



August 8, 2023

Honourable Natalie Jameson
Minister Education and Early Years
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women
2nd Floor Sullivan
PO Box 2000
Charlottetown, PE C1A 7N8

Dear Minister Jameson,

I am pleased to have you serve as the **Minister of Education and Early Years and Minister Responsible for the Status of Women**.

On April 3, 2023, we were given a mandate by Islanders to continue to work towards building a brighter, bolder, and better future for our province. We made a commitment to work with Islanders, and for Islanders – and that motto should be the basis of how you conduct yourself in your actions as Minister. We must engage Islanders, have real conversations, and put the interest of Islanders at the heart of every decision we make as a government.

Over the last four years we have proven to Islanders that we can navigate many challenges. We must continue to show courage, strength and above all else, leadership when it comes to the challenges we are faced with. Change is sometimes difficult, but with your proven ability to stand up and meet challenges head-on, I'm confident that you will make the best decisions to move our province forward.

Our government has always led with positivity and has served with humility and kindness. I expect this to continue in our second mandate. We have shifted the political landscape in PEI to be more collaborative in nature. I have always said, it doesn't matter where good ideas come from – if it's a good idea, and it improves the lives of Islanders – we should consider it. I want you to have regular communication with your legislative colleagues on all sides of the Legislature to provide opportunities for input and feedback.

As Minister, you and your leadership team will play a critical role in contributing to the commitments we have made to Islanders. You are responsible for the conduct of the department(s) you oversee and must be aware and adhere to the values of the public service in your interactions with the Islanders and the public service. Most importantly, you have Cabinet Colleagues that serve alongside of you; whenever and wherever possible, you should work collaboratively with them to break down silos and reduce barriers to accessing services by working together across Departments.

As Minister of Education and Early Years, you will:

- Explore the creation of a universal breakfast program for both the Public Schools Branch and the commission scolaire de langue française;
- Increase investment into English as an Added Language (EAL) and with our school boards to help mitigate challenges of growing our enrollment linked to migration and immigration;
- Fund the service costs for community use of schools;
- Add 100 new positions for our education system by increasing teachers, educational assistants, youth service workers, counsellors, and mental health support workers;
- Create a School Infrastructure Revitalization Fund investing \$25 Million Dollars over the next three years to ensure our schools are safe and provide modernized teaching and learning environments;
- Pilot a School Bus Monitoring Program to support bus drivers and protect students while traveling to and from school;
- Working with the Minister of Justice and Public Safety, develop criteria for a pilot program to fund the hiring of School Resource Officers for schools that wish to have a dedicated school resource officer and provide a timeline and framework to assess the pilot program and the impacts it has on the lives of students, parents, and staff
- Take immediate steps to alleviate space pressures at Queen Charlotte Junior High School through expansion and renovation;
- Begin planning to include a Junior High School as part of the Stratford Campus plan;
- Expand the curriculum to include course offerings on local Indigenous history;
- Establish outdoor learning spaces to stimulate new educational opportunities and a greater appreciation for our natural environment;
- Working with the Minister of Health and Wellness and the Minister of Workforce, Advanced Learning and Population, develop a Healthcare Career Pathway Pilot in high schools allowing students to more easily transition from high school to health-based careers;
- Provide the necessary funding to expand the Imagination Library program so that more young Islanders receive free books in the mail each month;
- Continue to promote and educate the importance of social-emotional learning at all levels through professional development;
- Working with the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, transition the entire school bus fleet to electric buses by 2030;
- Work with existing providers and engage with our school system to pilot a universal afterschool program for grades K to 6 and develop an action plan to expand the program to all areas of the province;
- Working with the Minister of Workforce, Advanced Learning, expand vocational training opportunities in our education system to expose students to career options earlier and provide pathways for mentorship and training for young Islanders to express an interest in the construction industry;
- Reduce childcare fees to \$10 a day for all Island children enrolled in designated Early Years Centres before the end of 2023;
- Establish a \$20 Million Dollar Infrastructure Fund to provide grants to Early Learning Centres to expand and create more spaces;

- Working with the Minister of Housing, Land and Communities, create incentives to encourage private developers to build childcare centres into multi-unit buildings in areas of the province where childcare spaces are needed;
- Designate six more early learning centres before the end of 2023;
- Work with the Early Childhood Development Association to launch a national recruitment campaign to recruit trained Early Childhood Educators to live and work in Prince Edward Island;
- Establish a Pension Plan for Early Childhood Educators before the end of 2023; and
- Working with the Early Years sector, launch a pilot to provide extended-hour childcare facilities that are in close proximity to our hospitals; and
- Working with all cabinet colleagues, support literacy initiatives offered by community partners to improve literacy rates, including financial literacy.

As Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, you will:

- Ensure Gender and Diversity Analysis is broadly used within government policy-making and program development;
- Provide core and project-based funding to community organizations seeking to end gender-based violence, enhance women's equality measures, and encourage women's leadership and democratic participation;
- Partner with government departments, community organizations, and other stakeholders in efforts that promote the status of women and violence prevention efforts;
- Continue to undertake initiatives to encourage, promote, support and retain women in leadership roles including in running for elected office;
- Remain focused on the work of ensuring Islanders are safe from gender-based violence;
- Support the Minister of Workforce, Advance Learning and Population, in partnership with student leadership across PEI, in work to prevent and respond to sexual violence on campus and workplaces;
- Support the Minister of Health and Wellness to address gaps in health care services experienced by women and gender diverse individuals; and
- Provide programming assistance to government departments, such as *Menstrual Products in Schools* initiative.

While you accomplish your work, I ask that you assess the impacts of each policy decision by using evidence-based tools and frameworks to ensure we always consider the impacts on climate, gender, diversity, and vulnerable individuals before implementing a decision.

As we progress through our mandate, we will work together to identify further refinement and priorities of focus. We must be nimble as a government and be able to adapt to the realities of what Islanders are facing each and every day. To do this, I ask that you have regular outreach with key stakeholders connected to your department and the work that your department does. Along with the leadership in your department, I ask that you regularly communicate with stakeholders and community organizations.

I look forward to working with you to improve the lives of all Islanders.

Sincerely,



Hon. Dennis King

Premier of Prince Edward Island

CC. Erin McGrath-Gaudet, Deputy Minister – Department of Education and Early Years and
Interministerial Women's Secretariat