

HANSARD

NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

COMMITTEE

ON

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Thursday, March 30, 2006

Committee Room 1

**Sport Nova Scotia
KidSport Program**

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COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Ms. Marilyn More (Chairman)
Dr. John Hamm
Mr. Ernest Fage
Mr. Peter Christie
Mr. Jerry Pye
Mr. Gordon Gosse
Mr. Stephen McNeil
Mr. Leo Glavine
Ms. Diana Whalen

[Mr. Peter Christie was replaced by Mr. Gary Hines.]

[Mr. Stephen McNeil was replaced by Mr. Wayne Gaudet.]

[Mr. Leo Glavine was replaced by Mr. David Wilson (Glace Bay).]

In Attendance:
Ms. Mora Stevens
Legislative Committee Clerk

WITNESSES

Sport Nova Scotia

Mr. Jamie Ferguson
Chief Executive Officer

Mr. David Wagg
KidSport Coordinator

Ms. Catherine McKellar
Director, Public Relations and Communications

HALIFAX, THURSDAY, MARCH 30, 2006

STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SERVICES

9:00 A.M.

CHAIRMAN

Ms. Marilyn More

MADAM CHAIRMAN: I'm going to call the meeting for the Standing Committee on Community Services to order. We're very pleased today to have representatives from Sport Nova Scotia with us to talk about the KidSport program. Before we get underway and give them an opportunity to do a brief overview, I want to recognize that this is sort of a transition period for the standing committee. We have lost three members of the committee, and their replacements are here today - two of them are. I want to welcome them.

So from the previous standing committee, Mark Parent, who served as vice-chairman, has moved on; Gary, I understand you're filling in today for someone . . .

MR. GARY HINES: Peter Christie.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: We are pleased to have you here temporarily and want to thank you for your service on the standing committee; and we also recognize the contribution of the Honourable Judy Streach. It's our great pleasure to welcome our new members, representing the Progressive Conservative caucus. Dr. Hamm, we're delighted to have you with us. Ernie, it's a real pleasure to have you join the standing committee. As Gary has mentioned, Peter Christie will be the third member. So this is certainly going to change the dynamics a little bit. We'd be pleased to help bring you up to speed on some of the issues that we've been dealing with on an ongoing basis, and we will have a chance later to talk about some of the committee's follow-up on the Forum on Poverty, which has perhaps been one of our key matters during this current year.

Let's get back to the schedule. If you look at the agenda, I just want to ask the committee's advice. As you know, we've scheduled KidSport until about 10:30 a.m., and then we're going to spend about 15 minutes working on agenda items for the near future, and then we're going to move into further discussion on the Forum on Poverty. We do have one outstanding sort of business item, and that is to replace our vice-chairman. I just would like your advice, whether you'd like to do that later in today's meeting, or you'd like to wait and put that on the agenda for our next meeting.

MS. DIANA WHALEN: Madam Chairman, there are a number of our members who are not here today, as well - we have two members substituting for others - so I think it might be best to wait until the next meeting when we gather.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Is there general agreement on that?

It is agreed.

Fine, we'll add that to our agenda for the next meeting.

Let's start with the introduction of members.

[The committee members introduced themselves.]

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Jamie, would you like to introduce the people you have with you today and perhaps give an opening presentation. What we generally do is perhaps a couple of rounds of questions and clarifications so that people thoroughly understand the issue. Welcome.

MR. JAMIE FERGUSON: Thank you to all of you for an opportunity to be here today. On my left is David Wagg, who is our KidSport Coordinator, who is directly responsible for the implementation of the program itself; and on my right is Catherine McKellar, who is our Director of Public Relations and Communications, who is directly responsible to make sure that I don't say anything I'm not supposed to. (Laughter)

I'm going to give a brief overview, maybe just five or six minutes, and then we'll have time for questions and answers, and whatever else the committee would like to discuss. I'll start with a little bit of background on the KidSport program. It actually started in 1993, and it was a program of Sport British Columbia. Sport Nova Scotia began to operate a Nova Scotia chapter of the program the next year, in 1994. The program operates through the Canadian Council for Provincial and Territorial Sport Federations, which we call the CCPTSF for the acronym people out there. That is the organization that actually holds the RCAA number that allows the fund to operate. The RCAA number is granted by the CRA and it allows us to receive donations to the fund and also use the money for specified purposes and programs. In the case of KidSport, we are permitted to give out money to children in order to participate in sport activities that are sustained sport activities led by qualified instructors.

For the first nine years of operation, the program had an annual allocation budget of between \$100,000 to \$150,000 per year. Occasionally we would run out of money and have to suspend grants and allocations for the program. Over those first years, KidSport gave out approximately \$550,000 to about 3,700 children across Nova Scotia so that they could participate in sport.

We had some recent changes which were very positive for the program, and of course that started in 2004, when the provincial government provided \$330,000 in funding for KidSport, \$30,000 to be used for administration and \$300,000 directly to be allocated to children across the province. When that happened, we defined three main initiatives that we wanted to look after in order to increase the awareness and try to broaden the reach of the program. The first was to hire a full-time coordinator, and we've been successful, obviously, in that, as David is sitting here with us today. The second is to increase our community partnerships, and we wanted to do that through the establishment of regional chapters for KidSport. The third was to form a partnership with Community Services.

David began his work in August 2004, and we now have nine of the 12 regional chapters across the province in operation, and the other three will all be in operation shortly. The chapters are not fundraising vehicles, per se, in the community. We try to use the chapters more to increase the awareness of the program, so that we'll have more uptake in the program, so we use the community partners to try to get more people involved and have more people aware that the program is out there and that they can access the funds.

Similarly, our partnership with Community Services is meant to broaden the reach of the program, as well. In addition to the broadening of the program, by using their regional services, it's also meant to streamline the application process for those who may need the program the most. I'll get into that a little bit as we go on here.

We originally used a referral process to determine allocations, so that people would be referred for funding from someone in their community. In fact there are a number of local community funds that exist in Nova Scotia that still use this method now. We, over the period of time of being provincial in scope, encountered, as many other provinces did, a number of issues with the referral method. The most significant, of course, being people calling into question the levels of need or who was most deserving of the funds from one community to the next, and sometimes within the same community itself.

That, in addition to the fact that we try to operate on a provincial level, had us examine our processes and put some other guidelines in place to make sure that we're operating as efficiently and as fairly as we can. So some of the considerations we looked at were that we are provincial in scope, and we also recognize that we may receive donations in one part of the province and expend those same donations to an allocation for someone in another part of the province. These questions about the levels of need that we were encountering, we were very concerned were going to start to hinder our ability to raise funds throughout the province.

In addition to that, we are also cognizant, of course, that the \$300,000 of allocation that is provided by the provincial government is taxpayers' dollars and they are not dollars that were donated at the community level for a specific program, and we feel that we really have an obligation here to make sure that we're equitable, as well, when we look at distributing these funds across the province.

Finally, the element that makes the referral process, in my mind, with the local funds a successful one is that it's at the community level, on the ground. Even our regional chapters, the 12 that we have, really aren't close enough on the ground to be able to effectively operate a referral method. The feedback we've received from other provinces when we talk about it has been the same.

With those guidelines in mind, we operate now, as do many of the different chapters across the country, on a system where the applicants are accepted based on household income. So we use the National Council of Welfare's Estimates of Statistics Canada and apply the highest levels of poverty as our threshold, so we admit as many people as possible. Applicants can submit their tax information in order to qualify.

In addition, our partnership with Community Services was very important, because in addition to this system what we also do is any children in Nova Scotia who are on the Income Assistance Program need only have their caseworker stamp their application, because we've melded our guidelines together with Community Services, and they are automatically accepted into the program. So that has been a big means of not just streamlining but also broadening the reach of the program, because it's another way for us to get the message out.

We give out our funding four times a year. This, of course, in addition to allowing us to budget and allocate our payments and process them efficiently, also allows us to make sure that all seasonal activities receive an opportunity to have their participants take part in the program.

A little bit on the results since those changes have taken place. As we sit here now, we've seen an increasing level of success, especially recently, in this program. It has been obvious to us that the work with the regional chapters and with Community Services have really helped us increase the word on KidSport and increase the uptake. Over the past five allocation periods, we've had significant increases in the amount of monies we've given out. In particular, in our October allocation of 2005, we increased the amount of funds we gave out from \$47,000 a year before, to \$111,000 in October. So we had a 134 per cent jump. Our most recent allocation in January of this year, where in January 2005 we had given out \$15,000, this year we gave out \$42,000. So again we had a 174 per cent improvement on this allocation for January.

Currently, as we go forward with this program, Sport British Columbia owns the trademark to the program KidSport, and we are in negotiations across the country for the formation of KidSport Canada, and what implications and guidelines that might bring.

That's still in the very middle of the negotiations, so we don't have an outcome of that yet. But we do know, and we have agreement with all the provinces across the country and the territories, that whether we call this KidSport or anything else, the program will continue to deliver aid to children who need it so they can participate in sport. Obviously our goal is to go broke, and then to come back and ask for more money.

MR. DAVID WILSON (Glace Bay): That sounds familiar.

MR. FERGUSON: It's a good plan, we thought, actually. We'll know that if we are successful that we're helping children not just get healthy, and that's one of the great things about this program, but they're also going to get all the other benefits that sport imparts. I've said this before, sport is not a weight loss system and it can't be replaced with a diet pill, and Jenny Craig is not an Olympic event. The benefits that you get from participating in sport are varied. These children will be healthy, yes, but they're also going to do better in school, they're going to be less likely to commit crime, they're going to enter their adult lives with a better sense of self-esteem and better social skills, and, in short, we're really helping these children get a head start on life.

I'd like to close with that, and just say thank you very much for the opportunity to be here today. We look forward to answering any questions you might have. I'd also like to thank you as the elected officials of the province for helping us and partnering with us to deliver these sport opportunities to children in Nova Scotia. Thank you.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Jamie. Just because we have so many new people here today, I just want to mention that we don't divvy up our time by caucus. You just indicate to me that you wish to speak. Usually we give people five, six, seven minutes, which allows two or three questions, and then when everyone has had a turn we go into our second round of questioning. Is there anyone who would like to start off with a question?

Jerry.

MR. JERRY PYE: Madam Chairman, I think I'll begin. First of all, I want to thank you very much for the presentation on KidSport, and if you're looking at it on a national level, I would imagine - KidSport Canada as you're suggesting - there might also be federal dollars that might be able to be pulled through such an agency or an organization.

You had mentioned earlier that there were approximately three chapters that were in the process of being finalized or formalized. I'm wondering if you can tell me what those three chapters are. Secondly, are chapters responsible for the sport that might be funded through your agency or your organization, or is any sport open and receptive to the dollars that might be available?

MR. FERGUSON: I'm going to let David answer the chapter question first, because he's working directly with the chapters, and then we'll speak to the next part of your question.

MR. DAVID WAGG: The remaining chapters are for the areas of Inverness-Richmond, so we've basically used a dual accounting model for most of this, Antigonish-Guysborough, as well as Lunenburg County.

MR. FERGUSON: In terms of the federal monies, yes, there are, with the formation of KidSport Canada. One of the ideas behind that is that we could run some events on a national level, outside of the provincial level. Over the course the negotiations will go along, what will the allocation or distribution formula be, and who will be on the board of the new committee, and those types of things.

In terms of the sports that are available for KidSport, the definition - as long as they meet the definition of the same sport experience, I believe we have about 60 sports right now that operate out of Sport Nova Scotia, and any of those would be eligible to have their participants apply for funds.

[9:15 a.m.]

MR. PYE: Do the funds go through the community chapter to the recipient, or in some cases it obviously goes through the Department of Community Services to the recipient? What's the process?

MR. FERGUSON: They apply to their community chapters, or they can apply directly to Sport Nova Scotia, either one, because, obviously, we don't have all the community chapters in place yet. Then, when we write the allocations and give the monies out, the normal process - and David can correct me - is for us to send the funds directly to the organization that's providing the activity. So if you have a child enrolled in a minor hockey association, the monies from us go to the minor hockey association to pay for their registration fees. If there's an equipment piece, then the monies are normally sent; if there is a retail outlet that's recognized by us in their neighbourhood, it gets sent there. The cheque is made out so they can use it, or the cheque is made out to them, if they're going to purchase the equipment somewhere else.

MR. PYE: Madam Chairman, the other thing is, how confidential is this? I remember serving on a committee that funded individuals who could not afford to be involved in minor baseball. What we did is we took the applications in, did it on a confidential basis, and sent them off to the organization with this in mind. So is their confidentiality maintained with respect to those clients who are on social services and receiving the KidSport funding in order to participate in a program? How widespread is it known to individuals that they can tap into this source of funding for their children - and when I say individuals, I mean social service recipients? How widespread is it that they are

aware that their children or their family can tap into this funding in order for their children to participate in a sport program of their interest?

MR. FERGUSON: We have complete privacy regulations that we had drawn up actually - and this would be included in that - about a year and a half ago that guides all our work around that. In terms of the actual Community Services application, we're bound by that, too. We have regulations on how the information is stored, when it's destroyed, and all those pieces in terms of the privacy. In fact, for the children in social services, all we receive is their stamped application, so we don't have additional information on them. It's just the stamped application from their caseworker.

In terms of how widespread it is, I think it's continuing to grow all the time. It took probably a three- or four-month lag time for it to get started, but with the increases we've seen lately, we are starting to see a greater amount of uptake from the children in the social assistance program. What we're trying to do is work to get our information to all the regional offices, so that, for instance, when you come in and sit in the waiting room or the office our KidSport brochures and programs are on the table there.

MR. PYE: That would be Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCAs, and everyone who would be a part of the chapter?

MR. FERGUSON: Yes. Those are people we try to get in at the community level when we put our chapters together, those representatives.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Wayne.

MR. WAYNE GAUDET: I'm just looking for a clarification. With regard to your funding, how much funding is available province-wide for KidSport?

MR. FERGUSON: How much do we have total? We raise anywhere, again, from about \$120,000 to \$150,000 ourselves, and then there's \$300,000 that is available through the province for allocations. Then, of course, the other \$30,000 goes into the operation and administration of the program.

MR. GAUDET: If someone wants to make a contribution, how do they go about doing that?

MR. FERGUSON: They just have to contact Sport Nova Scotia, and we accept all the donations and issue the receipts.

MR. GAUDET: I'm just curious, what kind of advertising do you do to try to get the word out? I know that I've done a little bit at home. I've had a number of people who have called, and I'll share that with you in a few minutes because I've had some difficulties. But I'm just curious, in terms of getting the word out.

MR. FERGUSON: Obviously we don't like to spend a lot of money on the piece, because we try to give out as much as we can, but we did, this year, actually have an advertising campaign for the first time, an awareness campaign, that went through the province. Maybe David or Catherine could talk a little more about what the particulars of that were. We ran it for about a month, I think, prior to an allocation period, with one of our allocations. In addition to that, what we're trying to do now is work through our regional chapters to help us increase the reach.

Really, the issue for the organization, and this was previous to me being there was that there wasn't a lot of work done in terms of spreading the word or getting the word out, but at the same time we were often in a position where we had no funds to give out, we would run out of money. So it was kind of a touchy scenario as to whether or not they wanted to advertise if they knew that when they got a number of applications in they were going to have to say we don't have any money left to give out.

This year, being that we did have money because we had the additional funds from the province, we did put an advertising campaign in place. Do you want to speak on that, Catherine?

MS. CATHERINE MCKELLAR: There is a comprehensive campaign that was done in October. We relied a great deal on our sponsorship agreements with The ChronicleHerald and Global TV. Global TV ran a commercial that we adapted, we have used it over the course of a number of years. Of course The ChronicleHerald, we had advertisements that appeared in it. Then we also used radio, public service announcements, to get the word out. Our receptionist could tell when those ads were running, because there was a big increase in the number of calls that came in. As Jamie said, we tried not to use a lot of money to run that campaign but relied on our sponsorship agreements and in kind agreements.

MR. GAUDET: I had an opportunity of running an ad at home about KidSport. I received maybe a dozen or so calls. Then I had some further calls that came in, why did you bother advertising, my kids don't qualify. It really caught me off guard, what are you talking about? Looking through your information, the sport has to be registered under Sport Nova Scotia. I'll give you a couple of examples. I had, especially, mothers who came back. Their children were in swimming classes, were in dancing classes, were in bowling leagues at home, but they did not qualify. That really caught me, what are we talking about?

Then, after checking further, I found out that they were not registered with Sport Nova Scotia, so therefore they could not apply for these different activities. How does one go about registering with Sport Nova Scotia? I guess that would be my first question.

MR. FERGUSON: We have 60 provincial sport organizations that are members, and that would include about 160,000 individual members across the province. For instance, if the dance organization that offers these programs was a member of the provincial Dance Nova Scotia, then they would automatically be members and eligible to

participate in the fund. It would depend - each organization has different membership guidelines or regulations. So in some organizations you register as an individual member, and in other provincial sport organizations, clubs or organizations register and all their members are automatically members of the organization. So that's how it works to become a member of Sport Nova Scotia.

MR. GAUDET: So for a dance group or club, if they decided to go and register, how do they go about doing it?

MR. FERGUSON: They can simply contact Dance Nova Scotia through our Web site, the link should be there, and they would get in touch and they would have to register with Dance Nova Scotia. Usually the provincial governing bodies have normal guidelines that are set out, in terms of they have to have safety policies and those types of things in order to become a member. If they are within those guidelines, then I'm sure they would be accepted. There aren't many provincial sport organizations that aren't looking for more members.

MR. GAUDET: I was looking at the B.C. Sport list, and they had bowling on their list, but bowling doesn't qualify in Nova Scotia.

MR. FERGUSON: Bowling has, I believe, a provincial sport organization in Sport British Columbia within that province, and they aren't organized at that level in Nova Scotia. So were they to do that, and that depends because bowling is largely delivered through private clubs across the province rather than not-for-profits or community-based, it would simply require them to form a provincial organization in order to qualify.

MR. GAUDET: My final question. I read that the funding is basically for registration and equipment. Has KidSport considered providing funding for transportation?

MR. FERGUSON: We would consider it. Actually we're looking at a number of areas like that now, because for the first time we're anticipating that we'll have funds to do those things. We were all registration and equipment, because, essentially, that's all the money we had. Now with additional funds, that's something we would consider. What we want to do is see where we end up in the course of this year and next year now that we've increased our uptake, and see, do we have space to start to consider some other means of providing assistance to children to further reduce the barriers. Yes, it is something.

We review annually with the program right now because of the increase we've had in funding, not just what we support but how much do we want to give per allocation, how much do you think we should spend for equipment, those types of things, what's the limit going to be, is it going to be \$300, what about someone who is applying for the second time. We review each of those at the end of each year based on where we stand and what we've given out to see how we think we might help each individual as much as possible without being able to help a broad enough reach.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Diana.

MS. WHALEN: I have a number of questions. I must say I think it's very interesting to see the scope of these sports that are involved in this, and maybe the few that are missing, as was mentioned. I had printed off the list of the 60, and bowling isn't included there. I was just surprised when Wayne asked that question. I didn't realize that that wouldn't have been. So there's obviously a bit of room there that we need to expand.

I wanted to know if you keep wait lists. You indicated the first few years you definitely expended the money before your fiscal year was over. Would you keep names on a wait list, and do you currently have a wait list?

MR. FERGUSON: We don't have a wait list now. I wasn't with this organization, in fact nobody at this table was. We may have as much of a turnover as you people are having today. (Laughter) I don't know if they kept a wait list or not. It's my understanding, based on talking to people who administered the program earlier that they did, that those people who weren't able to receive funding when they came through were first up for funding in the next allocation period, when the funding came in.

The issue with that, of course, is sometimes the activities are gone. So if they didn't have the opportunity to receive the funding then, they may have missed the registration date unless their community organization was actually there to say, okay, we'll pay for this for you now, and then when you get the funding you can reimburse. If that didn't happen, then they would have missed their opportunity to participate. Currently, we don't have a wait list, and we haven't encountered that since we've received the provincial funding. I'm sure we would do much the same thing but, really, the key there is to make sure that the connect is with the community organization so that it doesn't preclude the child from participating.

MS. WHALEN: I understand what you're saying about wanting the money more to go to the children directly rather than spending money on paid advertising and going that route, but is there a fear that if you advertise it widely that you will be overwhelmed, that you don't want to go too far in terms of expectations?

MR. FERGUSON: There is, but I can't tell you how great it would be, really, to be overwhelmed. We would love to have a compelling case to come back and say, look at all the things we would be able to do and be able to provide. So we would be overwhelmed simply by accessing all the children right now who are in the income assistance program in the province. If we did nothing but involve probably 75 per cent of those children, and I forget what all the numbers were when we looked at it, but we could be overwhelmed there without any further. We don't want to be in a position, obviously, where we have to turn people away. We are cognizant of that, but at the same time we are working hard to try to make sure that we are putting forward a very compelling case to demonstrate the amount of need that's out there.

MS. WHALEN: I think the need is huge, as you say, and, really, I'd like to see you in a position where maybe the demand became so great that there would be an outcry and maybe saying to us, as MLAs, come on, you have to help more. We all know the benefits of children being active and being involved in organized sport. The costs are great. I think probably most of us have had children involved in sport and know what that's like. I still have a son playing in minor hockey, and that's a very big cost.

Actually I noticed your maximum amount is \$300 a year. That wouldn't pay the registration fee for minor hockey, let alone the travel and tournaments and things like that. So what do you do? Are there any other organizations that can offset or provide extra money to get a child into a sport that costs more?

MR. FERGUSON: There are other local community funds that work, and of course Canadian Tire now has started their JumpStart program. KidSport works in partnership with Canadian Tire throughout the different communities where the chapters are set up. In addition to that, in the case of some organizations, for instance, hockey in particular, have a program for assistance with equipment and those types of things. It raises money through different events that take place across the country. They have equipment programs where children can get equipment at reduced cost or no cost if they want to participate.

Certainly, again, the \$300 is not enough. My son is in minor hockey as well, it wouldn't cover that registration at all. We're very aware of that. Again, that's why at the end of each year we've had those discussions as to how much should we get, and in fact that \$300 figure is an increase from where we were before.

MS. WHALEN: I was going to ask you what that was.

[9:30 a.m.]

MR. FERGUSON: We've just raised that by \$100. Of all of the discussions that we have at our board level, of course, this is one of the most passionate, obviously, discussions that we have, how much per allocation, are we really helping, are we not helping. That's one of the things, again, as I mentioned to Mr. Gaudet, that we examine every year at the end of the year when we look at our funds.

MS. WHALEN: I'm glad to hear it has gone up, because I was looking at that as well. I wonder if you have any figures available on the number of the children helped who are girls as opposed to boys. There's a lot of evidence that girls are less active. In fact I think it's this month or next, there's an entire month dedicated to an awareness of girls being more athletic, being more involved in sport and activities. I'm wondering, is there a possibility that you could give us a kind of breakdown on that?

MR. FERGUSON: David, do we have a gender breakdown?

MR. WAGG: We don't have the gender breakdown here, but I can definitely follow up, if you would like.

MS. MCKELLAR: We'll send it to the committee.

MS. WHALEN: I think that would be of interest to us. Again, that may be just a question of awareness, whether the girls are paying as much attention, but I would like to see if it's roughly a balanced approach there. On the equipment, again, it's for the purchase of new equipment. I'm wondering, do we do any equipment exchanges? A lot of the equipment is very expensive, particularly in sports like hockey, but in a lot of sports, their children grow, they outgrow that size, and I'm wondering, is there any encouragement to have people donate that?

MR. FERGUSON: David, do you want to talk about the program that we're just starting, donation of equipment?

MR. WAGG: We are starting a new equipment program in partnership with Cleve's Source for Sports, in which they will offer a discount to individuals who bring used equipment in to Cleve's locations. They have agreed to store that equipment for us, since it would be quite overwhelming to keep all the equipment at our offices.

MR. FERGUSON: The smell of it alone. (Laughter)

MR. WAGG: Absolutely.

MS. WHALEN: I don't want to go there, one hockey bag is enough. (Laughter)

MR. WAGG: We are in the initial stages of that development, and we're going to sort of pilot that and see how the progress works. Actually KidSport in Manitoba does this quite well, and we're trying to use their model to adopt in Nova Scotia.

MS. WHALEN: I think that sounds like a positive thing. Can you tell me about HRM Kids? Is that your local organization, when you were talking about the chapters?

MR. FERGUSON: That's a different fund. That's a local fund that works with children in just this region. We are likely in touch with them and would be partnering with them when we deliver.

MR. WAGG: Their coordinator actually sits on our KidSport chapter, as well as the Canadian Tire JumpStart chapter, which I am a part of. So it is a collaboration between all of the organizations to make sure that we distribute to all the individuals.

MR. FERGUSON: To give you an example of that, the JumpStart program through Canadian Tire, because it has different rules and operational guidelines because it's through their Foundation for Families, which is charitable, as opposed to an RCAA, has a broader

guideline of assistance. For instance, in areas where we sit together, often when those applications come in for KidSport for children who want to take part, let's say, in a program that's not part of a Sport Nova Scotia member-based program or doesn't fit the sustained sport program, we can steer those applications to the JumpStart program through Canadian Tire and try to get assistance in that manner.

MS. WHALEN: That's a good idea. On those sports that are not included, I'm thinking if people live in an area and want to start a program themselves to involve kids in a particular area or get kids more active, they wouldn't really be able to access your funds, if it's more ad hoc, if they've just started it up with all the best intentions. Is there any plan to expand beyond your 60-member organization so that you could use your own judgment in assessing programs?

MR. FERGUSON: In terms of is there any plan for Sport Nova Scotia to increase its membership base, or to start looking at allocating outside of our member organizations?

MS. WHALEN: Outside of your member organizations. If you know, for example, the bowling league is a legitimate bowling league in a given area and that they're meeting on a regular basis, it's sustained and whatnot, but they're not a member.

MR. FERGUSON: That's one of the discussions we'll be having with the formation of KidSport Canada. Again, across the country one of the issues with this is we were for a long period of time, as were most of the other provinces, running out of money all the time. So there wasn't an issue of do we want to look beyond this, do we want to get broader. But, yes, that is something that we've had discussions on within our membership. It's not a simple discussion, because obviously we're a member-based federated organization and we're here to provide services for our members and to increase participation numbers, but it is something that we would have a look at.

In terms of new ad hoc programs starting, there are other programs and allocations that are available for those types of programs to get started within communities. A couple - I'm trying to think of one right now, there's the physical activity grants that are available through what is now Nova Scotia Health Promotion and Protection. There are monies available through that to have new programs which give benefits of physical activity or even for the expansion of existing programs, so there are some programs like that where funding does exist for new start-ups that may not be on the scene or ad hoc, as you say.

MS. WHALEN: Can I ask you, was your organization involved in any way with the new tax credit for kids who are involved in sport? We're all doing our income tax right about now, and I'm wondering if you were involved in advising at all on that?

MR. FERGUSON: I met with Farida Gabanni, who was the Senior Director of the Physical Activity, Sport and Recreation Division of what was then Nova Scotia Health Promotion, and we had discussions on the tax credit and what the potential was for it and

to try to get the word out. We did some work within our membership to try to spread the word about the tax credit.

MS. WHALEN: You wouldn't be involved in where it's headed in the future, though?

MR. FERGUSON: No - I'd like to be. I'll be asking to be involved in where it's headed in the future.

MS. WHALEN: I guess I'd like to say I think it's a good first move and it's nice to recognize the funds that parents and families are putting into sport for their kids, but it certainly is a small amount when you work out the credit. It's \$150 maximum and then it becomes a percentage of that. I believe it's about \$15 that comes off the bottom line of your taxes. Again, I know a lot of parents were excited and asking about having the opportunity to do that, but it seems pretty insignificant, that's my worry, that it's the right direction but it's insignificant. Anyway, I'm going to pass to the next speaker, and perhaps I'll get another round.

DR. JOHN HAMM: Madam Chairman, I enjoyed the presentation. I certainly had many of my questions already answered as a result of questions that have been fielded already. One of the suggestions I would make is that now that we have local chapters, it would be useful if the chapters made contact with all of the local MLAs. Some would actually be involved with a number. As MLAs, sometimes we become aware of this particular need, so I think establishing a contact would be helpful. I think all MLAs would be used as caseworkers or case finders, and I think it's a pretty cheap way to do business. I would encourage chapters to do that very thing.

I was particularly interested in the questions around the different kinds of sports, in terms of the relative inequity of cost of sport today. Hockey is the obvious one. I have a grandson in a soccer program, which is relatively inexpensive, but he's also in a hockey program, which is relatively expensive. How do you deal with that? For example, for a relatively small amount of money you can actually get a youngster in a soccer program and equipped for a soccer program. Do you deal with that on the basis of actual cost or simply that this is an application and they get a certain amount of money?

MR. FERGUSON: We actually give out what the registration amount would be . . .

DR. HAMM: So it's an actual cost.

MR. FERGUSON: . . . and we would pay the registration amount directly to the association. And it works the same way for the equipment.

DR. HAMM: It might be useful if you could provide, eventually, some idea of the applications that are really not being suitably addressed because the amount of funding really doesn't represent the real need in terms of a particular sport.

MR. FERGUSON: Absolutely. Hockey comes to mind on that. Other sports enter into that realm, usually once they become a more competitive level, but at the grassroots participatory level, which is mostly what this fund deals with, hockey is one of the few that actually is over and above what our current level of funding is. But we do have records of children per area per sport, how many applications per sport we're getting, and we track that each year.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Gary.

MR. HINES: I'm interested in your equipment program. To what degree have you gotten involved in that? The NHL Players' Association and the Major League Baseball Players Association have programs that when they're accessed are very beneficial in providing equipment. Do you access that presently? What professional athletes would you be involved with?

MR. FERGUSON: Do we access their programs?

MR. HINES: Yes.

MR. FERGUSON: No, we've worked with them and we do some work with the NHL Players' Association through some of their fundraising projects. They actually donate from one of the events they have each year, Maritime NHLers for Kids. They give a portion of their proceeds to the KidSport program each year for that. We've dealt with Rick Bowness through there. Our biggest contact through there has actually been Mike McPhee, who is on the executive of our board of directors. Mike has been a good help for us in that area as well. The only way we would deal with them, unless David has something new that I'm not aware of, would be to indicate or get the message out to children that those programs exist. Our program would be separate, in terms of the equipment, from their program, but this would be something that we would tell them, yes, there are additional - not funds - avenues to get equipment for children who want to participate in those programs.

MR. HINES: The Major League Baseball Players Association, they have an interactive program with the baseball community as well. I think that entails some equipment distribution and that kind of thing, as well, but at what level, I'm not sure. The other thing I want to do is get a little plug in, too, for our community. We just recently announced a multimillion dollar sports facility for the Bedford Commons. It also has the children's village. I don't know if you're familiar with the concept of the children's villages, but in terms of interacting with communities, you might be interested in making a contact with Dwight Hennigar, who is with the HRM Police. He is the coordinator of things surrounding the children's village. It's a good program, and you might be interested in it, and how you may be able to interact with them. It deals with street smarts for little kids, and in terms of street smarts, you can tie in the sports aspect of it, too, I think. So it

might be interesting to get hold of Dwight and make that contact. I just wanted to make that suggestion to you.

MR. FERGUSON: That's great, thank you.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Gordie.

MR. GORDON GOSSE: First, I'd like to say thank you for coming in today and doing this presentation. I'm quite familiar with the KidSport program. My name is on many applications that have gone through in my former job. I probably have my signature on 100 applications. I'm very glad of recommendations years ago. I was there when it first launched in Cape Breton, actually with Fabian Joseph and Theresa MacCuish, and I think Scott Logan, at the time, was there. That's 11 years ago, I think. I still see the picture of those kids, who were there at Keddy's for their picture, in the program. I'm very glad it's tied in with Community Services, because we're actually reaching some of the kids who are in need, in low-income families, and those are the ones who have to get physically active.

The question I'd like to ask today is, does the program receive any money from the Gaming Foundation of the Province of Nova Scotia?

MR. FERGUSON: Well, it's funny you should ask that, because according to The Daily News yesterday we are receiving \$100,000 from the Gaming Foundation. So we just set up our accounts receivable to get that cheque. (Laughter) Actually, we don't receive any money through that. I believe that \$100,000 that was in the paper yesterday is actually cost recovery that goes through Nova Scotia Health Promotion and Protection. We don't receive direct monies through them.

We receive a base funding grant through Nova Scotia Health Promotion and Protection for the operation of Sport Nova Scotia itself, and we receive another grant to operate an administrative centre, which has to run at a break-even each year. So it just depends on the number of members we're servicing and other bodies or organizations that are approved by the provincial government.

MR. GOSSE: In that case, I'm just wondering now, when that grant comes from the Office of Health Promotion, it's not divvied up through the district health authorities, across the province, because they changed the criteria on the Gaming Foundation and those physical activity grants are now going through the district health authorities. You don't deal with the district health authority to access your funding?

MR. FERGUSON: No, we don't deal with the district health authorities.

MR. GOSSE: I wish I could be as positive as my colleague, Mr. Hines, and say I could make an announcement of a sports complex, but someday in the future we'll have that in my community, I hope. We do have lots of outdoor activities and we have a youth

centre, and we're pretty active. The Whitney Pier Youth Club has always been involved with the KidSport program. I was executive director, and now Chester Bordon is there and still involved with your program. I would like to thank you for all the work in the community of Whitney Pier and Ashby over the years.

MR. FERGUSON: Thank you very much. I know Chester, he has done great work there.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Dave.

MR. DAVID WILSON (Glacé Bay): Thank you very much for your presentation. I'm aware to a certain extent of KidSport because I think at one time or another as an MLA you're asked to sign an application for your program. I'm interested in a couple of things. One, you take great pride in noting that you have nothing to do with government funding, in what I've read anyway, but you do, do you not?

[9:45 a.m.]

MR. FERGUSON: Absolutely.

MR. DAVID WILSON (Glacé Bay): I was confused by that, where it said that you don't rely on government funds.

MR. FERGUSON: Well, we don't rely on government funds to operate the program, but we're very pleased to work in partnership with the government.

MR. DAVID WILSON (Glacé Bay): But indirectly you rely on government funds to bring you your clients, do you not?

MR. FERGUSON: For KidSport?

MR. DAVID WILSON (Glacé Bay): Yes.

MR. FERGUSON: Absolutely, and we've been very pleased with the partnership that we have with the government.

MR. DAVID WILSON (Glacé Bay): So there is a connection. My other area of interest is in the organizations that are able to, and it's been made mention of already, access your program. I'll give you an example, there's probably about 350 kids involved in Little League Baseball in Glacé Bay. As a matter of fact we're very famous for Little League Baseball in Glacé Bay, we hold national championships and we win national championships, and we do have a sports complex in Glacé Bay, as well. The BAYplex, it's called.

Having said that, probably two teams out of those 350 kids or about 30 kids would be registered with the minor baseball teams that are in Sport Nova Scotia, but I don't know, and this is a question, if the rest of those little leaguers would be eligible for your program. Now, having said that, and perhaps you can check it out, the Little League registration, I think, would be under \$50. Therefore, it would provide your program a great opportunity to get a large number of children involved in a sporting activity, as opposed to minor hockey that costs \$300 or \$400, or, as Dr. Hamm said, minor soccer which is relatively less expensive. If you could just check into that, I'd be interested because Little League Canada is not a member of Sport Nova Scotia.

MR. FERGUSON: Yes, we're very aware of that scenario. In fact I'm a friend of Doug McKenzie, who is the Atlantic representative, I believe . . .

MR. DAVID WILSON (Glace Bay): He is the regional director.

MR. FERGUSON: Yes, on their board. We've had some discussions on that.

MR. DAVID WILSON (Glace Bay): Would little leaguers qualify for your program?

MR. FERGUSON: Under their program, if they weren't registering for minor baseball, it would be a decision on Baseball Nova Scotia's part whether or not they said yes, we're going to authorize that request. The truth of the matter is that due to the cost we haven't received any applications or any issues with that, because the cost just isn't that great. We've been working and having some discussions with Baseball Nova Scotia and the Little League branch to see if they can put their programs together. There are obviously some issues that they need to overcome to get to that point, but we haven't encountered that situation as of yet, to be honest with you.

MR. DAVID WILSON (Glace Bay): There was a period of years there that Little League registration in Glace Bay was free, and that was due to the revenue that was generated by the national tournament, which in turn went to the Little League Board of Directors and they supplied free registration for 300, 400 players for a period of years. That may have worn off by now. I'm almost certain that it has, as a matter of fact, and that your program - but those players would not be eligible, currently, under your program.

MR. FERGUSON: As I understand it right now, no, they wouldn't.

MR. DAVID WILSON (Glace Bay): If you would, I would request of you that you just check into that further. Perhaps there is something that could be offered. I don't think a number of the Little League people would be aware of your program not being available to them. I don't know if you've rejected any applications because of that or not. It's a large number of kids who are involved who perhaps could be using your program, but they don't have access to it.

The other question I had was about the partnership that's there with Community Services. Could you just explain that a little more to us, please? You said that the cases are signed off by a caseworker?

MR. FERGUSON: Yes, through the income assistance program in the regional offices. They have a stamp, and we've talked with Community Services here and they've said this would be the stamp, each caseworker would have a stamp, and they simply have to stamp the application and send it in. That's the approval method.

MR. DAVID WILSON (Glace Bay): That's all there is to it?

MR. FERGUSON: Yes, they just fill out the form, here's the activity, here's what they're going to do, and when it comes to saying - instead of providing household income or anything like that, the application is stamped through the Community Services staff person and sent to us, and that's it.

MR. DAVID WILSON (Glace Bay): Just one final point, Madam Chairman, and that would be, I don't know if you're aware of it or not, but the Minor Hockey Association in Glace Bay and in other areas across the province and in Cape Breton are usually forced into having 50/50 draws. The one in Glace Bay is quite successful. I think the last draw they had was for \$38,000, and they've had them as high as \$60,000, on an even split, which mostly goes toward payment of ice time for minor hockey, as I understand it. That's their biggest allocation, ice time. The equipment and so on and the registration is still left up to the individual child to pay, and that's, as we've mentioned here already, a major amount of money in some cases if you combine the two. Your \$300 maximum that you have now, you said it's just recently that that went up to \$300?

MR. FERGUSON: Yes, it is.

MR. DAVID WILSON (Glace Bay): Do you review that on an annual basis?

MR. FERGUSON: Yes, we do.

MR. DAVID WILSON (Glace Bay): And there's a possibility, depending on how much money you have, that that would be increased again?

MR. FERGUSON: Yes, if we were in a position to give out more per allocation, we would do that.

MR. DAVID WILSON (Glace Bay): I think you have a very worthwhile organization. Thank you.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Ernie.

MR. ERNEST FAGE: I just wanted to compliment you on your fine presentation. A lot of the questions that had occurred to me, or the details, have been answered. But there's one circumstance I just wanted to know for clarity. A lot of sports centre around facilities or clubs related to educational facilities, schools. Some schools will have a ski club, if they're somewhere near a facility, and there are a few with golf-type club arrangements. Those types of sports that are centred around school activities but not on the site of the school property, like a ski club, are they eligible, or would you be involved with those types of clubs?

MR. FERGUSON: Some of those are organizations or clubs that are members of their provincial organizations, and some of them aren't. So it really depends on a case-by-case issue on which ones are involved and which ones aren't. In addition to that, we've done a fair amount of work with schools over the past couple of years with our After School Physical Activity Program, to get involved with those types of programs. From my work that I've done as a reviewer of the physical activity grants, a number of those school-based clubs are also applying for and receiving funding through the physical activity grants that are given out through Nova Scotia Health Promotion and Protection.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: With the permission of the committee members, since we don't have a vice-chairman, I was wondering if I could ask a few questions from the Chair.

MR. DAVID WILSON (Glace Bay): Pretty dicey, Madam Chairman. (Laughter)

MADAM CHAIRMAN: You can give me a signal if I go on too long.

This is a very interesting topic, and I just want to say I think the first time I became aware of KidSport was when a young friend of mine, Jessica Fraser, did a fundraiser by swimming across the Northumberland Strait from Nova Scotia to P.E.I. a number of years ago. I believe the money went towards KidSport in its early days. I hadn't heard an awful lot since, so I really appreciate Dr. Hamm's suggestion that perhaps we do need to get briefings as MLAs so that we can promote this within our own constituencies.

I have three areas I would like to pursue. One, I am a little concerned about the number of families that are benefiting from income assistance from the province and just how many of them are able to take advantage of this funding program. I'm wondering if you've done any analysis to give me a percentage of how many of your current recipients may have come through the Department of Community Services application route?

MR. FERGUSON: I'm not sure. I'll ask David if we have that with us, or if it's something we could send.

MR. WAGG: I believe we do. In 2005, we had around 920 applications, and around 200 of those were directly identifiable as Community Services applications.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Do you have any idea how many of those 200 actually received the grants?

MR. WAGG: That would have been approved grants.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: I think this is an area we need to improve upon, because it would make sense to suggest that people receiving income assistance are the lowest-income families in our province. I think sometimes there's a huge jump in terms of expecting them to apply for this grant.

I want to move over to an issue that several members have already raised, and that's which sports and activities are sort of benefiting from the criteria that you have with the program. First of all, I need to check, is Recreation Nova Scotia a member of Sport Nova Scotia?

MR. FERGUSON: Yes, they are one of our affiliate members. We work in partnership with Recreation Nova Scotia.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: So would people enrolled in the members of Recreation Nova Scotia be eligible for KidSport funding?

MR. FERGUSON: Well, Recreation Nova Scotia wouldn't directly deliver any programs. The programs would be delivered through the municipalities across the province, and some of those municipalities and municipal programs are members of provincial sport organizations, and not all of them are. There are some municipal organizations that deliver programs that are actually part of the provincial organization. They get certified instructors and those types of things. So those, again, would be.

If there were any of those programs being offered that weren't members, they wouldn't. Now that would be a pretty small number. I can ask David, but we don't deal with very many applications that we say aren't within our parameters for funding on an annual basis. We don't encounter very much of that. One of the things that has really helped us, now, again, is the advent of the JumpStart program. Where we are sitting together on those committees, we're able to move those applications. So we don't see that come up very much with that, but again that would be on a case-by-case basis within each municipal unit.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Perhaps there isn't an issue here, but I guess what I am wondering is there seems to be a lot of recreation-based physical activity and sports events and groups that are not what you would call fully-fledged sports. I'm just wondering, could that be a transition piece into regular sport involvement? Is there some way that the funding barriers to some of the recreation-type sports could be covered by your program? I'm not clear on whether you're saying it already is.

MR. FERGUSON: Those ones who would be members of their provincial organization are. Recreation Nova Scotia has also recently started an assistance fund for some of their recreation programs, and of course we're aware of that and we've been involved just a little bit in seeing that come down the wire as it has begun. So I'm assuming that takes a piece of that slack away again, and the JumpStart piece will also fill in for some of that. My hope is that we can all grab our niche and fulfill all the needs we have within our own niche.

As I said before, we would be open to examining, do we want to broaden the scope of this program based on having the funds available to do so. The issue with us is twofold, it is in addition to whether or not the organization is a member. There is a question of the definition of the sustained sport activity itself. So there are some programs that don't fit within the definition of the sustained sport activity, for instance a one-day camp wouldn't fit within the parameters of what we're allowed to give out our funding for, based on our guidelines and regulations.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: But as your funding revenue increases, it gives you more flexibility to look at those, that broader picture.

MR. FERGUSON: Yes.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Can you tell me if the provincial sports organization across Canada is usually the lead sponsor for KidSport in their province, or are there collaborations in that . . .

MR. FERGUSON: The deliverers of the KidSport program, in every case, are the members of the Canadian Council for Provincial and Territorial Sport Federations, I believe with the exception of Alberta because Alberta does not have a provincial sport federation, it's through the Alberta Parks and Wildlife Recreation Association. So there's a separate KidSport organization that acts as the chapter there, but it works in partnership with that section of the provincial government that works with their sports. It was this group, this council that initially was set up to get the RCAA number to deliver the program.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: And a last quick question, how is the money from KidSport distributed across the province? Is it based on where the applications come from? Is it based on population? Is it based on geography? What sort of criteria do you use for the allocation of money?

MR. FERGUSON: Currently we've been able to answer or give money out for all the applications we've received, so we haven't run into a point where we've had to say that's enough for this region or that region or the regional chapters. David, we do, I believe, give a piece so that the regional chapters have an understanding of what they'll have to deal with throughout the year. Maybe you can explain how that formula works for each regional chapter.

MR. WAGG: It's a formula based solely on population right now. So each chapter is given a budget to work with. We do have reserve funds, often, if there is a chapter that's really exceeding demand and doing a very good job, then there are extra funds that we can try to dip into to help fulfill the needs in that area.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: We'll now start the second round of questions. I have Diana and Jerry on the list. Does anyone else want to indicate further questions at this point?

[10:00 a.m.]

MS. WHALEN: I wonder if you could give us the geographic breakdown of the funds that have been given - I don't know, Madam Chairman, if you had gone that far in asking that. Along with the gender, maybe the geographic distribution of funds understanding that you've met all the requests.

MR. FERGUSON: We do have it. Is it in the package, David?

MS. WHALEN: If it is, maybe you could just tell us where and I'll get it afterwards. Perhaps you could give it to us at the end, and Mora could get a photocopy of that one page. We have a big package. It takes some time to get through it.

I had a couple of questions. We talked about 920 applicants being accepted last year. Do you have the number on how many might have applied who were refused because they weren't approved sports?

MR. WAGG: I don't have the number on hand. It's a small number.

MS. WHALEN: It's not substantial?

MR. WAGG: No, it's not.

MS. WHALEN: Maybe that could be one more little piece of information, so we would know. Given the experience that Wayne has had in the Clare area, I'd like to promote this program as well, but it's a little bit worrisome if we do create an expectation for families that they can be helped and then we would feel we had done wrong by not explaining all of the caveats that go with that. That would be of concern to me.

Last night actually I attended an event for Special Olympics. They had a big dinner and fundraiser at the World Trade and Convention Centre. I'm wondering, within your framework, have you looked at all at sports that are for intellectually challenged or disabled athletes?

MR. FERGUSON: Yes, we do. Special Olympics is a member of Sport Nova Scotia, so we do work with them on some of their programs. We do, obviously, recognize

that those who are challenged intellectually or physically are recognized as inactive groups, and so we do work with our sport organizations to try to design programs specifically around those, much as we do work to try to design programs specifically for females as well, because they've also been recognized as inactive.

MS. WHALEN: Are there any sports specifically, like wheelchair sports or leagues like that that would be funded under KidSport?

MR. FERGUSON: Well, if those people applied, they would be, but we deal with them in a lot of other ways. We have requests through our Nova Scotia Amateur Sport Fund, which gives money to provincial and community organizations and leaders to have programs. For instance, I think there are programs out there, a number of them, that work right now - we work with Deaf Sport, which is a member of our organization. We've also done work with a number of other organizations. I'm trying to think, wheelchair basketball, there's a wheelchair component to the tennis organization, as well, and in fact there's obviously a broad number of those opportunities that exist throughout the different provincial organizations in the province now. We work with them.

I'm not aware of what percentage of requests or any requests we get through those. To a great extent they try to absorb costs themselves, when they put those types of programs on and not to charge the participants, because they're trying to encourage participation.

MS. WHALEN: It was very interesting. They had a lot of the athletes there, telling us what it means to them. It was a really nice event for us to get a window on what they're doing right across the province. There were participants there from all corners of the province. It was great, and kind of an eye-opener for me as well to see that. So I'm glad to see that you are including them in your support.

On your organization chart, there's another fund called the Nova Scotia Amateur Sport Fund. What's the relationship there?

MR. FERGUSON: The Nova Scotia Amateur Sport Fund is run through, again, the same RCAA number as a separate fund. What we use that for is we give out money on an annual basis to athletes, coaches, officials, community and provincial sport organizations. The athletes receive funding based on performance, so we've worked with the province and with the Canadian Sport Centre Atlantic so that we have a grid of how athletes would qualify. It all falls under - it starts with the federal system of carding for the Olympic athletes and moves down.

The sport fund tries to fill the gap beneath those athletes who wouldn't receive funding from the federal or provincial government but would be on the verge of or on the cusp of moving up to the next level. The funds we give out to coaches and officials are to develop leadership positions within the province for coaches and officials, so those coaches or officials who might be able to move on and do work at a national or international level and then be back here and doing clinics or training or qualifications work within their own

sport, and the money to the community and provincial-based organizations are primarily for work that is going to expand their group, their participation base. So it's to increase the number of people to put on programs that would allow more people to participate in sport rather than helping individuals.

MS. WHALEN: But you say they do help the individuals who fall just below the sort of . . .

MR. FERGUSON: The athlete's piece does, yes. We divide it up into different pieces. So you can apply to that fund through an athlete application or through a coaching application or through an official's application, or your community organization, each application is a little bit different because it serves different purposes.

MS. WHALEN: But most of the people helped or most of the groups would be for more accomplished athletes?

MR. FERGUSON: No, that would be a small - probably, if we give out, in essence, and the figure varies per year, usually a minimum of \$50,000 to community and provincial sport organizations for broad-based participation programming. We may give \$25,000 to \$30,000 per year to athletes.

MS. WHALEN: I'm just interested because I do think there seems like a number of overlapping groups, and it's good that you're the executive director, maybe you can keep them all coordinated, and there's enough boards and committees that keep you coordinated. I'm just trying to probe that a little bit.

Now I have a question which relates to HRM, which is where I have most of my experience, here in the city. In HRM the municipality draws a line between what they consider recreational sport and what they consider competitive sport. They try to put the competitive, or as they've defined it competitive, onto the shoulders of the provincial government, and say that is not their job, their job is recreation. I'm wondering, as a recreational specialist, could you just comment on that, and how it works in terms of delivering sport?

MR. FERGUSON: You don't mind if I just check the clock. (Interruptions) My definition of sport, and I've worked in sport all my life, is that sport is anything from kicking a poorly inflated basketball around your front yard with your children to participating at the Olympics. We have a very broad, all-inclusive view of what sport is. My view, from being involved in sport from outside the administrative piece, because I worked for a long time as a professional coach but not on the administrative end, was that the users of sport and recreation programs see no difference.

The divide exists within the administrators and the bureaucracies that operate these programs, not at the ground level. You can go to any participant who is in any community with their children in sport and ask them, is this a sport program or a recreation program,

and they would have no idea what you're talking about. For instance, t-ball is a broad-based participatory program. It's sport in my mind. It's all some form of sport, and there's a blend. You can't really split the system up, because anywhere you draw the line, you're going to be providing a disconnect. So the wish is to work together on all these things.

Now there are other parts of physical activity that perhaps don't meet what the definition of sport would be, but there's not a lot. If you see people walking in the Olympics, then potentially everybody who goes for a walk at lunchtime is participating in a sport. So, really, it depends on how you want to see it. Our view of it is it's all inclusive, and there shouldn't be a difference in any physically active exercise. In fact when we go to teach our after-school physical activity program to the schools that we're working in across the province, we don't teach a specific sport, we teach fundamentals, play games, throw balls, work on coordination and dexterity, things that will allow children to then take up sports that they can play forever. But if someone were to suggest to me that that wasn't a sport program, I would say of course it is. It's just not a specific program to any one individual sport, but it's a program that will help children get the physically active experience they need to be able to compete.

So I don't see a disconnect from the angle that I come at, and high-performance sport, for instance, again depends on your definition. The reality is that Canadian Sport Centre Atlantic takes care of the high-performance athletes who are recognized at a national level from our province. So there would maybe be about 50, give or take, which curling team happens to make it into the Olympic trials that year or not, of those high-performance athletes within Nova Scotia.

Again, our membership is about 160,000. So for my mind, the goal of provincial sport organizations is to increase participation and to help build a pathway where people can have an opportunity to try an activity, then learn the fundamentals if they want to keep going, and then have an opportunity to play, whether that's at a competitive level or a social level, it doesn't matter. From the sport world, in terms of provincial sport organizations and national ones, national sport organizations generally deal with all the high-performance needs of their athletes, and provincial sport organizations deal with all the participation.

MS. WHALEN: So it's a continuum for that participation, as you say, from backyard activity right through to sports. Again, thinking of the Special Olympics last night, the competitive part of it is very much a continuum for those participants.

MR. FERGUSON: Absolutely.

MS. WHALEN: They love coming together and competing. It's part of the experience. I think that's very helpful. That division has created and does create some stress between city objectives and provincial objectives. I'm thinking specifically of our aim to get better facilities in the Mainland Common to serve all of the western region of Halifax, because it's also one of the approved projects for HRM, but there's a division between what exactly the scope should be of that project. Again, I think it's worth mentioning, there

are 200,000 people within a 20-minute radius of that location, and there are scarcely any facilities to serve that population. So it's a good opportunity to get that oar in as well, since other MLAs have talked about their individual areas. I appreciate that. I have only one last question . . .

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Actually, Diana, if you could save that.

MS. WHALEN: I will, because we have a long answer here . . .

MR. PYE: Madam Chairman, I had not realized that my colleague would be so long and so in-depth on this subject, but I must say that it's informative and it's certain eye-opening. I'll try not to be as long. My concern comes back to you, Jamie, when you said you would be overwhelmed if you were just to address the issues of children in poverty, particularly children on social assistance. I recognized how long the row is to hoe when you responded to the chairperson's comment with the number of children who are on social assistance who received a KidSport grant; some 200 individuals I think you had suggested had made application.

I attended a Sport Nova Scotia Annual Dinner, this was one of their fundraising ventures for KidSport. On the table at that dinner there was a little card that indicated that some 44,000 Nova Scotia children live in poverty and are too poor to be actively involved in sport - that's not mine, that was on the little card at the dinner table if you'll recall. I don't know if you do recall that or not.

MR. FERGUSON: Yes, I do.

MR. PYE: As a matter of fact part of the fundraising venture was that you could pick one of the coloured balloons to get a particular prize, and you paid for it. My concern was that I didn't know what the definition of children was. I went back to my office and I contacted Statistics Canada to ask what the definition of a child might be. They said a child is a person between the ages of zero to 14, and there are 176,000 children living in Nova Scotia. So that's about 25 per cent of your population who are too poor to be actively involved in sport. That's a reality.

The reality is that many of the young children who are impoverished will be a long time waiting to receive a real benefit - and this is not a criticism, I believe this is a factual statement - unless there are additional dollars put in by provincial and by corporate sponsors into the purse of KidSport Nova Scotia in order to dispense those dollars.

With respect to the participants and how they participate in a sport is in their ability to pay. Many poor children do not actually get entertained in the sport in which he or she might love to be simply because of affordability. That is a crime in itself, if you don't mind my saying. I represent, and there are some of us who represent constituencies where we have more than an inordinate number of persons who are on social assistance. The demand through our office comes loud and clear, particularly during the Summer when they know

there is a sport which for some apparent reason allows them to at least be able to access some funding and be actively involved in.

I think, in fairness, this is one of the major reasons why we have seen such a tremendous decline in some of our historically known sports, such as baseball and hockey, and particularly minor baseball in Nova Scotia, and particularly in some parts of Nova Scotia, a tremendous decline where children have moved from there into soccer. Not to diminish the sport of soccer as an international sport and it's wide growing, but it's much cheaper to be actively involved in soccer and more children have a chance to participate than in minor baseball, a team of nine versus a team of 11 and so on.

[10:15 a.m.]

So there is a really serious problem with respect to how you address that very issue in itself. I don't know if you've looked at it or not, or if there is some way that you can further entrench KidSport Nova Scotia into probably changing the ratio of the number of children who are on social assistance to be a greater benefactor through KidSport than some of the other sport programs that might be available. There are always these numbers that you can move around and shift around. It's truly alarming that only 200 of those 44,000 in this province - and I would assume that those numbers are across the province - last year, were recipients. I can tell you that that in itself will take forever to resolve.

MR. FERGUSON: I think you're right. We've seen an increased number just recently. We didn't get this rolling full out as soon as the funding came in, obviously. We had our coordinator to hire, we had some initial meetings to put things together. It's my hope that now that we've seen, especially, as I mentioned, in our last two allocation periods, such a broad increase that we'll continue to move that forward. But we need to continue to work, it's not something we can let go, we need to work at that. We need to work at the sport programs themselves, especially with some of the traditional sports, as you say.

There's competition out there in the sport world, and we are competing for people's leisure time. We need to make sure that we know that it's no longer going to be simple for kids to get involved in sport because you got involved in sport or I got involved in sport. There are a lot of other activities out there. I can see that when I have to pick my eight-year-old up by the collar of his sweatshirt and throw him outside in the day so he won't keep playing his X-Box games. There are all kinds of things that exist now that we're competing with, and from a general sporting view, we need to make sure that we're making our product as attractive as it can be, so that it's simple to try and it's successful to try and it's as fun to try as these other games.

From a Community Services connect point of view, we need to continue to work with the regional chapters. I think the contact with the MLAs that was suggested is a terrific idea to make sure we're increasing the awareness at that level, too.

MR. PYE: Madam Chairman, that will suffice.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: I have one other question, but my name is the only one left on the round.

MR. GAUDET: You made reference to the JumpStart program that Canadian Tire is offering. I guess looking at the fact that there are people applying who don't qualify, chances are the people who don't qualify under KidSport would probably qualify under the Canadian Tire JumpStart program. I had heard of it, but very little about it. I'm just curious, how does one go about applying? Do you have any information on the JumpStart program?

MR. FERGUSON: David can give you that.

MR. WAGG: Their program varies across the province. They use different models in different areas. Some chapters of JumpStart made their own application and made it an application process. Other areas use community partners, such as the YMCA and the Boys and Girls Clubs, and actually Big Brothers/Big Sisters has just come on board in HRM to sort of get in the mix and help. As I said, in some areas it's an application process, and anyone who is not considered through KidSport, we do our best to suggest the JumpStart route or another community fund that exists in your area. As Jamie mentioned, there are several communities that have local funds that provide sport and recreational opportunities.

MR. GAUDET: So you do relay that information back to whoever applied?

MR. WAGG: We do it, obviously within confidentiality. We don't want to pass the names over, but we do, in some cases, provide applications or the medium in which to get the application, and let them know how they can go through another process.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: I just have one quick question. There's another large group of children who are under the direct responsibility of the Department of Community Services, the children in permanent and temporary care of the minister. I'm just wondering, are foster children given the same opportunity to apply through the Department of Community Services and automatically have their applications stamped?

MR. WAGG: We do approve the children in care, absolutely. Anyone who is under the blanket of Community Services does get approved for the program.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Okay. So it's not just the income assistance route. Thank you very much.

Gordie, and then a motion.

MR. GOSSE: Madam Chairman, I'm enjoying the presentation, it's great. You said nine out of 12 regions, when are the other three regions coming on board? Is there a timeline for that?

MR. FERGUSON: David can give you that.

MR. WAGG: Actually I have the individuals in place for Lunenburg County specifically. We should be launching very soon in that area. I'm hoping to do some more communication with them, and basically some more schooling on how the program works. We've also had preliminary conversations with individuals in Inverness-Richmond, as well as in Antigonish-Guysborough to get the program operational in those areas. It's going to take a little bit more travelling to the area, and recruitment of individuals as well.

MR. GOSSE: As we all know, as MLAs, and society in general, you'd much rather see a young person on the basketball court than in the law courts.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Diana.

MS. WHALEN: I'd like to make a motion, if I could, for the committee's consideration. I'd like to have this committee write to and ask the Minister of Community Services if he would ensure that all the caseworkers across the province will inform their clients, whether they're foster children or children who fall under the social assistance umbrella, just to ensure that they are being informed. We heard that only 200 children who were approved this year were from social assistance.

I've written it up, that the committee ask that we write to the Minister of Community Services and ask that he instruct the caseworkers across the province to inform all of their clients who have children who are eligible about the KidSport program.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Is there any discussion?

MR. DAVID WILSON (Glace Bay): It's not on the motion, but I'd like to make a point that Jamie brought forward himself when we were discussing the little leaguers in Glace Bay, that it may not be a problem because of low registration, but \$30, \$40, \$50 may not be a problem to us, but for a single mother on income assistance, it's a huge chunk out of their monthly income that they'd have to pay for that little leaguer to play ball. If they don't know about it, you may be doing them a big favour here by informing them through Community Services. I'm just speaking in support of the motion.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Is there any further discussion? Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Thank you all very much for coming. That was most informative, and I'm just wondering if any of you would like to have a few closing comments before you leave.

MR. FERGUSON: I just wanted to say thank you very much. This is a great program. As with all these programs in our experience in sport, one of the most difficult

things to do is to give money away. It always comes with challenges, but at the very core of this is that, yes, there are parameters around this program, yes, there are parameters around the JumpStart program and the community programs, but it's great that they're there. Every one of them serves a great purpose, and the more we can grow them and broaden the reach, whether it's by broadening the parameters of each program or by having the programs work better together as partners, the end goal is the same. The end goal will be a benefit for the children in this province. Again, thank you very much for having us here today.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Gordie, did you want to make a point?

MR. GOSSE: I just wanted to ask for one clarification there. You said there were 900 or more applications and 200 were Community Services, is it possible that some more of those applications came from other organizations, and the children are recipients of Community Services but you would not be notified because they came through Boys and Girls Clubs or other clubs? That's a possibility, that that 200 figure could be even higher.

MR. FERGUSON: Yes, absolutely. We have no idea, of the other applications, whether they're involved with the income assistance or children in care program or not.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: I think you can tell from the line of questioning here today that we certainly share the objectives of KidSport. We wish you well, and we thank you very much for the work you're doing on behalf of the children and youth of this province. Thank you very much for coming.

We'll take a five-minute break, and then we'll reconvene for the rest of our agenda.

[The committee adjourned at 10:25 a.m.]