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| ***Province*** | ***Législature*** | ***Session*** | ***Type de discours*** | ***Date du discours*** | ***Locuteur*** | ***Fonction du locuteur*** | ***Parti politique*** |
| Saskatchewan | 26e | 3e | Discours sur l’éducation | 21 avril 2010 | Ken Krawetz | Minister of Education | Saskatchewan Party |

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. And good afternoon to everyone, both government and opposition members of committee or their replacements. I want to begin, Mr. Chair, by introducing a number of people behind me and seated with me. There are a number of people that are present today because of course there are many different responsibilities within Education, so we have representation here from a number.

Seated to my right of course is Audrey Roadhouse, who is my deputy minister. On my immediate left is Darren McKee, assistant deputy minister; and Helen Horsman, also assistant deputy minister. Dawn Court, director of finance, is immediately behind me. And I don’t see Clint. Clint Repski is back there. Okay. Rather than trying to find out where they are seated, Mr. Chair, I’ll just introduce them.

We have Darryl Richter, manager of capital projects. Jane Thurgood Sagal is the executive director of curriculum and e-learning. Sue Amundrud who’s the associate executive director, also with curriculum and e-learning. Lois Zelmer who is executive director of early learning and child care. Rosanne Glass is executive director of policy, evaluation, and legislative services. Shirley Robertson is the director of the Teachers’ Superannuation Commission. Joylene Campbell is the Provincial Librarian responsible for the Provincial Library and literacy office. Darryl Hunter is the executive director of accountability, assessment, and records. Greg Tuer, executive director with Public Service Commission. Sonya Leib who is the senior financial manager with financial planning.

And we have . . . I think I missed one person, a couple of people with the education finance and facilities. That’s Darryl Richter, manager of capital projects facilities and geomatics unit; and Rhonda Smysniuk who’s the executive director of education finance and facilities.

So those are the people. And as you indicated, when these people will be commenting, they’ll introduce themselves as well for the record.

Mr. Chair, a brief comment. I hope it’s not going to be seen as being too long. I’ll indicate these words for the record. The ministry’s budget is of course set in the context of the provincial budget and the province’s current fiscal circumstances. The 2010-11 provincial budget is Balanced, Forward-looking, Responsible.

I would like to take a few minutes to talk about a few highlights in the ministry’s budget. The overall funding for school divisions will increase by 33 million or 2.1 per cent in 2010-11, and this is in the context of the government’s fiscal year. In terms of the school divisions’ fiscal year, funding will increase by 18.6 million or 1.16 per cent. The education property tax mill rates will remain at the 2009-10 level, as we have had to delay the phase-in of property tax relief, given the fiscal situation.

The 2010-11 Ministry of Education budget also includes $17.2 million for K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] school capital, and this will bring our three-year total to a record $328 million investment in the province’s K to 12 education infrastructure. In the past two and a half years, our government has advanced 28 major school capital projects, including six recently announced school projects to address the most critical space issues in our province. We have also advanced another 400 projects for block funding in schools across the province to replace boilers, roofs, and fix structural issues, to give just a few examples.

The budget also contains investment for early learning and child care — $2 million for 235 additional child care spaces and 18 new pre-kindergarten programs. By the end of 2010-11, this will bring the total number of licensed child care spaces to approximately 11,650 and the total number of pre-kindergarten programs to 230. Since being elected, my government has allotted 2,935 licensed child care spaces and has funded an additional 75 pre-K programs.

Equitable access to high-quality learning opportunities throughout the province is also key to moving forward. This is why the Ministry of Education’s new video streaming service called recommended online video education resources — and of course the acronym for that is ROVER. ROVER will, after a two-year pilot, will be fully implemented in all provincially funded schools.

And our ministry will continue its focus on career development by continuing funding to help students become self-reliant, self-motivated career managers as they transition between learning and work. In 2010-11 the ministry will continue to work with local school boards, the business community, and CBOs [community-based organization] to enhance business literacy, entrepreneurship, and career education for students.

Moving forward, we also remain committed to highly literate citizens with equal access to information. This budget also includes a commitment to the continued implementation of a single integrated library system, also acronym known as SILS. To date the one province, one library card initiative has been implemented in four of the public library systems with six more to come. By the end of this year, all of Saskatchewan’s public libraries will be up and running on SILS.

These are the highlights, Mr. Chair, of this year’s budget. And I also want to indicate that the 2010-11 budget is not about any short-term resource revenue cycles. It is about the long term and our ability as a province to afford our growth agenda moving forward. We remain committed to developing a funding model that will provide more predictability and withstand market fluctuations while still being responsive to the changes that come our way. I assure you that our government’s commitment to pre-K to 12 education has not changed. Our ministry priorities remain focused on student achievement, development of a new funding model, First Nations and Métis education, early learning and child care, and continued development of infrastructure.

We understand the essential role of education in our province’s future and the importance of preparing our young people for success. That success must extend to First Nations and Métis students in our province. Building on our new policy, Inspiring Success, we want to continue to work collaboratively and build on the leadership of boards and school divisions in improving outcomes for these students.

Because of this commitment to education, our government has worked very hard to provide adequate funding in this budget. We will continue to work together with ministry officials, going out again after budget in April and May to consult with boards of education to listen to their ideas about how our new funding model can be most effective.

We believe that our government is making the right choices to ensure our economy is even stronger moving forward for the benefit of our young people who are the future of this province.

Mr. Chair, we look forward to the discussion with committee members.