



Office of the Provincial President

August 17, 2021

Dear Minister Montgrand,

Maarsii. Thank you for agreeing to serve the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan (MN-S) as Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Development.

This mandate letter describes the progress made to date in this 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

Post-Secondary Education

Creation of a New Post-Secondary Education Fund. Our government is committed to prioritizing the needs of students and addressing the significant gap in post-secondary attainment levels between Métis and non-Indigenous populations in Saskatchewan. In July 2019 at Batoche, we announced our 10-year, \$89 M post-secondary fund to support Métis students with tuition, books, and living allowances. This fund also supports student services and increases education governance capacity at the post-secondary level. In 2019-20, 461 Métis students benefited.

Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Saskatchewan. An important component of closing the gap of post-secondary attainment levels between Métis and non-Indigenous populations in Saskatchewan is community partnering. In November 2019, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the University of Saskatchewan focused on improving the education status of Métis people and removing barriers. This MOU will encourage and contribute to Métis presence at all levels of the university, including employment, governance, enrolment, completion rates, Métis-specific research, Métis studies and curriculum development.

MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

As Minister, you are responsible for the following areas:

- Post-secondary education;
- Serve as Chair of Board of Directors, Gabriel Dumont Institute and affiliates; and



- Relationships with Gabriel Dumont Institute, the University of Saskatchewan, University of Regina, First Nations University of Canada, Saskatchewan Polytechnic, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, Employment and Social Development Canada, Saskatchewan Ministry of Advanced Education, and learning institutes and organizations in Saskatchewan engaged in post-secondary and advanced education.

PRIORITIES

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

- We want to ensure that Métis students are receiving a top-quality education and are encouraged to go into second and third degrees. To accomplish this objective, over the next year:
 - Ensure the Métis Nation University Sponsorship Program continues to build and support Métis citizens pursuing post-secondary academic studies and scholarly activities. It needs to be administered based on annual priority areas established by MN-S, and the process to review eligible Métis students needs to be grounded on an objective adjudication process.
 - Continue to strengthen our relationship with the University of Saskatchewan and implement the MOU signed in November 2019 to increase Métis presence at all levels of the university. Specifically, focus on enrolment and completion rates. Ensure the use of the definition of Métis citizenship as outlined in the *Constitution of the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan* for any Métis distinction-based student supports, scholarships, bursaries, appointments, faculty positions, and research chairs.
 - Through the Gabriel Dumont Institute, continue to provide skill development training and skill certification to increase the employability of youth, families and citizens as provided through the ASETS program. As well, provide fresh skill development training to school dropouts, college dropouts and unemployed youth through short term courses.
 - With support from the Minister of Women and Gender Equality, advocate for the need for Métis women’s studies at post-secondary institutions in Saskatchewan and across Canada.
- Continue to strengthen relationships with all post-secondary educational institutions in Saskatchewan and across Canada. This will include promoting the move from a pan-Indigenous approach within courses and other programming, instead infusing them with distinctions-based, Métis cultural knowledge and content.
- Work with institutions like the First Nations and Métis Health and Wellness Research, Training and Knowledge Mobilization Network to support the creation of Métis-specific knowledge and support the dissemination of this information to your fellow ministers as appropriate to apply to their assigned portfolios.
- Continue to contribute to the MN-S COVID-19 response and recovery to help



ensure the health, safety and education of all Métis citizens, specifically for children and families. Work closely with the Minister of Health and other relevant Ministers.

- 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 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons in Saskatchewan.
- Support the Minister of Justice in the Constitutional Reform process to update and modernize our *Constitution of the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan* and related legislation to ensure they are grounded on our Métis laws and that we create legislative frameworks that will continue to serve our citizens and Métis Nation as we move to towards self-government.

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, 2SLGBTQQIA+ 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 2SLGBTQQIA+ 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.

Much respect,



Glen McCallum
President

