

OPEN LETTER

October 13, 2022

Premier,

Please accept this letter as my resignation as Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development and as Vice-Chair of Treasury Board, with immediate effect.

It has been an honour to serve our province in your Cabinet over the last four years. I am proud of our accomplishments and of the great work done by the staff of the Department, the staff across the English and French school systems, and the team in the Executive Council and Premier's office.

In particular, it has been an honour to work with the early childhood educators and teachers, and other school staff, who are always there for our province's children.

I look forward to continuing to serve the people of Fredericton West-Hanwell as a member of the Progressive Conservative caucus from the back benches and to continue to advocate for policies of reform and responsibility. I want to thank my caucus colleagues for their kindness and support. This government has done excellent work. The team deserves the credit.

I hope you will reflect on where and how you began your political project, as leader of the PC party and as Premier, and where you are today.

You are owed an explanation for my resignation. This list is not exhaustive, but reflective of my concerns.

We campaigned against politicizing the education system, and you rightly condemned "Thirty-seven education reforms in 35 years". You promised to make decisions based on evidence and to do politics differently.

Your recent efforts to pressure EECD to abolish French Immersion by September 2023, an initiative not included in our platform or Throne Speech, and not shared or approved by cabinet or caucus, would place huge stress on the education system and damage the education of our province's anglophone young people.

Serious changes to our French second-language education system are required. Change requires care, not a wrecking ball. You have been in the room when targets were set, and reported met, for progress on the language instruction and other files at EECD. You cannot change deadlines on large systems based on your emotional state, without undermining the quality of the work, or the morale of your team. I have worked tirelessly to prepare our system for changes. Many are accomplished, but some will stall because of your micromanagement. Government is not the same as building oil tankers. At EECD we are working with, and for, the

over 100,000 human beings in our education system. Reform is about inspiring movement, not ordering people to move.

Your behaviour at a recent meeting, where you refused to even read evidence you had specifically requested, instead choosing to yell “Data my ass” at a senior civil servant because you didn’t like what the data showed you; well, that was the end of your political project in my eyes: If you reject evidence because you dislike it then you don’t believe in evidence.

Similarly, civil servants should be able to work in a respectful environment. If that had been in place I would argue turnover in the civil service would have been greatly reduced and morale maintained in recent years. Too many good people have left on bad terms, on your watch.

Your order to abolish the democratically elected Regional Health Authorities without informing cabinet represents a steady consolidation of power in your own hands that has accelerated over the last 14 months. The difference between our parliamentary democracy and an executive presidency or dictatorship is that New Brunswickers should expect that major decisions will at least be discussed with a group of elected people, representing the public. You personally appoint your cabinet and can fire them at any time. Consulting a group like that before abolishing an elected branch of government is not a high bar to meet.

Similarly, your efforts to delay or undermine work related to reconciliation between our linguistic and cultural communities has been a missed opportunity to unite our province, to celebrate a strong francophone culture and to lead efforts to build a strong and inclusive anglophone culture while pursuing reconciliation with First Nations. Among others the endless excuses over replying to the report of on the Official Languages Act are embarrassing for a government elected on promises of action and unity.

Every day in public life you decide whether you are helping or hurting, with your work – which is all that each of us have to offer. With our values and working styles increasingly diverging I feel that tipping point has been reached and, for the above reasons among others, I resign.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve,

Dominic Cardy, MLA
Fredericton West-Hanwell