



THE PREMIER  
Halifax, Nova Scotia

September 14, 2021

Honourable Becky Druhan  
Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development

Dear Minister Druhan,

Thank you for agreeing to serve Nova Scotians as Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Governing is about people. On August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021, we were given a mandate by Nova Scotians to activate solutions. They responded to our platform, *Solutions for Nova Scotians*, and its vision for our Province. Nova Scotians share the hope you and I have for our beautiful province and its potential.

A brighter future starts with a shared belief in what our province can do. A belief in each other. A belief in our communities. A belief in fellow Nova Scotians. We can put Nova Scotians on the path to financial sustainability and fix healthcare. We can support our traditional industries and build an environment plan that fights climate change. We can make our province a magnet for doctors, students, new residents, investors and tourists alike, and remain proud of our traditions and our heritage.

Fixing healthcare and rebuilding our economy is not for the faint of heart. It will require strong leadership and a willingness to take bold action. Working together, we can get the job done.

The success of all Nova Scotians and improvement of their health, access to health care and quality of life will be our collective success.

We have committed to listen to and respect all Nova Scotians. We have also committed to lead a government which represents all Nova Scotians and is reflective of the modern societal makeup of Nova Scotia, inclusive and respectful of all demographic, cultural and ethnic diversities to advance our collective growth and prosperity.

You have been chosen for Cabinet because of your track record and capabilities as a problem solver, as a “solutionist”, as someone who gets things done and is not deterred by complexity. You are a known collaborator who will work with your colleagues on solutions that need all the capabilities of the Government and the public service pulling in the same direction.

As Minister, your leadership and your team will play a critical role in contributing to the commitments we have made and to providing solutions. You are responsible for the conduct of the department(s) you oversee and

must be aware of and adhere to the public service's *Code of Conduct and Respectful Workplace Policy* in your interactions with the public service. Most importantly, you are part of a team of solutionists who share a common vision and commitment to *Solutions for Nova Scotians*.

As Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development you will:

- Within the first 90 days of your mandate, prepare a timeline for completion of all tasks below over the next four years. The initial timelines are to be updated quarterly thereafter.

#### Curriculum

- Review and update curriculum in the following areas: financial literacy, civics, environmental stewardship, physical activity and healthy living and diversity, including education on Residential Schools.
- Establish Professional Development to accommodate the extra training in diversity, financial literacy, civics, and climate change.

#### Inclusive Education

- Follow through on the recommendations outlined in the Inclusive Education Report and, provide public accounting of our progress by the eight-month mark of coming into government.

#### Healthy Living

- Work with the Regional Centres for Education in conjunction with the Teachers' Union to determine what is possible to expand personal fitness opportunities for all students.
- Make it a priority to educate high school students about healthy eating and cooking.
- Expand mental health training for teachers who wish to participate.
- Establish a Healthy Living Grant for all public schools.

#### International Baccalaureate Program

- Develop an education travel tax credit for families who have to travel outside of their bussing and school districts to attend the IB program.

#### Communication and Local Decision-Making

- Spend time in schools and classrooms across the province and have regular meetings with the NSTU.
- Meet more directly and regularly with a broader base of teachers to get a more local sense of the issues.
- Work closely with schools across the province and sit in on at least one school staff meeting per week, virtually, to hear on the ground concerns that teachers face each day.
- Conduct exit interviews with teachers who are retiring early or otherwise leaving the system prematurely.
- Consult with a variety of groups, including parents from across the province, teachers, administrators, program assistants, representatives from the African Nova Scotian, First Nations, and disability communities, to determine a governance model for P-12 education that allows for increased local voice in Education policy and decision-making.

#### Skilled Trades

- Invest in both capital expenditures for upgrades to our skilled trades programming as well as a significant increase in operational costs allocated to support skilled trades students.
- Ensure that all students at the junior high level receive a presentation and information before entering High School on the options for taking a skilled trade and what training and labour opportunities are available for them with that skill.
- Double the students enrolled in skilled trades across the province.
- Set a measurable goal of having forty percent diverse enrollment in high school trades programming by year four of our first mandate, working with schools to find creative ways to encourage students from underrepresented groups to consider skilled trades.

As Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, you will also support your Ministerial colleagues as they execute their responsibilities. In particular, you will support the:

- Minister responsible for the Office of Mental Health and Addictions as they prioritize and collaborate across Education and Early Childhood Development, Justice, Community Services, and other departments as required.
- Minister of Labour Relations as they remain committed to fair and open negotiations and engage in meaningful negotiations with unions.

As we progress through our mandate, we will work together to identify further refinement and priorities of focus.

Within the first six months, and as part of your Department's mandate, you will work with me and other Departments in reviewing the role and effectiveness of Agencies, Offices and Crown Corporations with a goal of ensuring the most efficient and accountable methodology for the undertaking of their respective tasks.

We have a clear mandate and the vision and the determination to take decisive action to solve problems for people by giving them hope for health, universal mental health care, dignity for our seniors and a new opportunity for aging well. We will invest in our future. We will build a Nova Scotia with more people, more jobs, better jobs and more housing and infrastructure for people. We will do this with an overriding commitment to sustainable prosperity, establishing Nova Scotia as a world leader.

We will overcome the obstacles that stand in the way of achieving the incredible opportunities within our reach to improve the well-being and quality of life every Nova Scotian deserves.

I look forward to working with you to improve the lives of all the people of Nova Scotia and change the course of our Province now and for generations to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "P. Houston".

Honourable Becky Druhan  
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Honourable Tim Houston, M.L.A.  
Premier of Nova Scotia

Copy to: Cathy Montreuil, Deputy Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development