will you be restoring an elected board in charge of the affairs of the Hamilton board?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Do you know what? Mr Hartmann has been involved with all three supervisors. He can certainly share with you what the legislation states about these particular situations since he's extremely knowledgeable.

**Mr Kennedy:** He is extremely knowledgeable. But, Minister, I was interested in your official word to these communities, whether you have a message for them about when—you took away their boards—they might come back.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I have already said to you that we are awaiting the audited statements.

**Mr Kennedy:** Can you tell those communities what that means for them? If the audited statements are in order, does that mean the trustees will be restored to their powers?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I'll ask Mr Hartmann to speak to what it says in the legislation.

**Mr Kennedy:** Mr Hartmann, is there something specific in the legislation to the question I'm just asking?

**Mr Hartmann:** There is indeed. The legislation requires that the supervisors be removed if the audited financial statements for the year show a balance.

**Mr Kennedy:** If they show a balance. So if it's not in balance, then the supervisors can continue? Is that right?

**Mr Hartmann:** That's correct.

**Mr Kennedy:** In other words, if the supervisors want to continue to be paid, and I've forgotten what my colleague Mr Marchese established—\$180,000, \$300,000—then all they've got to do is not balance the budget and then they stay and work. That's a nice situation. That's amazing, actually.

Mr Hartmann, since you're up, I want to ask you a question from last year. You told us last year that the powers of the supervisor were such that the minister has not exercised any supervisory powers at all over the actions of the supervisor, that in fact the supervisor informs you after the fact, when they've acted. That's paraphrasing what was said last year. The minister can actually exercise powers if she chooses to. The question I have for you is, has the minister at all over the past year chosen to exercise those powers? Specifically, has she given direction to the supervisors through you at any time? Has she enacted any powers to make decisions about the three boards that are under supervisors?

**Mr Hartmann:** I've received no instructions from the minister regarding the supervision of those boards.

**Mr Kennedy:** OK, so those conditions remain the same.

How much time, please, Mr Chair?

**The Acting Chair:** You have about four minutes and ten seconds.

**Mr Kennedy:** Minister, I want to ask you again about some of the omissions, the huge, conspicuous omissions in your response to Dr Rozanski. One of the things he focused on was a demographic function: what the grant could do for poor kids, that there's a very high correlation to some of the backgrounds kids have and their readiness to learn and that that would be a valid way to direct dollars. He asked you to do two things, in fact. One was to conduct a study, but the other one was to immediately put \$50 million toward that. He felt so strongly that that was a deficiency in the formula. You've declined to do that.

Is there anything you can tell parents and children in the province who fit that category—and there are a number of indexes that are supposed to be considered there—as to why there's no money whatsoever for the educational barriers that low-income families and others from difficult backgrounds face?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Mr Hartmann will respond to that.

**Mr Kennedy:** I'd prefer your opinion, Minister, so thank you, Mr Hartmann.

I want to ask you then, Minister: in the report there is \$5.6 billion identified of crumbling schools, schools that are falling down under your watch. The investigator asked you for \$200 million. No money under the deferred maintenance recommendation has been forthcoming from you. I'm wondering if you could tell us why you're abandoning schools like those in Brantford and elsewhere that desperately need dollars to fix their schools. I'm wondering if you can tell us why it is that the specific recommendation, deferred maintenance, which he said is long overdue—we have to get started on this \$5.6 billion right now—that you've got no money for that.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I'm not sure if you really want to hear the answer or not but I'm certainly prepared to attempt to respond.

**Mr Kennedy:** Give it your best, Minister.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** You can interrupt when you feel it appropriate.

There has been money set aside. As you know, on March 18, 2003, the Premier announced a \$75-million enhancement for school—

**Mr Kennedy:** Minister, I am going to interrupt you. I'll take you up on your offer. The specific question I had was not about school renewal announcements. It was about a deferred maintenance recommendation, a very specific recommendation. You ought to be familiar with it. I've asked you to address that. Dr Rozanski, in his recommendations, said that there's \$5.6 billion worth of schools falling down. If you choose not to do that, that's fine. Just say, "No, I don't have the answer." But please don't disrespect the people out there who have schools and are hopeful about this with a non-answer about the school renewal money. Is the deferred maintenance money going to be forthcoming or not?

**Acting Chair:** You have about 30 seconds.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** We actually have been focusing on funding the replacement of schools that are deemed prohibitive to repair. We've set aside \$12.4 million to allocate to 34 schools initially, and as you know, we're going through a process where there is an inspection taking place to identify the schools that are most in need of additional funding.

**Mr Kennedy:** Minister, again, you didn't answer that question.

Instead, Mr Chair, what I'd like to do is table—

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** There will be \$110 million more in new construction to be provided.

**Acting Chair:** Perhaps the minister can answer the question next time. The time is up.

**Mr Kennedy:** Mr Chair, just for the benefit of the committee I'd like to table a January 31, 1985, resolution asked for by the members opposite: the chair of the Waterloo board supporting not to fund the private schools.

**Acting Chair:** Mr Marchese, you're going to take 10 minutes, I believe?

**Mr Marchese:** Yes. Minister, it's about Mr Christie. I'm worried and parents are worried that he's going to cut educational assistants, we fear, from 750 to 350. I know it might sound as if we're speculating, but these are the fears: we're afraid that lunchroom supervisors will be eliminated; we're worried that 300 daytime caretakers might be replaced by evening contract workers when there are no students in the classroom to worry about; will Toronto schools lose 50 secretaries—we're afraid they might, things like that. Does that concern you at all? Do these potential cuts, and I know they're speculative, concern you?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** That's what's really important: they are pure speculation.

**Mr Marchese:** But if they were to happen, would that worry you?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** You know what? I think it's really important that as they move forward, they attempt to do everything they can to provide equity of programs and servicing to the students throughout the board.

**Mr Marchese:** Right. If they got that \$120 million by getting the 5% from that foundation grant, I'm sure they'd bring about greater equity.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Well, they've had the \$900 million.

**Mr Marchese:** I see. But Rozanski said that this will really give greater equity if you give it to them.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** As I said to you before, they're receiving additional money this year. They're going to be receiving about \$2.1 billion.

**Mr Marchese:** So why don't we just scrap Rozanski? Who needs him? You've already given them all the money they need.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Let's not speculate on what the supervisor may or may not do.

**Mr Marchese:** But, Elizabeth, if you're giving them all this money, why do we need Rozanski? Just get rid of that report. They got money.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** They're going to get more.

**Mr Marchese:** So why don't we give it to them now? Equity would then be achieved.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Rozanski recommended that it happen over the course of three years, and that's what we're going to do.

**Mr Marchese:** Right. Here's what a parent, Sarah D., said to me when she called to congratulate me for the remarks I made in the House—sometimes they watch:

"The recent spate of attempted child abductions have made me increasingly aware of these cuts in staffing at my children's school. With a reduced number of assistants, custodial staff and lunchroom and schoolyard supervisors, I am no longer confident that there are enough adults at the school to keep the children safe from this very real threat.

"My fear is real. Incidents have occurred near our school and have been reported to the police, but I do not want a police presence at our schools"—not that you could have police in every school anyway. "I want to see staff who are part of our school and a greater community

who therefore know who belongs in our school and who may pose a threat. We had such a community, but it has been relentlessly eroded in the past several years." That would be you.

"Please continue to urge the government to return funding to our schools. And no, Mr Eves, you haven't done so, not in Toronto at any rate. Our children deserve a safe environment in which to learn and to thrive and we parents deserve the peace of mind of knowing that our schools are providing our children with what they need."

Your response?

1740

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Do you know what? I think we've talked about this. Certainly there is the need to keep students safe. As I pointed out, we introduced the Safe Schools Act in 2000 in order to make sure the appropriate steps were taken. We continue to work with the schools and the police. As you know, our government has drawn up a provincial model for local police-school board protocol.

**Mr Marchese:** You told me that.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I think people are really looking at taking the steps needed to protect the safety of children.

**Mr Marchese:** There are fewer vice-principals, fewer educational assistants, fewer caretakers; the lunchroom supervisors, school clericals and kindergarten education assistants are on the chopping block, and you don't seem to think schools are less safe with less staff watching over the children. I get the impression you're saying that schools are safe because you have a Safe Schools Act. But let me ask you, Minister: do you leave underaged kids alone at home with a set of instructions and no babysitter?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I'm not sure where you're going, Mr Marchese.

**Mr Marchese:** You say your schools are safe because you have a Safe Schools Act.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I'm saying that people are working co-operatively with the police, with the community and obviously with the education sector to make our schools as safe as they possibly can be.

**Mr Marchese:** The child who was almost accosted possibly or abducted possibly, but certainly approached by an intruder at Hawthorne, was walking down the hall when this individual approached him. The mother of this child wrote a letter to other parents at her school, and this is what she said: "I have always argued that this fight about provincial gutting of our public education system would go on until a child was hurt directly by these cuts. It was very nearly my child, but it could have been anyone's child. There needs to be more secretaries, more teachers, more caretakers, more staff in our schools."

Would you tell her the same answer you gave me before?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I'm not sure what more we can say. I think the government has taken steps. I think the school boards in the province of Ontario, particularly in Toronto, are taking steps to protect our children. The police are working in co-operation with school boards to

protect children. I think there is a recognition that you need to continue to be vigilant and do everything that you can.

**Mr Marchese:** Both of these parents are very worried about Christie, this highly paid individual, and his gang of spin doctors who are costing a lot of money. They're worried that Christie is going to get rid of educational assistants, lunchroom supervisors, daytime caretakers, secretaries, possibly more vice-principals and other dreaded things. These parents are saying that these people are the eyes and ears of safety in our schools. They're afraid we might lose many more, and more children could be put at risk. I'm saying that's true. I agree with them. I believe we need to stop that. I believe Rozanski gives us the way out of this, and I really do believe you should implement that policy before Christie does worse things to our school system. That will be my last point to you.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I just want to say thank you very much, Mr Marchese, certainly for the concern you've demonstrated for the safety of our students and for bringing those concerns forward. I would agree that some of the individuals you've mentioned do act as gatekeepers to the school, and I can tell you I will certainly keep your advice and comments in mind.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you, Minister, and Mr Marchese. Mr Arnott, you have 13 minutes.

**Mr Arnott:** I would say again to the NDP critic, thank you for giving us a bit of additional time on this side. I want to ask the minister a question about what the ministry calls "pupil accommodation." I know in some cases the parents don't use the terminology that the ministry uses. I would actually call that something like "student learning environment" or "the state of our schools" or "the physical state and upkeep of our schools." I think most parents—all parents, quite frankly—would expect and anticipate that provisions would be made to keep our schools in a very good state of repair so that students will have a good learning environment, a safe learning environment, a comfortable learning environment and of course one that is conducive to giving them the opportunity to achieve their maximum academic achievement and success.

I think back to when I was first running in an election campaign in 1990. We're of course getting close to another election perhaps. In my riding of Wellington at that time, a considerable number of schools had a lot of portables. I know it was a concern of parents. It was brought to my attention repeatedly when I was knocking on doors. I know that for students who learn in portables in some ways it's a learning environment that will give them an opportunity to have the kind of environment they need, but certainly most parents would think that's not the most ideal classroom environment.

I know that on March 18 the Premier announced an increase of \$75 million to school renewal funding, including an additional increase of \$25 million to supplement the grant for school renewal. I'm aware that Jim MacKenzie, who is a superintendent at the St Clair

Catholic District School Board, made a statement that in his view we must continue to work on schools on a priority basis, meaning that it's important to keep schools in a very good state of repair.

Minister, I would say I agree with Mr MacKenzie and would like to know what the ministry has done and what the ministry will do in the future to continue to make sure that each and every student has a place in an Ontario school and, secondly, that pupil places and spaces made available will be in schools that are in first-rate condition.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** We know that school boards are in the best position to plan accommodation for their students. We have moved forward in a way that boards are assured of funds to accommodate all of their students. I'm pleased to say that since 1998 school boards have built about 226 new schools and undertaken to make additions to about 291.

One of the most noticeable improvements is the elimination of some of the portables from the playgrounds of Ontario. This has certainly been a concern to parents for many, many years. We've actually been able to reduce the number of portables attached to schools by about 17%. In fact, that adds up to 2,166 portables being removed from the system. That of course will contribute to the fact that we've built 226 new schools and undertaken 291 renovations or additions.

Our funding approach now gives boards flexibility. They can decide whether they're going to build new schools in high-growth areas, whether they're going to do a renovation, whether they going to do an addition or whether they're going to eliminate portables. Boards no longer need to apply. That's what we used to have to do, or we would have to wait to see if we were going to get capital grants. They now have that opportunity to plan ahead. They can predict revenue funding for several years, and they can begin construction of new schools when they need to. They don't have to wait for the province to make that available.

If we take a look at 2003-04, the pupil accommodation grant will be approximately \$2.4 billion. That's going to include \$1.435 billion for school operations, \$288 million for school renewal and \$378 million for new pupil places. That's going to support the construction of over \$3.7 billion in projects that the 72 boards in Ontario can decide locally are a priority for them.

Mr Hartmann has been involved in this whole issue. He can certainly give us more information and detail. I think this has been an enormous success for students in this province.

**Mr Arnott:** While he's coming up, I would certainly concur with that, Minister. Again going back to when I was first elected, or maybe even in the days of the Liberal government, I recall quite distinctly school boards literally going hat in hand to the provincial government with their lists of requests for new schools, in many cases trying to justify the need for new schools on two lists: a growth list where communities were growing, and a non-growth list, where communities were smaller, perhaps, and the residential growth wasn't there. There would be

some years when the ministry would have money set aside to respond to school boards' needs, but I can recall that it was always a difficult time for school boards, trying to justify these needs, and in some cases the Liberal government of the day made it very difficult for them.

**1750**

**Mr Hartmann:** In addition to what the minister has already indicated to the committee around the level of investment and the number of projects that have been produced with the ministry's revised approach to pupil accommodation, I might add five other things.

You'll recall that the minister has indicated that the revised structure of the grant gave long-term stability to the school boards in terms of the predictability of the amount of funds that would be available to build new pupil accommodation, either in the form of new schools or additions, and guaranteed that that money would be in place over the long term so that school boards could undertake the building programs currently to improve the system in the way that the minister has indicated.

In addition to what the minister has already indicated, there have been a number of other improvements made to the school accommodation grants that we believe have been beneficial to schools in the province. First of all, we changed the nature by which the amount of money is generated for this grant for schools that are close to one another in overcapacity. There is a new feature in the grant that takes into account enrolment pressures at nearby schools and compensates schools with additional money for new pupil places in those areas where it cannot be reasonably served within a reasonable radius.

In addition, there has been a program which was previously alluded to put in place called the prohibitive to repair program, which this year began by putting in \$25 million to replace the schools which school boards judged to be the most obsolete in the province. That process is still ongoing.

In addition to that, there was a renewal and deferred maintenance program that was instituted and committed to to the tune of \$50 million over the last two years, which is intended for school boards to address some of the most pressing renewal and deferred maintenance needs.

In other to move forward the recommendations that are in the Rozanski report around the \$200 million for deferred maintenance, the ministry has undertaken a systematic evaluation by independent professionals of all schools in the province, so that by December of this year we will know the condition on a uniform basis of every school in the system and can make allocation decisions as well.

Also, provisions have been made within the grant for the flowing of money to school boards for that debt which had not been permanently financed at the time of amalgamation, so certainly that's now in place for that debt as well through a new provincial financing scheme that has been developed over the last year.

Lastly, I might add that in order to assess how well the monies that are being used for the purposes of school renewal, school maintenance and school operations are being used, the ministry undertakes an annual facilities evaluation survey, which is requested to be completed by representatives of teachers, principals, school councils and parents in the schools. That facilities evaluation mechanism is available publicly on our Web site and gives us an indication as to what the parents and other constituent groups in the province believe the conditions of our schools are like. The good-to-excellent ratings of schools in that survey have gone up consistently over the three years that we have administered that survey. So we have accountability mechanisms in place that also help us to assess how well the money we are assigning is being spent.

**Mr Arnott:** We have three minutes, you say, Mr Chair.

**The Acting Chair:** You have three minutes and four seconds.

**Mr Arnott:** I have a very quick question about transportation. As you know, Minister, my two eldest sons ride the bus to school in Fergus to John Black Public School, and I know that there has been new money allocated for busing recently as a result of Dr Rozanski's review. I was wondering if you could tell us a little bit about how that money is going to be allocated, that \$20 million for transportation, as we call it—school busing?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** It is permanent funding that boards are going to receive every year. There will be \$4 million for training all students, whether they're elementary or secondary, about how they can safely ride the bus. There's \$3.5 million to help provide transportation, \$6.4 million to help school boards form partnerships so that they can provide efficient delivery of services and \$6.1 million to assist with cost pressures faced by school boards and school board operators.

**Mr Arnott:** Thank you. I have one last question.

Mr Kennedy tabled a resolution that he had talked about earlier on funding for private schools that took place in January of 1985. I know, Minister, that you were the chairman of the Waterloo county school board at that time.

I was interested to see that it came from the OSSTF Waterloo office. It's rather interesting to observe that the OSSTF is working with the Liberal critic.

I wondered if you had any additional comments to provide in response to the statements that Mr Kennedy has been making about this.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Yes. I see that OSSTF Waterloo has provided the information to the Liberal Party. Just to set the record straight, I think we have another instance here of allegations being made that are not correct. Mr Kennedy indicated that I sponsored the resolution. I'd like the record to show that the recommendation was moved by Mr J.S. Darling and seconded by Mr G.R. MacDonald. I was chair of the board, so I did not sponsor the resolution. So that is inaccurate information.

**Mr Arnott:** That's an interesting way to conclude estimates on education. Thank you very much, Minister.

**The Acting Chair:** Thank you, Mr Arnott.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Chair:** Excuse me, Mr Peters and Mr Kennedy.

Mr Arnott, thank you very much. Minister, thank you for appearing today, and to your staff for their time.

Now, we have a series of votes.

**Mr Chudleigh:** Can we have a few minutes of recess?

**The Acting Chair:** What do you consider a few minutes?

**Mr Chudleigh:** Until Mr O'Toole gets here.

**Mr Marchese:** No, no. Let's finish this off now.

**The Acting Chair:** You can call up to 20 minutes.

**Mr Marchese:** Oh, please don't do that.

**The Acting Chair:** I'd rather have something more definite than just "until Mr O'Toole gets here."

Well, this committee stands in recess until Mr O'Toole appears or 6 of the clock.

*The committee recessed from 1757 to 1758.*

**The Acting Chair:** Thank you. We're ready to proceed. We have a series of questions and votes.

**Mr Peters:** Mr Chair, I formally request a recorded vote, please.

**The Acting Chair:** A recorded vote will be taken. Shall vote 1001 carry?

**Ayes**

Arnott, Chudleigh, Mazzilli, O'Toole.

**Nays**

Kennedy, Marchese, Peters.

**The Acting Chair:** Mr Kennedy?

**Mr Kennedy:** I wonder if you could tell us what each vote number relates to; in other words, what the vote is for.

**The Acting Chair:** The clerk will have to do that.

**Mr Kennedy:** It's on each page.

**The Acting Chair:** OK.

**Mr Kennedy:** Thank you.

**The Acting Chair:** Next, shall vote 1002 carry? The clerk will tell you what vote 1002 is.

**Clerk of the Committee:** Vote 1002 is on the elementary and secondary education program.

**Ayes**

Arnott, Chudleigh, Mazzilli, O'Toole.

**Nays**

Kennedy, Marchese, Peters.

**The Acting Chair:** OK. That's carried.

**The Acting Chair:** Shall the estimates of the Ministry of Education carry?

**Ayes**

Arnott, Chudleigh, Mazzilli, O'Toole.

**Nays**

Kennedy, Marchese, Peters.

**The Acting Chair:** Carried.

Shall I report the estimates of the Ministry of Education to the House?

**Ayes**

Arnott, Chudleigh, Mazzilli, O'Toole.

**Nays**

Kennedy, Marchese, Peters.

**The Acting Chair:** Thank you. I believe that concludes the business of estimates today. Thank you for your co-operation. The committee stands adjourned.

*The committee adjourned at 1800.*





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