



PREMIER OF MANITOBA

Room 204
Legislative Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba CANADA
R3C 0V8

March 3, 2020

Honourable Heather Stefanson
Deputy Premier and Minister of Families
357 – 450 Broadway
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0V8

Dear Colleague:

The people of Manitoba have given us the honour of a second mandate to move Manitoba forward. Our commitments are clear and ambitious.

All Ministers will work as a team to achieve the Five Point Guarantee as set out in our 2019 platform. We will work hard to create 40,000 new jobs, reduce taxes and invest in a health care system that delivers better care sooner. We will complete the construction of 20 new schools to provide better environments for our children to learn. We will deliver our Made in Manitoba Climate and Green Plan to achieve our vision of the cleanest, greenest and most climate resilient province.

We will build a better, more efficient, responsive and open government that provides quality services to communities throughout Manitoba.

Manitobans deserve a government that reflects their values: honesty, integrity and a commitment to hard work. I expect all ministers to work as a team to achieve our platform commitments and to hold themselves to the highest ethical standards. Manitoba became the most improved province in Canada in our first term. That record of achievement and success will provide a strong foundation for an equally ambitious second mandate. We are a government that keeps its word. We have a record of public trust that cannot be compromised by conflicts of interest, complacency or entitlement.

As Minister of Families, you will lead the following actions to enhance services for Manitobans.

Reduce Dependence on Government:

- Transforming the Employment Income Assistance (EIA) Program from a benefit that encourages dependency on government to one that provides a short-term bridge to meaningful employment;
- Putting employable Manitobans and young people on a path of discipline, responsibility, training and jobs by:
 - Working with the Minister of Justice to more effectively transition offenders leaving custody to training opportunities and jobs in the community;
 - Working with the Minister of Economic Development and Training and private sector partners to fill gaps in the labour market and reduce the EIA caseload; and
 - Collaborating with the Minister of Education and community partners to increase school attendance and post-secondary attainment, particularly for youth who are involved in the CFS and criminal justice systems.

Better Care for Vulnerable Children:

- Ensuring that the lessons learned during the devolution of Manitoba's child welfare services are heard as the federal government implements an Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families;
- Subject to the implementation of Federal Act Bill C-92 and working within remaining provincial jurisdiction:
 - Improving outcomes and continue reducing the number of children in care by increasing reunifications and reducing apprehensions;
 - Increasing the predictability of funding made available to CFS Authorities to provide them with flexibility to direct resources where most needed;
 - Improving emergency placement services to prioritize the best interests of children and long-term permanent care arrangements;
 - Developing a serious injury reporting regulation to identify the most effective and efficient way to report serious injuries; and
 - Supporting the development of community-based options for at-risk families with younger children such as Granny's House, providing 24/7 access to culturally safe, temporary out-of-home respite care and connections with community to enhance parental capacity.

- Continue implementation of the Tracia's Trust Strategy to end sexual exploitation and sex trafficking in Manitoba; and
- Working with your colleagues and community partners to support pregnant women requiring a higher degree of prenatal and post-partum support for the safety and well-being of their newborn infant, to eliminate the historical practice of issuing birth alerts related to protection concerns of expectant parents.

Support for Vulnerable Manitobans:

- Strengthen the accountability framework between community agencies and government;
- Transitioning Manitobans with disabilities currently receiving Employment Income Assistance (EIA) benefits to a new alternative income program better suited to their needs;
- Supporting an employment-first approach where employment is the primary goal for working age adults with an intellectual disability;
- Creating a new Advisory group of employers and advocates to develop the employment potential of persons with disabilities;
- Implementing all five Accessibility for Manitobans Act standards;
- Improving funding models for respite, day services, home share, supported independent living and other services to ensure Manitoba's frontline workers are compensated for their service;
- Strengthening The Vulnerable Persons Living With a Mental Disability Act to reduce stress and red tape while enhancing vital protections remain in place for vulnerable Manitobans;
- Focusing on a person-centred approach to improve care and prioritize individuals with the highest need so long waits do not add to their hardship; and
- Defining transparent performance standards and developing a means of tracking and reporting on the wait times on an annual basis.

Early learning and Child Care:

- Working with your colleague, the Minister of Education, build 1,510 more school-based spaces;
- Reviewing the provincial funding model for our Early Learning and Child Care sector to:
 - Examine supply and demand of child care;
 - Assess the effectiveness of our investments and modernize our child care system to improve options and availability for Manitoba families;
 - Developing a new Portable Child Care Benefit that will extend up to \$500 per month to help 3,000 lower-income families find child care;

- Working with the Minister of Finance to create new spaces sooner with help from the private sector, including through the enhancement of the Child Care Development Tax Credit;
- Addressing shortages and staff training requirements at child care centres; and
- Establish an \$10 million endowment to provide support for child care centres.

Affordable Housing:

- Reviewing existing stock of affordable and social housing to ensure it is meeting the needs of vulnerable Manitobans;
- Investing \$450 million in social and community housing through a 10-year bilateral agreement with the federal government, including \$4 million in home ownership programming;
- Continuing Rent Assist indexation at 75% of Median Market Rent to support the housing needs of more low income Manitobans; and
- Transforming the delivery of Manitoba's public housing to empower non-profit organization, municipal and Indigenous partners to address local housing needs, engage the skills of organizations that serve vulnerable Manitobans, foster a more entrepreneurial housing sector, promote home ownership and deliver better housing for Manitobans in need.

Also as Minister responsible for Families you advance the use of social innovation to address complex social issues, with a focus on establishing additional social impact bonds and engaging the philanthropic community.

You will work collaboratively with the public service, stakeholders and citizens to keep our promises. We are committed to ensuring all employees are treated with dignity and respect. There is no place for harassment of any kind in the civil service or any workplace, you must remain vigilant in ensuring there is no wrong door and not sit silent if you see others around you falling short of these standards.

We have established Ideas Funds across summary government to encourage front line service providers to come forward with innovative proposals to modernize and improve the way we deliver services Manitobans need. You will encourage your front line service providers to avail themselves of this opportunity.

Both with your department and the entities that receive our financial support, you will emphasize the need for continuous progress on spending within our budgets, reducing administrative costs and finding ways to ensure value for taxpayers' money.

As a member of Executive Council, you will continue to support our work to transform the public service, including the deployment of balanced scorecards to report on our progress and ensure Manitobans understand what we are doing and why we are doing it. As elected representatives of the people, we must always ensure that we remain transparent and accountable for our actions. Manitobans expect nothing less.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Brian Pallister