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**Tuesday 2 May 2006**

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**Mardi 2 mai 2006**

**Standing committee on  
estimates**

Ministry of Education

**Comité permanent des  
budgets des dépenses**

Ministère de l'Éducation

Chair: Cameron Jackson  
Clerk: Katch Koch

Président : Cameron Jackson  
Greffier : Katch Koch

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
ESTIMATESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES  
BUDGETS DES DÉPENSES

Tuesday 2 May 2006

Mardi 2 mai 2006

*The committee met at 1622 in room 151.*

## MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

**The Chair (Mr. Cameron Jackson):** I'd like to call to order the standing committee on estimates. We have approximately four hours and 48 minutes to complete.

Before I begin, I want to introduce, as well as recognize, a special guest we have joining us today. He is Mr. Anthony Appiah-Yeboah and he is the deputy editor of debates visiting us from the Parliament of Ghana. We're delighted that he's joining us. He is in Ontario for a couple of weeks to observe the Hansard operations of this Legislature, and in addition to watching the proceedings in the House, we are delighted that he has demonstrated such courage as to sit in and make notes on our conduct at estimates. I admire him for taking on such a challenge. Thank you.

**Mr. David Zimmer (Willowdale):** That was very subtle, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Well, in order for all of the committee to enforce the fact that we are on our best behaviour, we're going to use the House rules today. That means that all questions will have to go through the Chair, and no microphone will go on until the Chair recognizes the individual. So as long as we're comfortable with that, that will be a great assistance to electronic Hansard, so that we do not have gaps in our proceedings. It certainly is appreciated by those who are watching us on television, who are sitting there riveted by the debate and not wanting to miss a single word.

Now, before I begin, Minister, where's your deputy?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Education, minister responsible for women's issues):** My deputy is away today. He's actually out of the province.

**The Chair:** Oh. Do you think maybe in future you could tell us of that?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** Sure. But I have to tell you that the minister is here to answer your questions, and if there are questions that I can't answer, I'm happy to provide them to you.

**The Chair:** It was simply a courtesy. That's why I was asking you. But if that's difficult, then we can proceed.

Could you identify how many staff you have assisting you today from your ministry.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** Nancy Naylor is here, an ADM whom you met the other day, sitting to my right.

And just on this, it might be an appropriate time—

**The Chair:** It's just a simple question. You just have one civil servant from the ministry in the room today. Thank you.

Minister, do you have answers to any of the outstanding questions?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** Yes. In particular, a question was asked of me in the House today that I think you may like to know about as you schedule the balance of the hours—

**The Chair:** These are responses in writing? Do you have any of them in writing, Minister?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** No. I will give them to you verbally, though, if you'd like. I think one of your members would like the answer. We've got individuals who have scheduled vacation and who are away through the days that land on these committee meetings, so if there are others that you would like in the various sub-groups of the ministry, we're happy to take that list from you. The request that came of the College of Teachers, it's actually—

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister. I didn't want you to ramble. I simply wanted you to answer the question regarding if you had the written responses. Your answer is very clear: You don't have them. Let the record show the minister does not have the written responses to the questions from the committee.

Now I'm going to seek the input from the—the rotation will begin with Mr. Klees. You have a 40- to 45-minute cycle, and we can commence with your questioning now. Then I will recognize the third party.

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** Chair, before we do that, I'd like to clarify a matter that the minister raised. I would like to get confirmation on the record here relating to the College of Teachers and the request that I made to have specific individuals attending here. Can you confirm for me who will be here and at what time, representing the College of Teachers?

**The Chair:** Yes, Mr. Klees, I can confirm that Mr. Douglas Wilson, who is the registrar and chief executive officer of the Ontario College of Teachers will be here starting at 5 o'clock, and he is available for that full hour if needed. The second person is Marilyn Laframboise, who is chair of the council. Both have confirmed for tomorrow in room 228.

**Mr. Klees:** I had also requested the chair of the advisory council on special education. Can you confirm if he will be in attendance and, if so, at what time?

**The Chair:** We have been advised that although there is a vacancy for the chair—Lynn Ziraldo is no longer the chair of the advisory council on special education—we are seeking to find out whether or not the vice-chair might be available. With the education accountability office, Dr. Charles Pascal, who is the executive director, is out of the province these two days. We are in the process of contacting the vice-chair, Jerry Ponikvar, from Burlington.

**Mr. Klees:** Chair, we're running out of time here.

**The Chair:** Well, Mr. Klees, let me just say this: They are not impelled here. This committee does not have Statutory Powers Procedure Act authority in the sense that we can subpoena people; we can ask them, and there is an effort. If this committee spills over to next Tuesday, which it might do because of various circumstances—nobody's fault; it's just that we won't complete these estimates by tomorrow night, given our current calendar. So we will endeavour to try to get them here, but we can't force Dr. Pascal to fly back from out west.

**Mr. Klees:** No, and I don't think that's the intention either, Chair. The intention is that we have someone from his organization here who can respond to questions. If he's not available, I would have thought that we would immediately default to the next in line so that at least someone from the organization would be here to answer our questions. The fact that that isn't happening indicates to me that the government is suggesting that they would prefer not to have someone here. We're certainly not being very diligent in ensuring that we have a representative available to question in this committee. However, that too is for the record.

I'd like to address the minister. Minister, the Premier made a statement today on Education Week. In his statement, he referred to the fact that every Ontarian should have an opportunity to succeed. I responded to his statement and expressed my hope that the Premier's definition of every Ontarian would, in fact, include every Ontarian, every Ontario student. I specifically made reference to whether his definition of every Ontarian included students who attend independent schools and faith-based schools. I also referred to autistic children as falling, hopefully, into that definition. I would like to follow that discussion up with you.

1630

At the beginning of these hearings, I asked you a specific question. It related to whether or not you consider yourself the Minister of Education for all children in the province. You assured me, through your several ways of responding to that, that that was in fact the case. In fact, you referred to your platform—the Liberal platform in the last election—as having an entitlement on education: “Excellence for all,” as you quoted. By responding to my question in that way, I think we can all assume that “excellence for all” means that. Can you tell me, then, and confirm for me whether the definition of “all,” to you, includes autistic children, and if it's your intention as Minister of Education to ensure that autistic children in this province have the same and equal opportunity for an education as any other child?

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** I appreciate the question. I think my Premier was right in his answer, but moreover in his statement today in the House in addressing Education Week.

We intend to make all people of Ontario extremely proud of our public education system. I made no bones about the fact that we did change the policy that you brought in, where you extended tax credits, for example, to private schools. We believe that our first priority must be to our public education system and we're confident that we are moving in that direction. We're mid-term. We have set goals for ourselves that finally talk about quality in education. But please make no mistake; we intend to make our public education system, bar none, the best in this nation, if not beyond, and we believe we're moving in that direction.

You mentioned autism. Let me address more generally—in special education, this member probably knows that I have had a significant amount of time in dealing with the adult system through my last portfolio, where I worked very diligently to try to leave a mark, if you will, on the system, to make it fairer for everyone. People with intellectual disabilities have every right, in my view, to move forward and reach their potential. Our focus certainly was on the adult system, and I was always keenly aware of how the system for children has to line up so that there's a smooth transition for people as they move into the adult system.

In the area of autism, it is so broad and so diverse that I can't profess, in this third week of being named minister, to know all the particulars of how the education system has responded to this issue. But I can tell you, and give you my commitment, that I intend to do my very best to have our education system respond very well to all children who have special needs.

I have a particular interest in this area, and I intend to work diligently, along with the task force that was set, that met and is preparing a report on special education for me, to see the kinds of policies and how they need to be addressed in relation to grants that are coming out for the 2006-07 year. The best predictor of future behaviour is likely past behaviour. For me, it will be a significant interest in this area as it relates to education.

**Mr. Klees:** Minister, I have a series of questions here that I'd like to put to you. If you don't have an answer now, I'd appreciate a written response.

First, how many teachers and EAs have been trained in ABA over the last two years?

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** I will find that information out for you. I can tell you that the investment into the system has been fairly significant. I think this member will recognize the kinds of backlogs that we faced as a government, that in fact your government faced as well. It was quite unfortunate to watch the number of times this issue was brought forward to the previous government. While it is a difficult issue—and I acknowledge how difficult it is for all governments; every government has a history they wish they had done more with—I will tell you that in terms of investment related to additional

assessments, in terms of teacher training, bar none, we have not seen this kind of investment in our system in many years.

**The Chair:** But you don't have the number.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I have said from the beginning, Chair, that I'm very happy to get a very specific number for this member.

**The Chair:** Thank you. So that question is noted.

**Mr. Klees:** In addition to that, I would also appreciate having the specific number in terms of the funding that was specifically allocated to the hiring of those teachers and EAs.

**The Chair:** That is within the larger envelope?

**Mr. Klees:** That's right.

**The Chair:** So you want the funding envelope broken down into its component parts?

**Mr. Klees:** That is correct.

My second question flowing from that is: Minister, you'll know that school board autism teams are short-staffed and waiting lists are long. Every one of us deals with that in our constituency offices every day. Why is the ministry preventing the better-trained autism consultants from working directly with children with autism?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** Again, I will try to get you more specifics about that question, but I will tell you that, as this member knows, we have been handed a system that had significant backlog. What did happen in education through the Conservative government years was a wholesale reassessment of every child in the system, which took a tremendous amount of time and effort. No one is really certain that that exercise was worthwhile, because it became even more frustrating for parents, for teachers, for principals to actually land on having what was identified through this method—

**The Chair:** Minister, you don't have the answer to the question, do you?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I'm answering the question now.

**The Chair:** No, you're not. I'm sorry, Minister, you're not answering the question. Your next question, Mr. Klees.

**Mr. Klees:** Minister, does the government recognize ABA as the most effective evidence-based method for teaching children with autism?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I think the jury is still out on a number of areas in special education training. I have said, as I said at the last estimates committee, that I believe the ministry does need to have a role to play in setting the bar for what is excellence in education for all students for a number of various issues that we contend with in the classroom. It would be nice to know that the ministry could play that pivotal role of suggesting that we will find the world standard and that will be implemented in our system—

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister. Next question, Mr. Klees.

**Mr. Klees:** I draw the conclusion from that, then, that the ministry has not embraced ABA as an effective method for teaching children with autism and that you continue to search for an effective method. Is that right?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I can tell you that, in my experiences in my previous ministry, for example, having had so much to do with adult autism, what I became very aware of was the level of research that is required and is happening in some of our own Ontario institutions as it relates to best practices for kids and adults with autism.

I am not in a position now to tell you the details. As I mentioned earlier, the special education task force is meeting and is providing me with a report. It does have very much to do with how we flow our investments into the system to do the very best for our children. If there's more information that I'll be able to supply to you in the future, I'll be happy to do that.

**Mr. Klees:** In the meantime, while the ministry is carrying on this research to which you are referring, what is your recommendation to parents of autistic children whose children need some form of education? ABA is available. The ministry has already recognized it to some degree. They are implementing what is referred to by the ministry as principles of ABA and IBI. What's your recommendation to parents who have no place to send their children within the school system today?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I will tell you that we have a lot more to say to parents than parents would have heard from the government for the eight years that your government was in office, frankly. I believe that your government looked at education and moved from a crisis to crisis kind of management. We have been very diligent about trying to come to an answer for parents that is accessible, that is doable and that addresses issues in the system like having individuals who are trained and ready in the system to deliver the kind of resources that these children need.

1640

As you might want to recognize, and perhaps you will in your next statement, we have had to come forward with a plan that delivers right across the spectrum in terms of care. We have had to look at the number of our professionals who have to be trained to deliver services. We have come across with chairs, for example, in the university setting to encourage students to come in and be trained in this area to deliver the services.

It was quite frustrating, frankly, to have been left with a system, which was your government's system, that if we had every dollar in the world available, we would not have the personnel in the field who could deliver the services, because no one in your government had taken a fulsome approach to how we were going to resolve this. So yes, we were starting from scratch in many, many ways. But I will tell you, from an investment perspective, we have had an historic investment in this area. I know that while it takes time to train people, it takes time to make changes to the system, we are well on our way to a better system. I hope this member will appreciate that.

**Mr. Klees:** What I don't appreciate is, when I ask a specific question to the minister about what her advice is to parents of autistic children today, we get the partisan rhetoric about the previous government. Your government, Minister, has now been in place for two and half

years. You are now the second Minister of Education. It is of no use to either autistic children or their parents for you to ramble on with a partisan speech about the previous government.

I want to remind you that it was your leader and the current Premier who, in the election campaign, wrote the following, and I'll read this into the record: "I also believe that the lack of government-funded IBI treatment for autistic children over six is unfair and discriminatory. The Ontario Liberals support extending autism treatment beyond the age of six." It has been two and half years, Minister, and you continue to reach back to the previous government to justify what you haven't done.

I'm going to simply ask this question: When will you do what your leader, the current Premier, promised to do for autistic children and their parents?

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** I think it is important to look back to see where we started in 2003. Unfortunately, that does give you quite a bit of the responsibility of where we were in the education system. Because when you're starting from ground zero or starting behind by billions of dollars cut out of the education system, it does matter how quickly we're in a position to implement the many, many things that we would dearly love to implement right away. I'll use the NDP as an example. When you cut spaces to medical school and it takes 10 years to grow a doctor, you can't undo that kind of decision-making that was part of our history; you need to acknowledge that it was a problem and realize it takes many more years to fix it.

Likewise, in this area, it does matter that we didn't have enough students graduating who would be trained to deliver autism services in our schools, even in the community at large. We certainly see that the requirements now, so that families who are given money through special service at home, for example, 70% of which goes to children—even if they could buy the service because the money is there, they can't find the professionals in a position to offer the service. That does land on the lap of the history of how we came to be here. We just don't have that number of students out there because we need something that draws them in. We have to have a government that's prepared to address wage gaps in that sector so that these people want to work in that field—another thing that your government never chose to address and has landed in our lap.

So yes, it's important to talk about where we came from, and in particular in the area of special education. As I said, if we had every cent of the millions of dollars required to do everything we wanted in education right now, we could not find the specialists trained to do the things that we want them to do today.

For example, while we have poured millions into more assessments, we have a limited pool of psychologists who can actually deliver the assessments, so that we're constantly struggling with this backlog of, "How many can we get done and how quickly can we get it done?" It does matter that we didn't have a constant and gradual improvement in this area, and yes, that does land on your

feet. But I will tell you, I believe that you are sincere in wanting us to improve the system, so I would hope that at some point in this proceeding you would acknowledge significant investments that have gone in, not just in one place, not just for the photo op, but into the university system for a chair, to deliver more students to want to be trained in this area, into the assessment area so that we can move these kids through that assessment process, and yes, into the training of teachers, current teachers, and yes, into the actual services being delivered to them in the classroom. It has been unprecedented.

**The Chair:** Thank you Minister. Mr. Klees, you have the floor.

**Mr. Klees:** Those parents are observing you and listening to you, and I'm sure they're not impressed, Minister.

I would like you, if you would—probably as much for your information as the public's and ours, for the work that we're doing in this committee, because you continue to refer to the last government—to provide this committee with a timeline summary of when funding began for autism in the school system in Ontario, the year. I would like, over the last number of years, and let's go back to 1995, since you continue to refer to the previous government, so that we can see the flow of funds into autism in this province through the school system, the amounts of funding that were put into the system over that period of time, up to the current date. I look forward to receiving that information.

I'd like to move on and I'd like to read into the record from an e-mail that was sent to your attention. It was dated May 2, from Anna Germain, who is with us in the hearing today. She is here with her son. Minister, you may well have read this. She refers to her comments. She has attached a letter. With the parent's consent, I'm going to pass this on to you and table it with the committee members as well. She says in part the following:

"I am attaching a letter as some evidence of the lack of positive change and consistent refusal by some school boards to secure a good future for students who have a developmental disability, particularly Down syndrome." She goes on to refer to the fact that she observed the student referred to in the attached letter last week for a whole afternoon: "I found that staff had said anything just to segregate her. None of their claims were observable. There was no evidence of a program in place for this student and no adequate support. She was receiving no appropriate accommodations and her best interests were definitely not being served. This goes against her rights to a quality education, as well as against her rights as outlined in the human rights commission's guidelines on accessible education. She is still basically just 'dumped' in the classroom and not even in the grade she belongs in. Nobody at the board seems to care."

Minister, what is your response to this? Perhaps you can keep yourself back from blaming this on the previous government. What is your advice to the parent of this child? What do you have to say to Anna Germain?

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** In fairness, I think you have an obligation to supply me with correspondence in advance

if you would like me to properly address this. In fact, I have not seen this letter. I don't have a copy of the letter. I think you should just be fair and provide that to me.

I'm happy to address this issue because, as I said earlier, I think it's incumbent upon us to acknowledge what role we've all played to see where we are today and why we got to where we are today. You can't just talk about the money in special education, but if you were to, you would see a massive 20% increase in funding just in the area of special education. You are asking for some specific numbers. Even if we go back to 1995, when your government was in office, the monies did not flow to school boards with specifics to autism versus other types of spec-ed funding, so it's going to be tough to prove what you did, what you didn't do. I recognize that. We have to talk about special ed overall. But in terms of how we've moved forward and what we are trying to change, there are serious policy questions in place where I believe that the ministry does have a role to work with our boards and how the services get delivered out there in our schools. Does the ministry play that role at this point? I think only to a limited degree. I believe we should play more of that role. So it's hard to stand here now at estimates and answer for boards' behaviour on these specific incidents.

1650

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Klees.

**Mr. Klees:** I do look forward to receiving your—  
*Interjection.*

**The Chair:** No, Minister, you have said that you had difficulty in not having the letter. We're going to get you the letter. And you have difficulty responding to boards, so we'll move on. Thank you.

**Mr. Klees:** I will move on to another matter that was raised in the Legislature today. I addressed it in my statement in response to the Premier. Again, as Minister of Education, I'm hoping that you'll take a different view of your role in this province from your predecessor, who, quite frankly, held in disdain any parent who would have their student in an independent or faith-based school or teachers or staff who worked there. I would hope that you will embrace the education system in the province fully, as a minister should and I believe has a responsibility to.

I want to address the issue of faith-based education. A number of petitions have been read into the record over the last month or so relating to faith-based education, and I wonder, Minister, have you had an opportunity to read that petition? Have your ministry staff brought it to your attention?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** It would depend when those petitions were tabled as to who would respond in kind to that petition, but I don't believe that I have—I haven't heard them nor have I received a copy of them.

**Mr. Klees:** There have been literally thousands of signatures submitted through the petition process relating to that petition. I wonder if I might, just for the record, know if anyone in your ministry is aware of it; for example, your deputy or assistant deputy. Is there any consciousness on the part of the ministry that these

thousands of Ontarians are petitioning you as minister on this issue?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** Perhaps you could take the time to share with us what your concerns are in regard to the private system.

**Mr. Klees:** No, that's not my role, Minister. I am asking you and I'm asking your staff—perhaps you could let her respond—if she is aware of this petition and specifically what the request of the government is through the petition.

**The Chair:** Ms Naylor, are you in a position to respond?

**Ms. Nancy Naylor:** I have to say I haven't seen—we see a lot of petitions. We get several every month. I'm sorry, I haven't seen one recently. We have dealt with petitions in the past from private schools or independent schools.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms Naylor.

**Mr. Klees:** I would ask if any of the other staff who are present with the minister have any knowledge of this specific petition that relates to faith-based schools, anyone who is here with you, Minister. Can someone indicate whether they have knowledge of this petition?

**The Chair:** Minister, I think we're asking if any of your political staff in the room would be aware of this. We've established that you only have one of your public servants in the room.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** No, I'm not, but I'd be happy if you would like to table the content or the discussion, if that makes it easier for you to do any follow-up questions. I certainly have my own views on the matter that I'd be happy to share with you.

**Mr. Klees:** Minister, I find it bizarre—I guess that's the kindest word that I could give it without being unparliamentary—that after literally thousands of names being submitted, the petitions having been read out numerous times in the House, that neither you nor Ms. Naylor nor any of your political staff would have any idea of what's going on relating to this issue. However, that tells us a great deal.

I'd like to pursue a number of specific questions with you, and if you don't have the answers, perhaps you could undertake to get back to the committee in writing.

My first question is as follows: The Ontario government already fully funds 93% of faith-based schools in Ontario, but the remaining 7% receive no funding simply because they are not Catholic. The United Nations human rights committee ruled in 1999 and again in 2005 that this arrangement is discriminatory and violates basic international human rights law that Ontario formally agreed to uphold. The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that Ontario has the constitutional power to provide funding to non-Catholic faith-based schools. How can your government justify this discrimination and not immediately act to provide equitable treatment for non-Catholic faith-based schools?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I think the best defence, if you will, as you might like to say, will be a letter that I will find and table for you in writing. The letter was written

by then-Minister of Education Janet Ecker, who submitted her response to her position in this regard. I will endeavour to get you that letter because it makes the best case, which of course we used in the House in opposition, this member might remember, as to why Ontario is different and our history in Ontario is quite different.

But it will be very plain to most people where my party, my government, sits. It was the case in opposition, the case during the election campaign and the case now as government that we support public education. That is our priority. I believe we need to get that right. I believe there is a significant amount of education going on in Ontario. I applaud them for the work they do with their commitment, whether it be to religious schools or whatever type of private schools there are. But in the meantime, we've made it abundantly clear, repeatedly, that our priority is public education.

While I realize that you and I don't agree on this, I have respect for people who work in that system. The teachers have representatives, for example, on the College of Teachers. They follow an Ontario curriculum; that's a requirement. So there are innumerable ways that they are encompassed in the work we do to develop curriculum that is then used by this system of private education.

We've been very clear. I am a big supporter of public education. I believe the public needs confidence that the lion's share of their investment that goes into education through our government is well-serving to the public, and that's through excellence in public education.

**Mr. Klees:** I'm a huge supporter of the public education system as well, Minister. But I'd like to put this question to you. All other Canadian provinces except the Atlantic provinces fund faith-based schools and have thriving public school systems, yet your government continues to play politics with this issue and continually suggests and implies, based on no evidence, that eliminating religious discrimination in school funding will harm the public education system. How is it that Ontario can't do like other jurisdictions, like Quebec, BC and Alberta, that all have thriving public education systems and at the same time provide fair funding for all faith-based schools? How do you justify that?

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** I believe that Ontario has a very strong history in public education. For a little while, I believe we had a government that was not a big supporter of public education but instead chose to tear it down and to create quite a bit of crisis in the system. You and I both sat in the House during those turbulent years. That's not where we are today. We are intent on creating a very stable, confident public education system where all the children do matter. We believe that a public system can respond to what every child brings into the classroom with him or her.

Again, I personally have private schools in my own riding. Some of them do very fine work. I have a respect for them. I will tell you, though, I have been very clear provincially, now as minister, that our priority is the public education system. I respect that you and I will dis-

agree on this point. It simply isn't our priority to be moving in that area. We need to fix public education, where the lion's share of our children are, where tens of millions of dollars of public investment is made. We need to get that to a place where people have significant confidence in our system.

**1700**

I know that for you, this isn't an opinion you agree with you, but in the end you do have to make choices as a government. You make a choice about priority areas, and that priority area, then, follows where your funding will go. Again, if we have a limited amount of money, which we do—we're not nearly as flush as the federal government, thanks to the Liberal government leaving it in such good supply; you weren't as kind to us when we became the government in 2003—we have to make choices about where we invest our money, and we've been very clear about choosing the public education system.

**Mr. Klees:** Minister, I'm going to read a quote to you:

"My father worked at a lumber mill, and he worked hard and long to raise his six children. He served his country well and loved it—a lot more uncritically than I do. You know about what his salary was. But he worked extra hard and long and to pay our fees through an independent alternative high school. We helped him all we could—knowing full well that he was in a sense paying double taxes for our schooling—that he was a second-class citizen not permitted by law to direct his [education] taxes to the school of his choice.

"I would ask only that you consider the four reasons for relevance, which I have given: Alternative schools exist. They have a right to exist. They serve important needs. They are a precious natural resource. And their right to public support should be recognized. In a free and just society the rights of all are diminished, if the rights of anyone are infringed."

Can you tell us who spoke those words?

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** No, I can't, but I'll wait for you to share that with me. Or perhaps you'd like to share the letters with me as well.

**Mr. Klees:** I'd be happy to do that. It was the late Dalton J. McGuinty, Ph.D., in his written submission to the commission on private schools in Ontario in 1984. Mr. McGuinty served as the Ottawa South MPP until he passed away in 1990. He was the father of 10 children, including the current Premier of Ontario. It's interesting that those principles that were discussed and obviously held dear by the late Dalton J. McGuinty have somehow grown faint with your government.

I want to move on to my next question. Ontario formally agreed in writing to uphold rulings of the United Nations human rights committee under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. These rulings are binding under international law. How can Ontario now simply ignore such rulings?

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** I would need far more detail than that, but if you're happy to submit that, I will get you an answer as well.

**Mr. Klees:** The current government has a large surplus of funds, as demonstrated by the recent budget. Why were none of these monies provided to the 2% of Ontario children who attend non-Catholic faith-based schools, who continue to be discriminated against by this government? Their parents pay full education taxes, so the money is there for those children.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I'm not certain if this member has thought through the logic that he's presenting to me, that families, for example, would be double-taxed, if you will, as he put it earlier; that in fact they pay taxes, therefore they're paying for the system and yet they have to go and pay as well. If you follow through with this kind of logic, it would stand to reason that every individual who is a taxpayer in Ontario but doesn't have children in the system—doesn't have children, in fact—shouldn't be paying for the education system in Ontario. That makes no sense. I think all of us agree as taxpayers that what we're investing in in our tax system, to be distributed by governments—I think the Boston Tea Party taught us that that is what's going to happen with taxation—is for the good of society. That's what our commitment is as taxpayers.

Likewise, I have to say that if you use that logic, then only those who access health services are the ones who ought to pay taxes that fund our health services. That's not how we operate. We believe that all of us should pay taxes, that all of us should invest in our government. Our government, when given the privilege to govern, makes the choices for public systems that are available to everyone. In the area of education in particular, people were able to ask in the last election, did they want a government that believed in public education or one that would further the private tax credit? We have to say that they did select the government that would—in a very fulsome way, they outlined a plan in terms of implementation of education platform, which we're now halfway through doing. The results—

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister.

**Mr. Klees:** Minister, let me leave this thought with you: Everyone in the province of Ontario pays taxes, those who are at the threshold of income to do so. We all pay education taxes. The double taxation that I was referring to and that Mr. McGuinty was referring to in his submission was simply that additional fee that those parents who choose to send their children to faith-based or independent schools are paying in addition to the taxes they're paying to support the public education system. That's the point that I was trying to make. Perhaps you can give it some thought.

I'd like to—

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** Do you want me to respond to that?

**Mr. Klees:** No, I don't want you to respond to it; I'd like you to think about it.

I'd like to move on to another issue, and that is the issue of double-dipping by retired teachers in this province.

I have had many communications, e-mails and telephone calls from young teachers who have graduated,

who are attempting to make their way as teachers within our public education system and who are consistently bumped by retired teachers, who have come back into the system and are now teaching part-time. In addition to receiving their very comfortable pensions, they are now also being paid as part-time teachers.

What is unfair about this, from the perspective of young teachers who want a career in teaching, is that they don't have a permanent position or the advantage of longer-term teaching positions because of this double-dipping.

I'd like your response, and let me put it this way: Could you provide the committee with the number of part-time teachers in this province, by board, who are retired teachers and have come back into the system to teach part-time? Could you do that?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I'm not certain whether we can. It will depend on how the data has been collected. If the data is easily available, we'll try to make that available to you. I'm not certain that there's going to be that level of detail.

There are problems aplenty, given some of our exercises in the education system. When you pour \$2 billion into the system, I can tell you that we are having lots of issues on the quality of education. We're demanding results for our investments, and that means that boards do have to respond quickly to get teachers into the classroom. I do think that every year, when they see this kind of significant investment, boards are responding in kind and many new teachers are being hired.

As to this particular issue, there are limits to the amount that an occasional teacher can work. If they're coming back as a retiree, their pension has limits on how much they can come back in to work. To the extent that I don't know any more details but that I might get some for you, I'll certainly try to do that.

**The Chair:** Mr. Klees, you have about three minutes.

**Mr. Klees:** What I don't want is the minister to say "if it's easily achievable or readily available." I really don't care if it's readily available. Surely the ministry has the ability to get this information. I'm asking, as a member of this committee, that we get this information. I think it's very important. It's also important to know, in addition to finding the numbers, how much those teachers are being paid, by board. I'd like to know how much those retired teachers have been paid by those boards for their service over the last two years. I would also like to know the rate of pay that the new teachers, the young teachers, who are graduating are getting and I'd like to know by comparison how many of those teachers are present in these boards. That's important information. It impacts the bottom line of your ministry. I would look forward to receiving that information.

1710

**The Chair:** I just want to say for the record that in the minister's reference the use of the phrase "if it's readily available" in my view is contemptuous of the committee. That is not the requirement of this Parliament, nor is it the requirement of the regulations that govern the estim-

ates committee. You're required to provide these as a part of the estimates and you're required to submit them. We can hold up the estimates until we get certain information if in the opinion of the committee that is required.

The minister has chosen to limit the process by limiting the number of people here who can respond. They are your civil servants; they will walk off a short pier if you tell them to. But the fact of the matter is that this is very difficult, and in my eight years I've never had a minister use the phrase and actually mean it: "If it's readily available, I'll let you know when I might be able to share it with you." It's a requirement. I wish your deputy were here so that I could reinforce that because that's a matter for the Cabinet Office and the conduct of a senior bureaucrat.

I just want to assure Mr. Klees that this committee will not be passive in pursuit of these responses. Perhaps we've been too diplomatic as a committee with this ministry. Given that you're a new minister, we'll make certain allowances, but certainly the conduct of your deputy has been quite deplorable.

**Mr. Klees:** Chair, I just want to point out to you that while you've been making these very direct statements concerning the minister's performance, she has not been listening to you. She's been engaged in conversation, and I believe that's contempt of this committee.

**The Chair:** I'm not worried about whether or not the minister is listening. I know that the public is listening and I know that the deputy will see the transcript. We have a responsibility as former ministers of the crown. Our deputies are required—they get performance bonuses—to provide the work. It's just extraordinary to hear a minister to say, "People need holidays. They need vacations."

I'm sorry; I remember at one time tabling 85 order paper questions and I had the civil servants responsible phone me and say, "Please don't do this again. We're getting them as fast as we can." That was under Sean Conway, who did an extraordinarily good job in responding to our questions.

We will revisit this. This may be problematic tomorrow, when we begin our estimates, if we don't have any responses. This is a matter for a larger issue if a deputy cannot answer basic and simple questions with the size of his budget, \$17 billion, and with the number of staff that he has in the Mowat Block.

It has come to the end of your time, Mr. Klees. I would like to recognize Monsieur Bisson.

**M. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–Baie James):** Merci beaucoup, monsieur le Président. J'espère qu'au moins notre deuxième langue officielle—on va avoir la chance de demander des questions et, plus important, d'avoir des réponses.

I'll wait for the minister to put on her hearing aid and I'll respond to that. I will say that one more time.

Je vais le dire très lentement parce que je sais que les traducteurs travaillent très fort aujourd'hui.

I'm just waiting for you to get caught up. I hope you're on the same channel as me, Minister.

Avez-vous la traduction? Il y a de la traduction? Oui, on se comprend? C'est très frustrant des fois ici comme francophone. OK, on est pairé?

**The Chair:** Channel 2 for those—

**M. Bisson:** On commence. Madame la ministre, on va débiter en disant que j'espère qu'on va avoir la chance non seulement de demander des questions mais d'avoir des réponses dans notre deuxième langue officielle ici à l'Assemblée, parce qu'il y a beaucoup de monde qui veut savoir les réponses à certaines questions. Avec ça, on va commencer.

Vous savez que pour desservir la communauté francophone quand ça vient à l'éducation en français, le territoire est très vaste. Vous savez, par exemple, qu'au nord de l'Ontario, au sud-ouest de l'Ontario et dans d'autres places, les communautés francophones sont éparpillées un peu partout dans la province et que les conseils scolaires sont très immenses. Je me demande, acceptez-vous que c'est difficile dans la géographie de l'Ontario de desservir les élèves francophones à travers la province?

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** I think it's fair to say that probably governments of every political stripe, yours included, have recognized the issues of delivering French-language schools with appropriate supports and investments to try to do that better. I believe that every government has improved somewhat. I don't believe that we're where we want to be, but I think that all of us have an intent to do better.

**M. Bisson:** Vous acceptez que c'est un peu plus difficile, étant donné que la communauté est éloignée, que les francophones ne sont pas regroupés géographiquement dans un endroit et que les conseils sont beaucoup plus grands, donc c'est plus difficile à desservir la communauté francophone?

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** I'll tell you my experiences in these three weeks, having been named minister. Just getting a handle on the maps that cover the geographic territories of these French services boards: It's utterly amazing that one of them may well rival your own riding in its size in geography. It is quite amazing. I think that calls for a number of innovative techniques, whether it's through technology—a myriad of services may have to be applicable in this setting more so than in the English setting because of the issue of distance.

It isn't the same as distance issues for some of our northern school boards. I think it's fair to say that it is a tremendous challenge in the Toronto area, for example, but that it isn't just Toronto; it covers Toronto and north—

**M. Bisson:** Donc, vous acceptez.

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** Whatever. They're massive.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Bisson.

**M. Bisson:** Oui, vous acceptez la question. Bien, j'ai dit qu'elle accepte que oui, c'est difficile.

Deuxième question : vous savez que la Charte des droits—premièrement, la constitution canadienne, dans l'article 23, dit qu'on doit offrir aux élèves, francophones comme anglophones, les services en français quand ça

vient à l'éducation. Vous acceptez ce qu'on écrit dans notre constitution?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I think that every political party that has represented government at some time over the last 20 years has, and has endeavoured to deliver the best in this type of service. I think you in particular have followed with interest the last two and half years in terms of our investments in French-language boards. I have recently met with—

**M. Bisson:** Mais ma question est, acceptez-vous que dans la constitution canadienne on a une responsabilité de desservir la communauté francophone?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I think all of us intuitively understand the need to meet our constitutional obligations.

**M. Bisson:** C'est beau. C'est tout ce que je voulais savoir.

Numéro trois, vous savez qu'un des gros problèmes est le manque de financement. Les distances sont vastes, comme on dit, et les écoles sont plus anciennes. J'aimerais savoir, c'est quoi votre plan, comme ministre et le ministère, d'assurer que les écoles dans les communautés où on dessert les francophones soient adéquates pour répondre aux besoins dans le système public comme dans le système catholique? C'est quoi que vous allez faire pour assurer que ces écoles soient adéquates pour desservir—premièrement qu'il y ait des écoles et deuxièmement, quand elles sont là, qu'elles soient adéquates pour desservir la communauté francophone?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I think that's a very broad question that probably calls for a broader answer. Frankly, I think there is—

**M. Bisson:** Pas trop long.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** Right. I think there are some significant issues that you may or may not choose to address in the future, but there are some particular markers that have become quite apparent to every government: the kinds of losses from the French-language system, as students move through it, that clearly indicate that there are issues in how the services are being delivered. If you see a significant drop in the number of students after elementary school and they're not continuing on in that French-language system in high school, there's a reason for that.

What is the government doing to respond to that? Some of the areas of programming, and having the same level of programming available to people, whether they're in the French-language board or in the English board, I think are important. Parents will want to know that their students will have all choices available to them as they would, had they been in another system. It's just one marker that shows some significant, I believe, policy issues that need to be addressed in these boards.

1720

**M. Bisson:** Une réalité, madame la Ministre, dépend d'où le francophone demeure. Si le francophone demeure à Timmins, à Geraldton ou dans une autre communauté, ça peut être une expérience différente quand ça vient à

avoir accès aux systèmes francophones, soit publics soit catholiques.

Ma question est, que voulez-vous faire, exactement, pour assurer que les parents dans tous les districts de la province aient la chance de choisir soit d'envoyer leurs élèves au système public francophone ou au système catholique francophone? Comme vous savez, c'est un peu difficile maintenant.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I think you probably have learned that we have secured a new \$3-million, I believe, four-year deal with the federal government to continue to invest in elementary, secondary and post-secondary education. This is specifically as a result of all of us recognizing what all of our roles are in providing an excellent level of service in French-language schools. That's but one of the investments being made in the infrastructure of these boards. I think it's apparent to everyone that we have had significant investment in infrastructure. We have had investment in the teachers as well, with the number of student success leaders in those French-language schools, in the elementary schools with a focus on literacy and numeracy.

I'm suggesting that we're by no means done. We have tabled, as you know, the request, and it has been accepted, for a permanent French-language special task force that will continue to advise us on policy. The aménagement linguistique I think is an important one.

**M. Bisson:** La question que je demande : acceptez-vous que, dépendant d'où le parent se trouve, c'est difficile des fois de choisir d'envoyer son enfant à un système public parce que l'école n'est pas là? Il y a certains endroits, parce que la géographie est telle, qu'il n'y a possiblement rien qu'un choix, le choix catholique. Acceptez-vous qu'il y a un problème dans certaines parties de la province de faire le choix d'envoyer leurs enfants à une école francophone publique?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I do believe that there are far more challenges for French-language students in terms of choices that they're making. I believe that we're trying to address those challenges by making more opportunities available to them.

**M. Bisson:** Donc, vous acceptez qu'il y a un problème. Ma deuxième question : qu'est-ce que vous avez comme plan pour rectifier le problème? On comprend que ça ne peut pas arriver dans deux minutes, mais c'est quoi le plan pour être capable d'accepter que les parents, n'importe où qu'ils se trouvent, peuvent faire le choix d'envoyer leurs élèves soit au système français catholique soit au système public?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I will provide you with a list of the specific investments, for example builds—actual examples of schools that are being built in the system to create opportunities.

**M. Bisson:** On sait où elles sont bâties, madame la Ministre. On peut les trouver.

**Le Président:** Monsieur Bisson, permettez à la ministre de répondre, s'il vous plaît.

**M. Bisson:** Excusez-moi, monsieur le Président; mes excuses très sincères.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I will provide you with some very specific examples of the investments that are being made to allow parents the kinds of choices they would like in the area of infrastructure, specific schools being built, in the area of programming and in the area of just policy involvement by the variety stakeholders we've reached out to. I hope this member opposite would acknowledge that it's important, probably more so in this system than in any other, that the teachers and school boards are actual leaders in the francophone communities where they're found, and that the role they play through their schools and the health of their schools have quite a bit to do with the culture of our francophone community in Ontario.

**M. Bisson:** Ma question : oui, vous êtes capable de me donner une liste d'où sont les écoles présentement. Je pense que je peux les trouver; elles sont là. Je les vois.

Ma question est de deux parties : premièrement, c'est quoi votre plan pour assurer que les écoles soient là pour que les parents aient le choix d'envoyer leurs enfants à une école française; et deuxièmement, qu'est-ce que vous allez faire pour assurer que les écoles qui sont là présentement soient au moins des écoles qui rencontrent le standard nécessaire? Comme vous le savez, dans beaucoup d'exemples les écoles francophones publiques se trouvent des fois moins choyées que d'autres quand ça vient aux institutions.

Donc, ma première question : êtes-vous capable de nous donner un plan de comment vous allez rencontrer les demandes des nouvelles écoles qui ont besoin d'être bâties; et deuxièmement, le plan de ce que vous allez faire pour la réparation des écoles existantes qui rencontrent au moins les besoins des normes.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I think it's not just what's happening presently or what you can see being built today, but what some of the action items are into the future that either have been announced or perhaps have not been announced yet. In our next round of grants for 2006-07 there will be more information available in that context for additional supports to French-language schools. I have to say, though, that I anticipate that a significant amount of the work that's expected out of a standardized, regularly meeting task force for French-language schools will play the role of setting policy and ongoing policy instruction to help inform government on some of the needs that we have to address much longer-term.

I do believe that we have responded with a significant investment over the last couple of years of some \$50 million. These schools actually have also benefited from some of our investments in rural schools, in the geographic distance schools, because they are also in areas like eastern Ontario, whether it's the Prescott-Russell area or whatever. They too are benefiting from those supports. Because they have issues, some of which are the same as for our northern and rural schools, they benefit there. They are getting, in addition to that, some \$50 million of investment in their school system, and we anticipate that we have much more policy work to do, but the community seems game to work with us.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister.

**M. Bisson:** Une question très spécifique : avez-vous un plan pour rencontrer les besoins de ces élèves, et si oui, êtes-vous capable de nous donner ce plan?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** Are you speaking specifically to capital plans in terms of schools?

**M. Bisson:** Les fonds capitaux pour les écoles, oui.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** Okay. I'm going to ask my ADM to address some of the capital issues with French-language schools, and then if that's not sufficient and we have more that we can send to you, we will.

**Ms. Naylor:** Thank you. My apologies for responding in English, but I will just mention a couple of the investments that have—

**M. Bisson:** Madame, excusez-moi. On a seulement un petit peu de temps. Je connais les investissements que vous avez faits jusqu'à date. J'ai ces listes dans mon bureau. Je vous demande, c'est quoi votre plan? Avez-vous un plan, et si oui, êtes-vous capable de nous donner un plan pour comment vous allez répondre aux besoins futurs qui sont donnés par les conseils? Ne parlez pas de ce qui était fait. On le sait déjà.

**Ms. Naylor:** There are a couple of things that are relevant to say. One is that we are currently collecting five-year capital plans from all school boards, including all 12 French-language school boards, and in those plans we have asked them specifically for information about their needs in a number of areas. Primary class size is a major area of capital activity. Repair and renewal: As you know, we have a major \$2-billion program to repair and improve the condition of schools for the learning environment for students. We are also planning to introduce a prohibitive-to-repair program to retire or replace schools that need either deep retrofit or complete replacement. So on those plans, as boards submit them, we will be reviewing them and developing allocations for that funding.

Specifically with respect to French boards, we have two major things. One is that they have identified for us that they would like investments around program investments, for example, schools where they don't have libraries and gyms, so this is an initiative that will respond to that need. We also have a program we refer to as capital-transitional. We've run it for the last few years. We've allocated a number of schools to the French-language system. We expect to keep doing that. That's a program where French boards identify areas where there are French right holders without schools to serve them. So in a sense they don't have an enrolment base to justify or generate a need for new schools, but on the basis of the rights holders, the government has for a number of years identified areas where schools should be. So we are slowly building a network of elementary and secondary French schools both in the public system and the Catholic system, and we expect that will be a multi-year program.

**M. Bisson:** Avez-vous un critère, comment faire ces décisions?

**The Chair:** Minister, I sense you'd like to answer this question, briefly.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I think it's important to note that for the English boards, public, Catholic and French-language boards, we are having discussions now around capital policy. What all boards currently know is that we are requesting this five-year plan from them, and they are awaiting as well from us more detail around policy and capital—

**M. Bisson:** Je le comprends, mais est-ce qu'il y a présentement un critère par lequel vous allez faire vos décisions?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** Currently? All of this is under review right now. We are in the middle of deliberating.

**M. Bisson:** Donc, il n'y a pas de critères présentement? C'est tout ce que je voulais savoir.

Écoute, on parle toujours du « local », parce que c'est chez nous; c'est là nos électeurs. On veut s'assurer que nos électeurs sont très contents. À tous les quatre ans il faut passer les élections puis cogner aux portes. Je veux m'assurer que le monde chez nous à Timmins–Baie James est content.

Je vous demande une question. Présentement au système public francophone il y a seulement une école primaire francophone à Timmins et une demande de faire bâtir une deuxième école dans une autre partie de la ville pour attirer des étudiants. Savez-vous quelque chose sur ce projet, l'école publique élémentaire de Timmins? Si oui, quoi?

1730

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** No, I'm not. But I anticipate that in the ensuing months I'll have an opportunity to know most of the programs, in your riding in particular. As this member knows, I spend an awful lot of time worrying about Timmins issues, regardless of my portfolio, it seems.

**M. Bisson:** Oui, c'est toujours très beau de prendre soin de Timmins. Peut-être que votre sous-ministre—êtes-vous au courant de ce projet du conseil public, dans la région de Timmins, d'une deuxième école publique primaire?

**Ms. Naylor:** No, I can't say I am.

**M. Bisson:** Je veux seulement dire à la ministre qu'on va vous donner possiblement une lettre suite à cette rencontre de ce comité, parce qu'il y a certaines questions faisant affaire avec ce que le conseil scolaire a besoin de vous donner pour élaborer ce projet. On va le laisser à ce point-là.

Prochaine question—je n'en ai que deux autres, monsieur Marchese, notre critique. Je sais qu'il a beaucoup de questions mais j'en ai encore deux. Ça va aller très vite.

**Le Président:** Monsieur Bisson?

**M. Bisson:** Oui?

**The Chair:** It is quite permissible, if you wish, that they will be deemed to be entered into the record if you don't wish to read them in. They will be—

**M. Bisson:** Non, non. Excusez-moi. Écoute, ça va être très vite. Vous savez qu'il est supposé d'y avoir une certaine collaboration entre les conseils. Êtes-vous satisfaite qu'il y a une collaboration assez profonde entre,

on va dire, les conseils francophones catholiques et publics? Pensez-vous qu'il y existe une collaboration assez forte?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I'll be in a better position to answer that when I get to know both boards—and all of the boards—better. The likelihood is that there isn't enough collaboration, if it reflects the English boards; that's certainly the case there. Although there are some excellent examples where they're sharing schools amongst themselves as well as amongst English schools.

**M. Bisson:** Juste pour vous donner un peu de contexte, il y a certaines communautés où le noyau francophone, la population francophone est très grande. Dans ces instances, ça fait beaucoup de bon sens d'avoir une école francophone publique et une école francophone catholique; ça marche très bien. Mais il y a d'autres communautés où la communauté est très petite quand ça vient au nombre total d'étudiants.

La question est qu'il y a certains qui disent qu'il faudra avoir une certaine collaboration « polyfusée ». On ne parle pas d'une fusion parce qu'il faut avoir une division entre le public et le catholique; on parle des collaborations pour assurer que les élèves dans ces communautés aient une école adéquate et aient la programmation et les services adéquats pour donner une éducation, une expérience, qui est excellente. Dans certains cas, ces écoles ne donnent pas tout ce qui est là : bibliothèque, service de gymnase et autres.

Ma question est, avez-vous un plan pour être capable de regarder à cette question : comment, dans les communautés plus petites où il n'y a pas une grosse communauté francophone, être capable d'aider avec la collaboration des deux conseils? Avez-vous un plan?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I anticipate that this will become a standing item on the agenda because it is reflective of the issues at large in the French-language system. That is around collaboration and co-operation in a world of certainly not enough money: How many more innovative ways can we find to have excellent levels of programming in these schools? If that means collaboration on all fronts, whether that's sharing libraries or some of the examples that you gave—I believe that that will become a standing item on the agenda for this French-language task force, which will become a standing task force with regular meetings to provide the minister and the ministry with advice on policy.

This member is probably aware of the aménagement linguistique, which is also off and running to provide us with some very good policy direction in this area.

As I was saying earlier, just because they haven't been funded to the level that's allowed—the kind of uniqueness that the boards need—they have been quite innovative. The boards that you mentioned have been, in my view, more innovative—I suppose they say that necessity breeds innovation; they have been quite innovative, and I think many of our other boards can—

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister. M. Bisson, one minute.

**M. Bisson:** Dernière question. Vous savez qu'il y a eu une promesse dans les dernières élections pour rencontrer

les recommandations de Rozanski, qui disaient que les conseils francophones ne sont pas financés adéquatement, qu'on a besoin d'avoir une addition de 120 \$ millions, dans les dollars de—je ne me rappelle pas l'année des élections—la dernière élection.

Qu'est-ce que vous avez comme plan concret pour assurer que les recommandations de Rozanski et la promesse qui a été faite par votre parti dans les dernières élections vont être rencontrées de \$120 millions? Jusqu'à date un certain pourcentage a été donné. Qu'est-ce qu'on va faire pour s'assurer que le restant de ces 120 \$ millions soit là?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** Specifically—and this has been a conversation already with me in my new portfolio—I will tell you that in a number of areas across grants over the last two years, we have addressed significant issues, not just for French-language boards but for English public and English Catholic as well. So there is a significant amount of contribution and investment, for example—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I realize—specific to rural, distant etc., which was also referenced in the Rozanski report. In addition to that investment, we have added another \$50 million that's specific to French-language boards.

I believe that, like most of our investments, we need to do them in a way that's going to get the results that we need. I am prepared to look at what our next round of investment will be, but also tie it to some of the markers that I believe we will agree have to result in the kinds of program improvements that parents and students want to see, etc. That tells us that we can't—

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Minister. Mr. Marchese?

**M. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina):** Merci.

**M. Bisson:** À demain.

**M. Marchese:** C'était très bon de t'avoir ici. Merci.

**M. Bisson:** Je vais prendre ta plume.

**M. Marchese:** Voilà.

**The Chair:** Take all his time and his pen as well.

**M. Marchese:** Non, c'était la mienne.

**M. Bisson:** Si tu veux, je peux t'aider.

**The Chair:** Mr. Marchese, please proceed.

**M. Marchese:** Non, non, merci. Si tu veux rester, reste.

**M. Bisson:** Je peux t'aider.

**Mr. Marchese:** For the record, estimates is a time when we try to ask questions and make the minister and the ministry accountable to all three political parties.

I am deeply disappointed that the deputy minister is not here. The deputy minister is the chief executive officer of that ministry. He has been here over a year now and he's got a great deal of knowledge that the minister has made reference to in her remarks last week. I've got to tell you, when the deputy is not here, it's a problemo.

**The Chair:** To put a fine point on it, his failure to even advise this committee, the lack of courtesy there, or

the recommendations from the Chair as to how to cope with it—I will take that up with the Premier's office.

**Mr. Marchese:** Disappointed. My question: We had asked last year for the staffing reports from each board that would demonstrate that so many teachers were hired in 2003-04-05. We were promised by the previous minister that these numbers would be available last November—I think he said that by November we'd be able to get hold of them. Are they available, Minister?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I will endeavour to see that they are available. In fact, some of the questions that you tabled should be available this week that you asked us the other day.

**Mr. Marchese:** Your ministry did reply to this question that I asked. What they provided were figures for 2001-02, 2002-03. Those are the figures that your ministry provided. We didn't have figures for 2003-04, and we didn't get figures for 2004-05. Do you know why?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** My ADM, would you like to address this?

**Ms. Naylor:** Can you be more specific about which areas you're looking for?

**The Chair:** Ms. Naylor, you understand the question?

**Mr. Marchese:** It's a question—the answer of which came from the ministry.

**The Chair:** Ms. Naylor understands the question.

**Ms. Naylor:** My apologies. We had gone through the questions very carefully, and I thought we had responded to all the years and data that had been requested. If there were some that we overlooked, my apologies. We'll be happy to get those for you.

**Mr. Marchese:** So the figures for 2003-04 and 2004-05 are available, for newly hired teachers?

**Ms. Naylor:** Yes. They may be available now. We'll be happy to go back and respond then.

**The Chair:** They're available.

**Mr. Marchese:** Okay. Just to remind you that what you provided for me, question 1(a), says—I'll show it to you: "We do not collect data"—

**The Chair:** You're not on the microphone when you leave your chair. The clerk is here to assist you.

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**Mr. Marchese:** This document says, "We do not collect data concerning the number of newly hired teachers."

**The Chair:** We're securing you another copy, and we'll have it to you in a moment.

Mr. Marchese, you're back on the microphone.

**Mr. Marchese:** It seemed odd that we had data for 2001-02 and 2002-03, when the Tories were in power, and that your response is, "We do not collect data concerning the number of newly hired teachers." Can you respond to this, Minister, or the assistant deputy?

**The Chair:** Ms. Naylor, the question's been directed to you.

**Ms. Naylor:** I think what I've been handed actually is different. These are the questions we tabled the other day, but I will speak generally. We don't collect data exactly on newly hired teachers. I think what we provided you in

your responses to last year's questions was data about teachers who are in what we call the entry cells on the grid—teachers with a limited number of years of experience, with limited credentials, who are perhaps beginning their career. So it may have been a question of interpretation.

**Mr. Marchese:** This was the question either you or somebody else answered: "Can you tell us the number of newly qualified teachers that were hired by Ontario school boards for the current school year in both the secondary and elementary panels, and can you tell us what the numbers were for the last two years?" That was the specific question, right? It's not vague or unclear; it's very specific. The answer is, "We do not collect data concerning the number of newly hired teachers."

The reason I raise this is that it's troubling to me. You have the minister, a former minister and the Premier today saying, "We're hiring 4,200"—or 4,300; I forget the number—"new teachers." They keep on throwing this number out. We want to be able to say to the ministry, "Minister, Deputy, Assistant, give us the number," so that when the minister and other ministry people and the Premier say, "We've hired 4,000 new teachers," we can say, "Okay, where's the evidence for it?" That's my question.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I have to say, and you will likely know this as a teacher yourself at some point and having watched as an education critic for years as well, that when the information comes back to us from the board, we have ways to assume a teacher is new because they will tell us how many of their teachers are at what point on the salary grid. A teacher who's been there for 20 years will obviously be at the top end, and you could assume that's not a new number. So based on the number—

**The Chair:** Minister, I'm going to interrupt you. The question was very clear, and I'll rephrase it for you to help you: Could you please tell us what statistical base our Premier used today to come up with the number of 4,000? You're willing to defend that. This committee has a right to know how he arrived at the number. If you don't know and your deputy doesn't know, fine, but then tell us and we will inquire of the Premier's office as to how he gets these numbers out of the Ministry of Education. But this act is wearing thin.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** If you look at the numbers, as they come back to us from each board, this is how we make the count.

**The Chair:** He's satisfied that you do not have an answer.

**Mr. Marchese:** All I want is your evidence. I don't want to look at numbers I can't see; I want for you to prove that you've hired 4,000 new teachers. You said that last year; you say it this year. I want you, if you have the evidence, to show it to me. That's all I want. If you don't have it today, can you get that for me?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** Perhaps we can just explain how we get information from our boards in order to prove to you—

**The Chair:** You've already done that, Minister. You've given us an explanation. Thank you.

Mr. Marchese.

**Mr. Marchese:** On the class size cap: I know that you've tackled this before, and I just want to try this again. Have you succeeded in capping primary class sizes as per your election promise?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I think that at this point in the term, we are well on our way to achieving that. But as this member opposite would know, having served in government for five years actually, not for the standard four, we clearly can't commit to and finish everything in the first year or two. Something like class size, which has its own inherent challenges with every board to implement—

**The Chair:** You don't have the statistics, is that what you're saying?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** Of course we do. You haven't asked for the number; you asked if we've completed it. The truth is—

**Mr. Marchese:** Have you succeeded in capping primary class sizes?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** You have to let me finish. The truth is that at this point in time, we have moved significantly along to achieving our goal. I believe that with the \$112-million investment so far, we've moved from 48% to 52% of all of our classrooms being at the 20 cap or below.

**Mr. Marchese:** What mechanism is being used to monitor class sizes?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** We rely on a good relationship with our boards obviously in terms of reporting. In this new world, as you know, we've had some significant accounting changes. We anticipate that our relationship will be even closer when they report to us the number of classes they have that are 20 or below.

**Mr. Marchese:** So the mechanism is that the boards report to you?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** That's right.

**Mr. Marchese:** Can the minister produce a complete list of the size of every class in every school in the province?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** We are taking very specific efforts to track our JK to grade 3, which is part of our commitment. I anticipate that very soon we will not only be able to table it in the House or table it for all MPPs, but we plan to post it publicly, and the boards are aware of this as well.

**Mr. Marchese:** You're tracking at the moment, so you have some data. Is there a reason why you wouldn't give us the data of where you have capped class sizes and when you haven't been able to achieve capped sizes?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** At the moment, as you know, our commitment is to publicize this. We're doing that and we're preparing it for publication. We are now in the midst of going back with each board to confirm. As you know, as you move through the school year, there are changes in-year, so before it becomes public, we have to be certain that each piece of data is accurate—

**Mr. Marchese:** That's fine, but—

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** Sorry, but I have—

**Mr. Marchese:** No, you don't, Minister.

**The Chair:** No. Well, you know what, Minister?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** What I was going to say—

**The Chair:** No. Quite frankly, we've asked for specific data, and I don't wish to do this for Mr. Marchese, but are these monthly reports, quarterly reports or annual reports, and when can you table the reports with this committee?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** As I was going to say if you'd let me finish my sentence—

**The Chair:** No. I'm asking you a question. I'll ask Ms. Naylor.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** Actually, I can tell you right now that—

**The Chair:** Do these reports come in quarterly, monthly or annual reports? That's essentially Mr. Marchese's question.

Ms. Naylor, can you answer?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** We are going to—

**The Chair:** Ms. Naylor, can you please answer?

*Interjections.*

**The Chair:** Ms. Naylor, can you answer the question?

*Interjections.*

**The Chair:** I'm asking Ms. Naylor if these reports from the boards are monthly, quarterly or annually.

**Ms. Naylor:** Mr. Chair, the minister's answer is correct. They're annual reports.

**The Chair:** They are annual reports. So what is the last annual report you have, and when is its expiry date?

**Mr. Marchese:** Can we get it, the last report?

**The Chair:** Mr. Marchese, I'm trying to help you. We're almost going to get it here. Ms. Naylor?

**Ms. Naylor:** The last complete one we would have would be for 2004-05. We would just be processing the second half of the 2004-05 school year. We collect class sizes as of October 31 and March 31, so we don't have the final 2005-06 data.

**The Chair:** So you have a final report but you measure twice a year; correct?

**Ms. Naylor:** That's right, because some schools are on a semester system.

**The Chair:** Thank you. You do your analysis on the last fiscal year for the ministry; is that correct?

*Interjection.*

**The Chair:** So when will you be able to give Mr. Marchese the most recent reports because they're available now?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** They're not available now.

**The Chair:** I said the most recent report, Minister. I'm talking to Ms. Naylor.

*Interjection.*

**The Chair:** I'm asking Ms. Naylor.

Minister, we can be here all next week, if you like.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** That's fine, but I'm telling you—

**The Chair:** This committee stands adjourned. We will reconvene tomorrow at 3:30. I should recommend that your staff be ready to be on deck for this committee next Tuesday as well. Thank you.

*The committee adjourned at 1749.*







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