



**MINISTER OF
FINANCE**

Legislative Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba, CANADA
R3C 0V8

DEC 05 2017

Mr. Ken Cameron
President, Manitoba School Boards Association
191 Provencher Boulevard
Winnipeg MB R2G 0G4

Dear Mr. Cameron:

I am writing in response to your recent correspondence outlining the Manitoba School Boards Association's perspectives on Budget 2018.

I would like to thank you for your comments as we engage with Manitobans through our pre-Budget 2018 public consultations. As you alluded to in your letter, the current realities of our fiscal situation and our efforts to move towards a balanced budget are top of mind for many Manitobans and we want to ensure that everyone has the chance to provide their input into Manitoba's future.

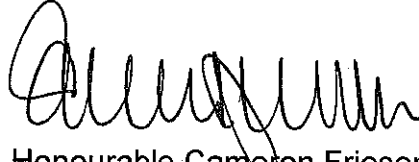
As you are likely aware, the Honourable Ian Wishart, Minister of Education and Training, has indicated that the Province will undertake a broad review of the Provincial school system, including the structure of how the system is funded, after the 2018 school board elections. This effort will include consultations with key stakeholders and the public; I would encourage you to engage in this upcoming process.

In terms of your concerns with health care premiums and their impact on children and families living in poverty, on October 24, 2017, The Honourable Brian Pallister, Premier agreed with Manitobans who told us clearly that they do not support the introduction of a health premium or higher taxes to sustain our health care system. The Premier committed that the Manitoba government will not institute a health premium during this mandate and promised to follow the direction of Manitobans to innovate and find greater efficiencies in government to sustain our health care system.

I also share your concerns around cannabis legalization and its potential impact on children and youth. We recognize that our approach to cannabis legalization and taxation needs to be in line with the social objective of eliminating the illicit market and keeping cannabis away from vulnerable populations, in particular, children and youth, and not on maximizing revenue generation.

I want to assure you that our government's focus on fiscal responsibility and addressing our Province's deficit will help ensure appropriate resources are available on an on-going basis for provincial government programs that protect and support our most vulnerable citizens; including school aged children and youth. Our government is listening to Manitobans and your input is valuable as we move forward with preparing Budget 2018.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cameron Friesen', written in a cursive style.

Honourable Cameron Friesen
Minister of Finance

c: The Honourable Brian Pallister
Honourable Ian Wishart