



Dear Minister Hurton,

Maarsii. Thank you for serving the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan (MN-S) as Minister of Child and Family Services (CFS).

This mandate letter describes the progress made to date under your portfolio and your responsibilities and priorities moving forward. It also outlines how I expect you to conduct yourself as a Minister and work with other Ministers, members of the Provincial Métis Council (PMC), and fellow citizens. As accountability and transparency are the cornerstones of good government, I am making these letters public, so all citizens are informed of how their government is working for them.

PROGRESS TO DATE

Niiaanaan ooshchi Nutr Zaanfaan (Our Children are Ours)

For decades, our children have been forcibly removed from their families, causing generations-long suffering for our people. Reuniting Métis children with their families and communities and keeping them out of provincial government care is a top priority for our government. A Métis child or youth has the right to be raised as a proud Métis citizen with a secure personal cultural identity. We want to ensure Métis children, youth and families are healthy and have access to quality resources and support. Supportive communities build strong families and even stronger children.

In June 2019, Canada passed C-92, *An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis Children, Youth and Families*, recognizing the inherent Aboriginal rights of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people to exercise legislative authority over their children and families. Our government fully agrees that as Métis, we should be looking after our own children. We want to create and implement a structure with the necessary supports and resources to make this happen. We have been reviewing the federal legislation and having discussions with Indigenous Services Canada. We need to ensure that our plan puts the best interests of the child at the forefront and that we are focused on early intervention and prevention. We also need to locate our children within the current CFS system and take care of them.

To work towards this goal, from August to September 2019, our government held consultation forums in the central, northern and southern areas to hear directly from frontline childcare providers, social workers, government partners, elders and Métis citizens. We are also engaging with citizens through a survey to better understand the needs of families and children and our path forward. We are also hiring Community Connectors to identify community needs for CFS and help citizens navigate the various services and supports available to them in a prompt, effective and efficient manner.



MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

As Minister, you are responsible for the following areas:

- Child and family services.
- Relationships with Indigenous Services Canada, the Government of Saskatchewan's Ministry of Social Services, all CFS agencies and organizations in Saskatchewan, all Indigenous organizations in Saskatchewan.

PRIORITIES

Over the next year, I expect you to work constructively with your colleagues, members of the PMC, and citizens to deliver on the following priorities:

- Over the long term, we want to exercise jurisdiction over the design and delivery of child and family programs and services. To accomplish this objective, over the next year:
 - Develop a model for the future hiring and retention of Community Connectors in all Regions.
 - Expand consultation to hear directly from frontline childcare providers, social workers, government partners, Elders, youth, advocates and Métis citizens on how MN-S can exercise legislative authority over children and families. This also includes discussions on the necessary services, resources and infrastructure required to support this work. Relevant MN-S Ministers should be included, and in particular seek support from the Ministers of Justice and Education and Early Learning.
 - Continue discussions with the Indigenous Services Canada and engage the Province of Saskatchewan on the path forward to assert our jurisdiction.
- We want citizens to be able to access services and programs in their Regions. A decentralized, Métis-focused service delivery model will best support our citizens. To work towards this objective, over the next year:
 - Work with the Ministers mentioned and the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure to design a pilot for the future construction and administration of a Métis Community Resource Centre for citizens to access services and support in an effective and efficient manner.
- Support the Ministers of Women and Gender Equality and Justice in the development of a plan to address the situation of violence against Métis women, female Elders, girls, and LGBTQIP2SAA persons in Saskatchewan.



EXPECTATIONS FOR MINISTERIAL CONDUCT

All Members of the Executive must act with honesty and uphold the highest ethical standards in their personal and professional lives. Métis citizens' confidence and trust in the integrity of government is essential. Our Executive Handbook was updated in November 2019 by the PMC. It affirms that all Ministers must adhere to strict standards of conduct guided by the principles of integrity, accountability, responsibility, leadership, respect and openness. I encourage you to routinely consult the Executive Handbook and use it as a guiding resource in your work.

In addition to the roles and responsibilities listed above, there is also an obligation to support and advance the overall priorities of this government. Confidentiality, solidarity and collective responsibility are critical to good governance and must be the foundation of how we work together. Our Executive Handbook outlines the meaning of solidarity. Ministers may disagree and state their personal opinions during private meetings. At the same time, to the public, they must present a unified front on all decisions and support all decisions made by their fellow Ministers. Collectively, Ministers are accountable for these decisions, even if they do not personally agree with them.

All Ministers must work collaboratively with each other and all members of the PMC to establish good communication. We will ensure policies and programs reflect the needs and aspirations of Métis citizens. The unique challenges that rural and urban citizens face are considerations in decision-making. Every attempt should be made to consult with and obtain the views of Members of the PMC, local Presidents, community members, Métis women, youth, LGBTQIP2SAA persons, Elders, and other experts.

As we strengthen our working partnerships with First Nations, the Government of Canada and the Government of Saskatchewan, you are expected to conduct yourself in a respectful and cooperative manner. Delivering success for our citizens requires good working partnerships with external partners and being solutions-oriented.

Our government has zero-tolerance for unethical behaviour. All Ministers are obligated to question any request or decision that they think may be unethical or unlawful. Rules and the proper protocol for addressing alleged breaches can be found in section 7.0 of the Executive Handbook.



As we rebuild our Nation, we know we have a lot of work to do. Part of this journey must include recognizing the devastating impact colonialism and land dispossession have had on our communities, kinship, and governance. Lateral violence is endemic across the Métis Nation. We need to understand how we are going to discard colonial attitudes and re-invigorate Métis laws and ways of living together. In particular, we need to critically examine how we will reinstate the vital role Métis women, girls and two-spirit persons traditionally played in our societies. This work must include addressing and ending systemic violence against Métis women, girls and LGBTQIP2SAA persons. We must also continue to ensure equal representation of women in all levels of our government, and that these perspectives and needs be reflected in decision-making.

Our people have fought for over a century for recognition, respect, and our rightful place as a self-determining people. Over the past three years, we have made substantial progress towards realizing the visions of Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont. From signing the Métis Government Recognition and Self-Government Agreement with Canada, investing in housing, education and economic development, making real progress on the negotiation of the North-West land claim, and strengthening our internal governance, we have made momentous strides in a relatively short time. This year, our communities have faced a significant challenge to our health and safety: COVID-19. We came together to support citizens, deliver PPE and provide critical support for housing, childcare, and Métis businesses. While we must remain vigilant to ensure everyone's safety, we should all be proud of how we have supported each other during such unprecedented times.

Thank you again for agreeing to serve the MN-S and its citizens. I am here to support you in your role as Minister. Together, we will continue to carry the torch of those great leaders who came before us. We can, and we will, succeed in fully realizing the vision of a strong, self-determining, accountable government for all of us as Métis people in this province.

Sincerely,

President Glen McCallum