



**FREDERICTON
CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE**
— The Voice of Business —

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1. What are your top three priorities that you will make happen during your term if elected?

My first priority this election is that of medical care, both physical and mental. Specifically, I want to see the hiring of 200 new family physicians, 100 new specialists, the repealing of regulation 84-20, universal mental health care, and universal pharma. My second priority is economy, which would involve investments in small, local businesses, the implementation of a universal basic income, and working towards maintaining Fredericton's position as a cybersecurity leader, alongside improving working conditions and increasing the minimum wage. Finally, my third priority is the environment. This would involve a large-scale Carbon Reduction Program, introducing an environmental bill of rights, investing in green energy options and infrastructure, and pushing for more, environmentally friendly business developments.

2. What opportunities do you see arising for the Fredericton Region as a result of the pandemic? How can we capitalize on these opportunities?

As a result of this pandemic, we see significantly more experience with technology and non-linear working schedules in the general public. This change allows for a push towards working from home, a greater focus on productivity and results instead of time worked, and a move away from the traditional office structure. If we can work towards capitalizing on these opportunities (offering tax rebates for businesses encouraging non-linear work from home, for example), we could harbour a more productive, healthy, and happy work force, without as much worry on time spent specifically at a desk in the office. This also would reduce general operating costs (as larger offices become unnecessary), and encourage greater technological literacy, which would provide a boost to the tech industry in Fredericton.

3. The private sector, especially small business which is the engine of the economy was severely impacted by the pandemic, how will your government support the recovery of our economy?



First and foremost, we need to have a government that specifically acknowledges the importance of small businesses in our communities, rather than that of mega-corporations. Small businesses make up around 80% of the economy nationally, and they need our support now more than ever. While I could go on about what I would want to implement, I think it's more important that our government takes the time to ask small businesses and small business owners what THEY need, and then works towards making that happen. No MLA, nor government, is made up of polymaths, thus the only way we can get through this is asking questions and listening to what our local businesses need more.

Though, while we ask those questions and work on solving them, grants towards small businesses aimed at keeping them operational without any layoffs would be a phenomenal intermediary step.

4. Prior to the pandemic, an aging and declining labour force was a top concern of businesses in our region. Immigration will be more challenging in the short-term – how can government help labour force participation in the province?

The easiest way to encourage labour force participation would be grants towards businesses hiring more people, the increase of the minimum wage (paid for with the grants), universal, safe childcare and working towards long-term immigration policies. Furthermore, as mentioned in my answer to the second question, as we have more people working from home, we have more people who are able to work in a safe environment (especially if they suffer from a disability), with less strict time pressures due to a non-linear schedule, and more access to what they need to be successful. If we mix this with universal, school-based childcare, many parents could see this as a reentry point into the labour force. Finally, we must work towards encouraging students to work in the province and to remain here after with greater government support to hiring students at local businesses, possibly through university co-op programs and grants towards hiring students.

5. What natural resource development opportunities are most important to growing the New Brunswick economy? How can government help move these industries forward?



From my own research, one of the more prominent natural resource opportunities in New Brunswick is that of mining. Working with Canadian companies, minerals in New Brunswick could be extracted in a clean, cost-efficient way that would be able to greatly support the provincial economy, and encouraging that through close work with Canadian businesses, grants, loans, and other developmental options.

This says nothing of other industries present in New Brunswick, such as forestry and fishing, which both could also be encouraged by the government through grant programs and improved legislation. What's most important is that we encourage a variety of businesses local to New Brunswick, or at least Canada, to play their part, and avoid strong monopolization by any one company, allowing many individuals and groups to invest in these industries and see real development. This can only be done through close collaboration and regular discussion with the businesses operating in these industries, and acting on what they need, which is the key element to my policy making decisions (and will be mentioned again).

6. The Fredericton Region has been building expertise and capacity in cyber security over the course of several decades. What role can government play in ensuring we remain a global leader in this sector?

I spoke of this in my previous answers, but to encourage the development of cyber-security even further, we need to create an environment in which they are able to thrive. This means, as a first step, working with the local universities to improve their computer science and cyber-security programs and encouraging a greater number of people to have access to this field.

There are 2 specific steps I believe would be necessary in encouraging this industry even further:

1. Improving opportunities provincially for individuals to work from home in Fredericton. We have seen some of this already, but the cyber-security industry can function extremely well, if not even better, at a distance. Thus, creating improved childcare programs, offering grants for long-distance development, and supporting businesses in working at a distance would be a primary step in increasing the available workforce for these businesses. Furthermore, encouraging more people to enter the



industry initially through lower-cost education, alongside that mentioned previous, would create a large, long-term workforce here in Fredericton.

2. Having regular, open communication with any and all businesses in the cyber-security industry to learn about what they need and how to solve the problems they are facing. While I personally may not currently know of every problem and every solution, I can learn these things, and working together would allow for the best, most effective steps going forwards and in maintaining our current position.

7. How should New Brunswick handle a second wave of COVID-19 in New Brunswick? What are the appropriate metrics to trigger another public health shutdown?

I had the opportunity to work as a COVID-19 researcher this summer (in mathematical modelling, working with the government of New Brunswick), and if there's one thing I learned, people working from home, and only interacting within a safe bubble, is an incredible step in avoiding a large-scale, or highly damaging, second wave. Thus, as mentioned many times before (this was the reason for regularly mentioning it), encouraging employees to work from home would prevent large-scale damages from COVID, or any later pandemics or emergencies.

For public health shutdowns, we look primarily at 6 unique, independent cases (which are not travel related) for code orange, and 20 for code red. Thus, limiting the ability for the disease to spread and lose our tracking abilities (thus creating an independent case) is extremely important, which is best done by lowering average contacts. Beyond this, encouraging all businesses to regularly clean and sanitize all official work spaces, and creating a provincial system for individuals to take time off of work due to sickness without worries of pay (an improved one, to be exact), would stop employees from working while sick, and spreading the disease even further.

Finally, as mentioned often, regular, open communication with healthcare professionals, and taking their advice to heart, would also prevent any major future outbreaks.



8. What are your views on the New Brunswick's 10-year education plan and Green Paper? How do you intend to ensure consistency in the province's education plans?

Firstly, the 10-year plan encourages a diverse culture, encouraging development, improving literacy and numeracy, improving general education, and nurturing healthy values. As of my reading of this, I quite support it, and see offering education is a diverse set of skills, with plenty of investment, formed by consulting thousands of individuals who this directly impacts, is very promising. This type of development, possibly with more funding, can only work to build a stronger economy, with a well-educated, happier workforce. Thus, it has my support, and continuing to consult those this impacts, and thus updating the plan regularly, is a must.

Secondly, the Green Paper, similarly to the plan above, outlines long-term, non-partisan plans that create a stronger educational environment for our youth. This is something I strongly encourage, as setting real goals, with real actions to achieve them, all formed by regularly consulting those within the field (either employed or actively using the services) is something that is extremely positive for a province as a whole. Education is the foundation on which we build our society, and it must always be strongly encouraged.