

December 5, 2013

The Honorable Kerri Irvin-Ross
Minister of Family Services
Legislative Building
357 – 450 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

The Honorable Kevin Chief
Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities
Legislative Building
324 – 450 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

Dear Ministers Irvin-Ross and Chief,

The Manitoba School Boards Association (MSBA) has worked closely over the past decade and more with Manitoba's pre-school sector and with government departments to advance the interests of early learning and child care in our province and to advocate for strategic and comprehensive approaches to policy and practice in this area. The intent of this letter is to add the voice of Manitoba's public school boards to the call for an integrated public system of early learning and child care as outlined in the recent letter sent to you by the Manitoba Child Care Association and the Child Care Coalition of Manitoba.

The MSBA is in agreement with the defining parameters of an integrated ELCC system as cited in the MCCA/CCCM letter:

- a strong and equal partnership with the education system
- a universal approach to access, with particular attention to children in need of special support
- substantial public investment in services and infrastructure
- a participatory approach to quality improvement and assurance
- appropriate training and working conditions for staff
- systematic attention to data collection and monitoring; and
- a stable framework and long-term agenda for research and evaluation.

Moreover, we see merit in the proposal to establish a Commission on Integrated Early Learning and Care with the mandate and the resources to design such a system and to articulate a multi-year plan to move our province toward its realization.

We are aware of the provincial consultations/dialogues which have been undertaken by your respective ministries in recent months and we applaud your initiatives of reaching out to garner community perspectives about how we best educate and care for our children in this province. We hope that the feedback from these sessions will be shared back to communities and to the child care and education sectors so that we can understand more fully and completely what communities value and seek in terms of ELCC services and supports.

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Manitoba school boards recognize and appreciate the enormity of the task before government in creating a redesigned and integrated ELCC system in Manitoba. Please be assured that the Manitoba School Boards Association is fully supportive of such a direction and is committed to working with Government and with provincial and community agencies to achieve this goal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Floyd Martens". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Floyd Martens
President

FM/ak

cc MSBA Provincial Executive
All Manitoba School Boards
The Honorable James Allum, Minister of Education and Advanced Learning
Manitoba Child Care Association
Child Care Coalition of Manitoba