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| ***Province*** | ***Législature*** | ***Session*** | ***Type de discours*** | ***Date du discours*** | ***Locuteur*** | ***Fonction du locuteur*** | ***Parti politique*** |
| Manitoba | 40e | 4e | Remarques préliminaires à l’étude des crédits du Ministère de l’Éducation | 27 mai 2015 | James Allum | Minister of Education and Advanced Learning | New Democratic Party of Manitoba |

Our government has a plan to deliver on the priorities of Manitoba families. We're investing to build our province and create jobs that will lay the foundation for an even stronger economic future. And we know that by investing in education and training we are helping more Manitobans, especially young Manitobans, get the skills they need to succeed. These skills will help young people start careers and take advantage of the opportunities we are creating with the investments we are making.

But, whether our kids want to become a carpenter, a teacher, an engineer or a nurse, it all starts with good schools and a high-quality education system. That's why while other provinces have been reducing funding to education, we are funding K-to-12 education at the rate of economic growth for the 16th consecutive year. Our government now invests more than $1.27 billion directly to our public schools, including the additional $25 million we invested this year. Our funding to the public education system has increased more than $500 million or 64.9 per cent since 1999, and this is a record that our government is proud of.

We all want the best for our children, and we are working with our schools to ensure greater accountability and providing targeted funding to improve outcomes in math and literacy so that parents see results. Together with parents, teachers and education leaders, we unveiled our action plan to improve academic achievement for all Manitoba students. We will accomplish this by working to enhance teacher education, supporting teachers and students in their early years, focus on fundamental skills training, giving parents and students more supports at home and ensuring greater accountability in our education system.

We are providing targeted funding to improve outcomes in math and literacy as well as targeted funding to support indigenous student achievement in math and literacy. We have also brought in legislation to create smaller classes in kindergarten to grade 3 and give teachers more one-on-one time with students. Working with school divisions, we've already hired more than 300 new teachers and invested more than $29 million in new and renovated classrooms.

This plan is working. We've already seen a 50 per cent reduction in classes, with 24 students or less. We have also introduced a revised K to–math curriculum focused on basic skills development like being able to do math in your head and not rely on a calculator. We are also revising the English and French language arts curriculum to ensure kids are mastering basic skills in reading, grammar, spelling and punctuation. We're renovating science labs across the province to equip them with the latest technology. And, finally, we've introduced a new parent-friendly curriculum website and plainlanguage report card to give parents the information they need to help their students succeed in school.

Madam Speaker, we're not just focusing on our investments to ensure that children get a solid foundation and learn the critical skills they need to succeed. We're also building, renovating and expanding schools throughout the province. We know that strong schools are at the heart of our communities and the key to creating a bright future for our children. Right now, we're building new schools in Riverbend, Sage Creek, Waverley West, Woodlands and Thompson. And we recently opened new schools in La Broquerie, Steinbach, Winkler and Amber Trails. In fact, since we formed government, we've built 35 schools throughout the province.

And we don't stop at building new schools. We are also expanding schools to create more classroom space. Soon, École Taché, George 'fritten'–George Fitton, Meadows School, John de Graff, David Livingstone, Lansdowne, Lord Nelson and Waverly Park in Brandon will have new classrooms to respond to increasing enrolment and our investments to make classes smaller. In fact, we're building and renovating 40 new–48 new classrooms to directly support smaller classes. In addition, we are building and renovating gyms at 14 schools and we have already built and renovated 50 science labs across the province with more than 20 yet to come.

But we won't stop at creating classrooms and gyms. We also need to invest in our schools so they can provide new links to employment and skills training. This is why we're investing in new shops classes throughout the province so students have the chance to complete the first year of a trade while they're still in high school. With new shops and the newest equipment, our graduates will be able to get industry-standard training earlier and graduate with the skills they need to get a good job.

This is a record to be proud of. In fact, since we formed government, we have invested over $1 billion to build, renovate and maintain our schools.

More students than ever are graduating from schools and moving on to the next stage in their lives. Our graduation rate has hit a new high of 87 per cent in Manitoba, and this is good news for Manitoba families. But we know that education doesn't end with high school graduation. More and more students are choosing to attend post-secondary education and training at our universities and colleges. In fact, enrolment at our universities has increased by 45 per cent since 1999 while our colleges have seen a 52 per cent increase in enrolment.

Many others are also choosing to enter the workforce directly and start their careers right away.Still others are returning to school to upgrade their skills, to better position themselves to take advantage of the opportunities we are creating.

All of this requires a strong post-secondary system. We know that better training and education opportunities are key to keeping Manitoba on the right track. More people with access to a better education will translate into a better trained workforce that's ready for the jobs of tomorrow.

Our plan focuses on improving the quality of education in Manitoba, helping young people get jobs–good jobs–and keeping education affordable for students. This is why we're investing more than ever in our universities and colleges. Budget 2015 invests an additional $19.8 million into the post-secondary system, the largest investment in the country.

Since 1999, funding support from our government has seen an additional $335 million invested in our universities and colleges. Our government is now providing over $680 million in supports to the postsecondary system in Manitoba. This funding helps institutions by providing operational funding but it also provides targeted investments designed to serve students and the economy better.

We have also taken steps to ensure more students have access to post-secondary education. We have frozen university tuition at the rate of inflation. We have the third lowest university and second lowest college tuition fees in the country.

And this year, we're making Manitoba the first province in western Canada to offer zero interest on student loans. And we're reducing barriers for rural and northern students by creating a vehicle exemption for student loan applications.

We've made substantial investments in supports for university and college students. By committing more than $260 million in grants, scholarships and bursaries, and providing almost $150 million to students through the tuition rebate, we are making studying and living in Manitoba more attractive.

Our post-secondary system works best when we are working together to serve students–ensure that there are no wrong doors. Last year we created the advanced education advisory committee to provide a table where education partners and stakeholders can meet to discuss the best ways to move our system forward. I'm pleased to report that the advisory committee has met several times and that the conversation around the table has been productive in allowing all voices to be heard as we develop a new strategy for post-secondary education.

Our post-secondary system is thriving and we continue to make investments in our colleges and universities because we know how essential a strong education system is for a modern, growing economy.

Madam Speaker, our government makes the education and training of students a top priority. We all want our children to succeed and to lead happy, productive lives here in Manitoba. We know that by continuing to invest in our schools, in our children, in our teachers and in our universities and colleges, we are ensuring that the future remains bright for Manitoba. We know that reckless cuts to front-line services and infrastructure investments others call for will hurt families and destroy our economic momentum. Our plan is to grow our economy, create good jobs for families, protect front-line services and invest in education to provide opportunities for youth. Our plan is working.

Thank you.