

December 14, 2015

Honourable Gerry Byrne  
Minister of Advanced Education and Skills

Dear Minister Byrne:

I am honoured to welcome you to your role as Minister of Advanced Education and Skills. We have been given an extraordinary opportunity to serve the people of our province and together we will work to create a stronger tomorrow for Newfoundland and Labrador. Over the next four years, we will fulfill our commitments, building on the trust placed in us on November 30, 2015. We shall, without fail, act with integrity in all aspects of our service, striving for excellence in discharging our responsibilities.

Embarking on this journey together, we will be guided by *A Stronger Tomorrow: Our Five Point Plan* to Restore Openness, Transparency and Accountability; Build a Stronger, Smarter Economy; Improve Health and Healthcare; Support Safe and Sustainable Communities; and Invest in Our Future Through Education.

As Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador I expect you to follow the principles of openness, transparency and accountability. It is my intention to ensure policy decisions in government are informed by research, evidence, and evaluation so that citizens can understand how and why decisions are made. It is critical that our government's decisions are also informed by engagement with stakeholders, including our Aboriginal partners, to ensure everyone's voices are heard.

Our government is committed to modernizing our province's legislative process in accordance with these principles and I call upon you to engage your fellow Members, constituents and the general public; avail of the Committee process of the House of Assembly; and seek opportunities for non-partisan cooperation.

We are also committed to creating an environment that captures the full potential of our province's many riches, through diversification, job creation and growth. We will take action to improve the health and well-being of people, empower sustainable community development, protect public safety and advance educational opportunities and outcomes.

Our province is facing significant fiscal challenges that require our collective leadership and the engagement of the public. Together, our government will lead our province towards a more sustainable, economic future.

As Minister of Advanced Education and Skills, you are mandated to help citizens obtain the necessary educational, financial and social supports needed to achieve the greatest benefit from the opportunities that exist in the province. You are also charged with ensuring that the province has a skilled workforce and highly educated graduates to participate in and contribute to their communities. As Minister of Advanced Education and Skills, I expect you to oversee these aspects of our government's mandate, together with a number of specific items outlined below.

### **Skilled Labour Force**

A skilled labour force is essential to growing the economy and ensuring long-term sustainability. Working with your colleagues, I expect you to develop a comprehensive human resources plan, premised on a labour market analysis to forecast upcoming job opportunities, to build the local workforce for skills needed now and into the future. The plan will include: working with post-secondary institutions, youth and employers to ensure appropriate skills training programs are available; to identify the skills, qualifications and training required by the oil and gas industry; and, to strengthen apprenticeship programs.

### **Post-Secondary and Adult Learning**

You must focus on improving affordability and accessibility of post-secondary education, and support adult literacy. A tuition freeze for Newfoundland and Labrador resident students at both of Newfoundland and Labrador's public post-secondary institutions will be maintained and you will consult with students and post-secondary institutions to ensure we maintain a critical mass of students at our facilities. Facilities at our post-secondary institutions are in need of renewal and you need to work with the federal government to secure the resources needed to refurbish the infrastructure at Memorial University and College of the North Atlantic. You will also lead development of an Adult Literacy Strategy.

### **Growing the Population**

Population growth is critical to the future of the province. You are directed to implement a plan for population growth which creates the economic conditions for more jobs through diversification and innovation, combined with policies to attract and retain qualified people and their families. The plan will include: the development of an immigration strategy to attract and retain new people and families who have the skills needed to build our economy; and, a recruitment strategy to encourage expatriate Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to return home. Actions must include increasing the participation rate in the labour force of persons with disabilities, improving supported and supportive employment for persons with disabilities, and implementation of family-friendly policies to promote gender diversity with a focus on affordable and accessible child care.

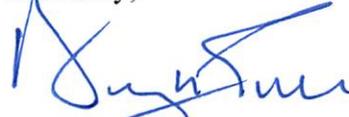
In fulfilling your responsibility as Minister you must ensure collaboration, in a positive and constructive manner, with your Cabinet colleagues. I take this opportunity to remind you that as you carry out your responsibilities, as a Member of the House of Assembly and Member of Cabinet, adhering to the Code of Conduct and the Conflict of Interest guidelines are mandatory, to ensure you discharge your duties with the highest ethical standards.

Deputy Ministers are your key source of support and will provide you with non-partisan advice in meeting your responsibilities. I expect you to develop a positive, respectful and trusting relationship with your Deputy Minister and the public service. I would also ask that you be mindful that Deputy Ministers, among their various responsibilities, are ultimately accountable to me, through the Clerk of the Executive Council.

Our government will report back to the public annually on the achievement of our commitments and make adjustments as required. As a Minister you are accountable for achieving these priorities and meeting other responsibilities within your Department.

Together, we will provide strong leadership to deliver the change we need to move beyond today's challenges and on to a stronger tomorrow.

Sincerely,



**DWIGHT BALL**

Premier