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*\*(Ce discours est bilingue)*

**Department of Education**

**Hon. Mr. Lamrock,** after all items under the Department of Education had been presented: I would just like to make a few brief comments to put this year’s estimates for the Department of Education in context.

This represents year two of *When kids come first,* our plan to build the best education system in Canada, together with New Brunswickers and their communities and together with the teachers and educators in our system. This was the challenge given to us in the election of 2006, and it is the challenge that drives us today. We know full well that, for too long, New Brunswick has been too satisfied with literacy rates and performance rates in school that will simply not do in the new economy. In the unforgiving environment of today, jobs, investments, and opportunity will follow those jurisdictions that give their graduates a chance to read, write, and do math and science well enough to solve novel problems every single day, and to be able to learn new technologies and new product lines. In short, the jurisdictions that do the best job of improving their educational outcomes are the jurisdictions that will know economic success.

I speak not only as a minister, but as a parent. When my youngest child walks across the graduation stage in 2020, she will know a world that is radically different from the one that her parents knew when they walked across the graduation stage in the eighties. In the world that my child will walk into, the average worker will change jobs 14 times by the age of 38. In the world that my child will walk into, we will not just do business down the street or even down the highway. Business will be done globally. The workers who are going to succeed are the ones who can constantly invent new products, create new knowledge, deal with an ever-changing world, and work across international boundaries. That means that we need to rethink completely how our education system works for all of our kids.

*When kids come first* is based upon three very simple principles. The ones that are reflected in this year’s budget show the new direction of reform with the largest increase to the Education budget in a generation. Three principles underline this year’s set of reforms. One, we believe that every single child should have high expectations, and we should believe that, with the right supports and the right environment, every child can succeed in every area of the curriculum. We should never declare any area, any subject, or any goal off-limits to any child. Our challenge as a government and our challenge as a community of educators is to put the right supports in place.

Deuxièmement, on croit fortement que chaque enfant peut réussir s’il utilise ses forces et ses

passions pour développer un intérêt dans la lecture, dans l’écriture, dans les mathématiques et dans les sciences. Pour cela, on doit avoir un programme universel, mais aussi une approche individuelle pour chaque élève.

While we have universal expectations of success, we have more individual teaching methods. That means that we have a diversity of teaching methods. We allow creativity among our teachers and a diversity of different ways for kids to learn by doing things that engage them, their strengths, and their passion. We need a universal curriculum, yes, but also a way of teaching that reaches every child as an individual. Finally, we must break free of the old ways of monitoring our teacher system. For too long, we have held teachers responsible for how they teach. We have given them long lists of instructions on how to teach their class. Then, we have been surprisingly indifferent to the results. I would note, for instance, that, only a few years ago, we saw a government cut the evaluation budget to know how well our kids were reading, writing, and doing math. Yet, we gave more and more instructions. Today’s teachers are highly paid and highly respected professionals, and we should treat them as such. That means that every teacher should be freed up to teach the classes that they see fit. We should allow teachers to be leaders in their profession by rewarding and recognizing the ideas that get the best results. We should share our leaders and our teaching profession with the schools that need to be raised up. We should reward and celebrate innovation and creativity, not just have teachers following instructions or seniority among our teachers. These three principles—universal expectations of success, teaching tailored to the individual needs and strengths of every child, and an atmosphere of creativity and innovation for our teachers—are

how we will build the best education system in Canada.

I am pleased to announce that this year’s budget represents an increase of $66 million to the school system, the largest increase to the Education budget in a generation. Spending will go up by $768 per student this year. By making good financial choices, we have also been able to put $83 million aside for the implementation of initiatives set out in *When kids come first.*

I want to touch briefly on what this year’s budget includes. This year, we have seen the launch of the NB3 initiative and of literacy, math, and science initiatives in both sectors of the education system.

On a ciblé un chiffre pour la réussite scolaire de chaque école. Les directeurs et les directrices sont responsables d’assurer que nous réussirons à atteindre les cibles en littératie et en numératie de chaque élève dans chaque école. Ce n’est pas une question de punir les écoles, mais d’investir nos ressources dans la littératie, dans la numératie et dans les sciences. On va cibler les pierres angulaires de l’apprentissage qui peuvent prédire la réussite scolaire de tous nos enfants. On veut utiliser les écoles et les enseignants qui ont réussi pour aider les gens à s’améliorer. Voilà la façon de réussir.

We are investing millions more in evaluations this year, restoring evaluations that were cut and adding more. The important part of doing evaluations this way is that we should know, every few years, not just where students are at the end of their academic year, but how much they have grown and how much they have learned. Then and only then can we see which schools are getting the best results and learn from our leaders. That also means that we are investing over $1 million in the early years evaluation to make sure that every single child is kindergarten-ready; that we are able to start preparing to help the students who struggle before they set foot in the kindergarten door; and that we know where every student starts out, so that we can see how much the system has truly made a difference.

We are also investing in a new student information system that will allow us to track the students’ success, so that we can see the difference each school and each teacher makes and so that, someday, we can truly learn from the very best our system has to offer. We are continuing to invest in the Innovation Fund. By the end of this year, $10 million will have been spent supporting and rewarding teacher innovation. That means that the very best ideas and the most creative teachers are going to be able to get funding up front for their ideas. We do not just dole out money to everyone, but we reward the teachers who are doing something a little differently. That will allow us to see more success stories like the one we saw in Dipper Harbour, where frontline teachers were able to create family literacy resources and family literacy nights that involved the whole family in literacy. It will mean continuing to invest in projects like the one we have seen in Devon Middle School, where children learn and master science concepts by working with NB Power employees on hands-on technology in alternative energy.

On peut voir une continuation de l’innovation dans le comté de Kent, où les gens utilisent la

littérature des collectivités autochtones. Ils ne font pas que lire les livres, ils parlent avec les auteurs eux-mêmes. Ils font également des activités traditionnelles des Premières nations en éducation physique pour que les élèves puissent développer un enthousiasme pour la littératie et la numératie.

That is the kind of innovation that we want to continue to support. We will continue to meet the goals of the MacKay report. It is worth noting that, this year, we have continued to meet the staffing levels set out by Professor MacKay in his report, and, once again, New Brunswick has led the country with the largest increase in a generation in our student services budget for students who struggle. Millions of dollars will be put into meeting the MacKay report targets. That means that we have met his targets for resource teachers. That means that more students can get help more quickly when they are looking for a plan if they struggle. We have met the targets for speech pathology, meaning more students will get intervention help when they need it, when they struggle with language development. We have met the targets for guidance counselors, so that students can have one adult who helps them discover their strengths and develop a plan of learning that lets them use things where they have a passion.

We have, of course, continued to invest in restoring the trades to New Brunswick schools. We have rolled out a series of five model schools that will use hands-on learning in order to develop the competencies that are needed. We have also used dual enrollment and a reinvestment in trades classes and professional development in curriculum in the middle schools, so that every child who has a strength and a passion in the trades can follow through.

Du côté francophone, nous voulons également ajouter le financement pour aider les gens qui veulent suivre des cours de métiers et développer leurs compétences. Nous avons travaillé avec les collèges communautaires et nous avons investi dans le développement professionnel, ce qui assurera que chaque élève qui veut suivre un cours de métiers ou de main-d’oeuvre pourra développer ses compétences au cours de sa carrière académique.

We have added more enrichment time.

On continue d’avoir des stratégies et on a ajouté des ressources pour les élèves doués.

We have added enrichment time. Now, every child who needs an additional challenge, who works a little ahead of the curve, will have a mentor and will have time to develop project-based learning that he or she can use in other classes. We will continue to work toward the day when all children who need an extra challenge will have a mentor who works with them and an individual learning plan that will help them meet with success.

We have restored physical education, art, and music by adding more specialists and more

professional development, so that we can finally celebrate the strengths of children in these areas and create co-curriculum learning opportunities. When you have specialists, you can actually use music combined with literature, and you can actually use physical education combined with other areas of discipline to create novel learning opportunities. We have also added guidance counselors. We will spend $3.3 million to continue our community schools project. In communities, rural and urban, we are seeing tremendous community partnerships by allowing our educators to work with those in the community who also have something to bring. In Saint John, we have seen an intercity school that once struggled. We have seen community mentors come to work with kids and give them a sense that somebody cares about their future. In Woodstock, we are seeing individuals with something to offer in everything from environmental science to technology. These people are working with kids who may have an academic interest beyond the classroom, helping the teacher find things that engage them as readers, writers, and learners in the areas that interest them.

Je viens de visiter Cocagne, où on développe un modèle entrepreneurial. Chaque enfant lance une micro-entreprise. Les élèves peuvent faire appel à plus de 30 compagnies dans la région de Cocagne pour développer leur propre micro-entreprise. Ces entrepreneurs servent également de mentors dans la collectivité. Ils travaillent avec les enseignants pour s’assurer que l’élève puisse lire, écrire et faire des mathématiques au sein de sa micro-entreprise afin de développer une passion non seulement pour les affaires mais également pour les habilités de littératie et numératie qui aident à former un entrepreneur.

We will continue to invest in student feedback loops that will help us to have quicker responses to bullying and quicker responses when students are bored or are not engaged in their classes. We will, of course, continue to develop our universal French second language curriculum. For too long, we have heard those voices of the past saying that it is okay to segregate kids on ability, that it is okay to declare learning a second language off-limits for too many, as long as you put in more resources.

Ten years ago, we saw the first report from experts who said that it was time to stop separating every kid who struggles from the mainstream and putting these kids in classes where they cannot learn. The minister at the time, Elvy Robichaud, said that it was okay, that they would just put in more resources. Ten years later, our literacy rates are still the worst in Canada, and we are still leaving too many kids behind.

In the MacKay report, we saw very clear directions saying that inclusive education was being hurt by the practice of having one stream for kids who were doing well and another for those who were struggling. In the words of Professor MacKay, those children were not only failing to get the literacy skills and the help that they needed, they were also ruining any chance that they had of becoming bilingual.

On veut un Nouveau-Brunswick où la grande majorité des anglophones peuvent avoir le privilège et la joie d’être bilingue. On ne peut pas atteindre un certain niveau de bilinguisme si on donne l’occasion de vraiment devenir bilingue à seulement 20 % des élèves. C’est pourquoi on est maintenant la seule province au Canada à bâtir un système universel de français langue seconde pour les anglophones. Le Nouveau-Brunswick est maintenant prêt à être une province où tout le monde doit réussir et peut réussir à devenir bilingue. C’est un fait que, quand le système ségrégé et optionnel de français langue seconde a été créé, ce n’était pas une décision pédagogique mais un compromis politique. C’était seulement une option parce que tout le monde n’était pas prêt à accepter le bilinguisme. Dans le Nouveau-Brunswick où j’ai grandi, nous sommes maintenant une province prête pour le bilinguisme universel. Les pays qui ont les plus grands taux de bilinguisme et de trilinguisme en Europe utilisent un système universel et non un système ségrégé où les enfants en difficulté n’ont pas l’occasion de devenir bilingue.

We know that most countries use a universal system and have higher bilingualism rates. In the seventies, we created an optional system, because many Anglophones were not ready to accept that French would be a requirement. In the New Brunswick in which I was privileged to grow up, we are ready to have a universal bilingual program. We are ready to say that French should be taught to every single Anglophone student. We are ready to insist on eight years of high-quality French instruction for everyone, and we are finally ready to say that we should not leave struggling children out of the opportunity to become bilingual. Learning French in New Brunswick should be as natural for an Anglophone as math, science, history, and physical education. We should offer it to everyone I would say this to those who would have us go back to a time when we would drop every kid who struggled, and they would never become bilingual: We should never go back to accepting anything less than full, universal bilingual programs in New Brunswick.

We have also targeted other opportunities to address traditional areas where we have fallen behind other provinces. We know that, for too long, there has been an unacceptable literacy gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal New Brunswickers. That was why we were proud and privileged to sign an agreement with all 15 First Nations Chiefs to target $40 million for First Nations literacy skills, language skills, and early childhood and transition to kindergarten programs, as well as adding tough accountability measures to make sure that districts attack the unacceptably high rate of dropouts among First Nations students in New Brunswick. In a New Brunswick where we dream of universal literacy, we cannot leave any group behind.

We have also begun the process of curriculum reform, making sure that we target what is truly important in literacy, numeracy, and science. A curriculum should not be an exercise where a teacher rams through a long list of facts. We should learn from the international example—from the places that give their teachers the most freedom to teach, that get children to develop the competencies that will allow them to learn throughout their lives. These are the jurisdictions that do best. I am very proud of, and very grateful to, the people in the department who have worked very hard on developing *When kids come first* and who have supported this government in what is an ambitious agenda.

Sometimes, we talk so much about what is wrong with education that we fail to celebrate what is right. It was gratifying for us when the Canadian Council on Learning published its biannual review of learning in Canada. For years, New Brunswick has trailed behind other provinces, near the bottom in terms of learning, in this and other international assessments. We know that if you start in last place, at some point, you have to start running faster than the others. That was why we were so happy to see that, over the past two years, we obtained the best results New Brunswick had ever obtained on the Canadian Council on Learning index. We had the third fastest rate of learning growth in Canada, and that is worth celebrating.

I know that this is a time of very quick changes, but, indeed, I would rather have passionate debate than benign indifference. I know and respect the members of the opposition, and I welcome their questions. We look forward to a good, passionate debate about education.