

May 3, 2016

Honourable Ian Wishart
Minister of Education and Training
Room 168 Legislative Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0V8

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for agreeing to serve Manitoba as Minister of Education & Training. Together, our party has been given a mandate to restore trust in government and improve the lives of Manitobans and their families. This is a high honour and privilege we have been given. It will be our focus every day in government.

At the outset, I want to remind you of the need to comport yourself at all times with personal and professional integrity as a representative of our new government. I insist we adhere to the highest possible standards of accountability and respect in the conduct of the province's business. Accordingly, I expect you to be fully aware and compliant with all ethical rules and guidelines currently established as well as those which will be part of our Open Government Initiative.

Most Improved Province

We asked for and received a mandate from Manitobans to improve our province in several key areas. We will be judged on how well we deliver on this. This government will relentlessly focus on these results. I expect us to be a government of results. We must strive each day to deliver high quality public services to citizens at reasonable costs to taxpayers.

A fundamental part of our platform commitment to Manitobans is to ensure our province improves in key areas. All ministers are expected to support and deliver on all of these commitments with colleagues. As Minister of Education & Training, you have a key role to play in delivering on our Most Improved Province commitments. Chiefly, improving student performance outcomes, by focusing on early years reading improvement and other measures so that Manitoba is the most improved province in student reading results.

Your Mandate

As Minister of Education and Training you have a mandate to institute better report cards in consultation with teachers, administrators and parents. This will include better information, so that outcomes are better understood and met. You will work to end the culture of no fail in our schools, and enforce a policy of zero grade for zero work.

As Minister of Education and Training, you are the lead in fulfilling the following platform commitments:

- Read to Succeed
 - Develop a Read to Succeed program to ensure children graduating Grade 3 are able to read at or above national levels.
 - Focus the ELA (English Language Arts) curriculum with identified and specific learning literacy objectives.
 - Direct more purposeful reading and writing in every subject.
 - Assign collaborative reading assessment teams to assist students whose reading proficiency is low or not improving to determine actionable improvement strategies.
 - Establish province-wide reading labs with trained educators and effective resources.
 - Enhance mentorship programs linking middle years students with early years students to help improve their literacy skills.
- Long-term Literacy
 - Develop and invest in a long-term literacy plan in consultation with front-line education stakeholders.
 - Establish a clear and reputable benchmarking system for student literacy with key milestone indicators to track progress through their educational career so they can read to succeed.
- Improved Scholarships and Bursaries
 - Raise total funding available to over \$20 million by increasing the Manitoba Scholarship and Bursary Initiative fund to \$6.75 million, with a one-third matching component from government to allow for more private donors.
 - Work with post-secondary advisory councils and industry to promote scholarship and bursary programs with strong labour market outcomes and employability potential.
- Empower Teachers and Parents
 - Provide teachers full professional discretion on the crafting of plain language report card comments on student performance including issues of student behaviour.
 - Ensure teachers are empowered with full discretion to issue appropriate marking for student work and provide greater transparency and accountability.
 - Build a more supportive and inclusive education system province-wide by reducing red tape in special needs education funding applications.

- Establish a new category under the Celebration of Excellence in Teaching Awards to recognize teachers who go above and beyond to benefit their students.

Working With Manitobans and the Public Service

Our government will be a listening government. Our government will be a responsible and responsive government. As a minister and representative of this new government, I expect you to work constructively and cooperatively with citizens and stakeholders to hear their views and communicate the decisions and priorities of the government. Having secured the people's trust in this election, we must work hard every day to earn it anew.

Manitoba's civil service will be a key partner with us to deliver on our commitments and serve the public. Our commitment to protecting front line services for people and the jobs of those who deliver them is one I expect all ministers to work towards.

I made a decision at the outset to reduce the size of Cabinet and set a new tone at the top in ensuring value in government services. That tone at the top extends to how I expect you and your colleagues to work with your departmental officials and other civil servants you encounter in the course of your professional duties. I expect you to forge a collaborative working relationship with your deputy minister and senior officials. I also expect you to be accessible to officials within your department, to listen to their advice, to hear their concerns, and understand that while they are here to serve in a professional non-partisan manner, they are also our employees who deserve our respect.

Cabinet, Caucus and the Legislature

Being a minister brings significant responsibility with your new duties. That responsibility extends to ensuring you are fully briefed and knowledgeable about your portfolio issues and obligations when engaging with colleagues at Cabinet and in the Legislature. I expect all ministers to know their files and bring a collegial working style to making decisions at Cabinet and Cabinet Committees.

You have also been named first acting Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living second acting Minister of Justice and Attorney General. You will also chair All Aboard! Committee.

Caucus is a vital part of our governance model. I remind you that all caucus members are full and equal colleagues in the work and direction of this government. I expect you to work closely at all times with your caucus colleagues providing them with information as they carry out their duties and being accessible to them in the conduct of their duties. From time to time, individual caucus members will be assigned to work with you on specific projects by me. You will treat them as full cabinet colleagues in this capacity.

The Legislative Assembly remains the foundation of our democracy and is essential for representative and accountable government. We shall treat it respectfully. I expect all ministers to be briefed, ready, and available to answer questions, explain decisions, and engage colleagues in the Legislature as well as citizens that appear before it.

As we work together, I will be evaluating individual and collective performance of ministers as they deliver their mandates and support and work collaboratively with ministerial and caucus colleagues.

Manitobans expect us to work for them as a team. I know I can count on your personal support and commitment to do so as you shall have my personal support and commitment to work with you in your new duties and responsibilities.

We have been given a rare privilege to serve our province. I know you are as grateful as I am for this opportunity. Let us make Manitobans proud once more of their government.

Sincerely,

Original signed by Brian Pallister, Premier

Premier Brian Pallister