



February 20, 2024

Honourable Lisa Beare
Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Beare:

Thank you for agreeing to serve as Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills. I trust in your leadership at this critical time to deliver results for the people of British Columbia.

British Columbians continue to recover from and respond to the upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and climate related natural disasters, while global inflation is driving up costs for more households and the world's economic outlook is concerning. Now more than ever, we need to focus on building a secure, low emission, sustainable economy, and a province where everyone can find a good home – whether you live in a rural area, in a city, or in an Indigenous community. We will continue working toward true and meaningful reconciliation by supporting opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to be full partners in the inclusive and sustainable province we are building together.

Our government is committed to delivering on the mandate British Columbians gave us in 2020. Together we can make life better for people in B.C., improve the services we all rely on, and ensure a sustainable province for future generations.

As we renew our work, my priority as Premier is to deliver results that people can see and feel in four key areas:

- **Attainable and affordable housing:** In the wake of soaring prices and record migration to B.C., we will take on the important work of building new homes that are actually attainable for the middle class, while continuing our work to address the housing crisis for those in distress on our streets.

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- **Safer communities:** To address concerns about public safety, both for the people struggling with mental health and addiction on our streets, as well as the feeling that downtown centres are not as safe as they were before the pandemic, we will work with our partners at all levels of government, the justice and health care systems, the non-profit sector, and community leaders to find solutions for this complex challenge facing our province, and work overtime to seize the assets of high-level criminals.
- **Improved health care:** Amid unprecedented pressures we will continue to work to strengthen our public health care system, from family doctors to new hospitals, so care is there for each of us when we need it.
- **A sustainable, clean, secure, and fair economy:** We will continue our work investing in British Columbians, fighting racism and promoting equity, and building a clean economy that addresses our obligations to combat climate change by driving down emissions, while creating good, family supporting jobs.

Building a strong, secure, and sustainable economy that works for everyone means ensuring British Columbians have the inclusive, accessible, and future-focused post-secondary, skills, and trades training system they will need to succeed. Whether at a college, university, or any of the apprenticeship programs across B.C., our government needs to ensure everyone has a chance to upgrade their skills and learning to provide opportunities for good-paying jobs that support communities, families, and economic resiliency.

We will not succeed by leaving people behind. Ensuring newcomers to British Columbia can put their training and abilities to work as quickly as possible is essential. Too often, artificial barriers to working in their fields limit new immigrants from contributing right away to help build our province to the full extent of their abilities. Responding to this challenge will make people feel welcome in their new home province, build our economy, and attract more skilled workers from around the world to help create a strong future for all British Columbians.

Ensuring that international students have a positive experience in British Columbia is important. Whether they choose to stay here and build a new life or return home to put the skills they have learned here to work in their home community, the experiences of international students will inform their view of and relationship with British Columbia and Canada for their entire lives. Fair treatment and rapid response to issues and challenges are key to ensuring positive experiences and will help us build our international reputation and continue development of economic, cultural, and personal links with countries around the world.

Indigenous education opportunities across the system need to be promoted and enhanced. Offering culturally responsive and safe environments for Indigenous learners, regardless of their area of study, will help make our province stronger by building diversity across our professions, businesses, and governments, and will support Indigenous students in enhancing the resilience and success of their home communities and our entire province.

Since 2020, our government has made considerable progress on important initiatives including:

- Supporting students to succeed in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery, including new supports for mental health.
- Providing more student housing, with nearly 8,000 new units open or underway across the province.
- Expanding training opportunities for early childhood educators, health care workers and other in-demand jobs.

As you continue to make progress on items in the previous mandate letter, over the remaining period of this mandate I expect you to prioritize making progress on the following:

- Recognizing the global trend of labour shortages, deliver StrongerBC's Future Ready Action Plan with clear actions to continue expanding access to affordable, accessible, and relevant training so British Columbians have the skills they need for the jobs of the future.
- Continue to advance work to launch B.C.'s second medical school in Surrey.
- Meet or exceed the Homes for B.C. Plan target of 8,000 new student housing units to build even more homes to support students and take pressure off local rental markets and explore innovative agreements to develop and build more student rental housing.
- With support from the Parliamentary Secretary for Labour, help more people to choose jobs in the trades, including by continuing the implementation of Skilled Trades Certification and building on its success through considering other trades that could be included.
- To reduce financial barriers to post-secondary education, continue work to expand the BC Access Grant by increasing eligibility to ensure that people can access the skills they need for the jobs of the future.

- Lead work to recruit and retain people to build a skilled and flexible workforce in B.C.'s changing economy, and support career paths for skilled immigrants and services that give immigrants and refugees a strong start.
- Strengthen resources for the evaluation of skilled immigrants' credentials, including the Credential Assessment Improvement Fund.
- Take steps to ensure our government is able to respond quickly if private institutions promote or offer sub-standard education to international students and develop protections for international students that support their fair treatment across the sector.
- With support from the Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity, and in partnership with post-secondary institutions, student leadership, and Indigenous partners across B.C., develop and deliver on an action plan related to preventing and responding to sexualized violence at post-secondary institutions.
- Advance work on a Traditional Chinese Medicine degree program for our province.

To assist you in meeting the commitments we have made to British Columbians, you are assigned a Parliamentary Secretary for International Credentials. You will work closely together and ensure your Parliamentary Secretary receives appropriate support to deliver on the priorities outlined in the mandate letter issued to them.

Our work together must continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of people in this province. Issues not contemplated by this letter will come forward for government action and I ask you to bring such matters forward for consideration by the Planning and Priorities Committee of Cabinet, with the expectation that any proposed initiatives will be subject to the usual Cabinet and Treasury Board oversight and include measurable outcomes for British Columbians. Your ministry's priorities must reflect our government's overall strategic plan as determined by Cabinet.

British Columbians expect their elected representatives to work together to advance the public good. That means seeking out, fostering, and championing good ideas regardless of their origin. I expect you to reach out to elected members from all parties as you deliver on your mandate. Further, you will build thoughtful and sustained relationships both with title holders and through public and stakeholder engagement plans that incorporate diverse perspectives early in the policy development process. Federal partnerships and resources will be particularly important and, on behalf of our government, you will engage with the federal government on advancing priorities to improve the lives of British Columbians.

As a Cabinet, we will uphold the highest standards of ethics, collaboration, and good conduct in service of the public, and as a Minister of the Crown, you are expected to review, understand, and act according to the Members' Conflict of Interest Act. You will establish a collaborative working relationship with your Deputy Minister, and the public servants under their direction, who provide the professional, non-partisan advice that is fundamental to delivering on our government's priorities. Your Minister's Office must meet the highest standards for integrity and provide a respectful, rewarding environment for all staff.

The rural and urban challenges that we face are urgent and complex. In response, we must be forward-thinking, strategic, and ready to work across disciplines and old divisions in new ways. Labour shortages are a major issue globally, and British Columbia is no exception, including in the public service. Maintaining the BC Public Service as an employer of excellence will be key to retaining and recruiting the diverse professionals we rely on to deliver essential services, advice, and analysis.

At the core of this work is listening and responding to the priorities of people in B.C. Together, we can deliver results in very real ways – ways that people can see, feel, and touch, and that change their lives for the better. Thank you for doing this important work with me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Eby", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Eby, KC
Premier