



LEADERSHIP, ADVOCACY AND SERVICE FOR MANITOBA'S PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS

January 30, 2023

Honourable Cliff Cullen  
Minister of Finance and Deputy Premier  
Room 103, 450 Broadway  
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

Dear Minister Cullen:

As part of our annual advocacy cycle and, in particular through opportunities to engage with you during the standing pre-budget consultation, the Manitoba School Boards Association has always provided the Government of Manitoba with the very best case in support of our most essential investment as a province: our children and their future.

In last year's pre-budget brief, we acknowledged the Government of Manitoba for its one-time funding of the impacts arising from province-wide teacher wage settlements in 2021/22. We were equally appreciative for your support in view of the added costs required to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. We remain grateful for this extra-ordinary support. While last year's pressures required special measures to achieve a steady-state funding environment, the 2023/24 Budget Development cycle brings the public education system to a distinct crossroads requiring the same level of partnership and investment.

**Annualization of previous teacher wage settlement**

As you prepare Budget 2023, including the advance Funding of Schools announcement typically released in late January/early February of each fiscal year, we cannot underscore the importance of sustaining the full \$81.1 million in one-time funding for teacher wage settlements arising from the last round of collective bargaining (2018-2022). As presented in last year's pre-budget consultation brief, the annualization of these funds in this coming Fiscal Year could not be more important. The very real relationship between our students and school staff is the most significant connection that underpins everything that we can do and achieve in public education. Sustaining the General Pay Increase (GPI) for our teaching staff is therefore critical.

The need for funded teacher salaries is well understood by Manitobans in context of improving outcomes for our students: according to an open-ended question, "what is the most important thing that should be done to improve our public schools in Manitoba?"— asked by Probe Research on behalf of our association to a representative sample of those living in our province in December, 2021— a clear majority (51%) responded that "teacher salaries and benefits", "providing more funding for schools", and "added resources and supports for children and families" were their top priority. That our constituents continue to support provincial budget investment in their local schools is more than evident from these responses. The people of Manitoba recognize that if any improvement is to take

place, then our province must remain competitive while providing the inputs necessary for enhanced educational outcomes. Amidst national and international teacher shortages and this year's repeat cycle of growing requirements for substitution capacity, it is important to protect Manitoba's ability to develop, attract and retain our present and future teacher workforce. Annualizing the 2018-2022 GPI could therefore not be more compelling as we enter 2023/24.

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***Recommendation 1:***

*We strongly recommend that the Province of Manitoba extend consideration for annualization of the full \$81.1 million for the 2018-2022 teacher wage settlement in 2023/24.*

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**Upcoming provincial teacher bargaining settlement**

As the Government of Manitoba is aware, the above requirement comes with further augmented expectations as we enter this next Fiscal Year. Given the Government's proclamation of the new provincial model for teacher collective bargaining under Bill 45 last year, our Association has operationalized the many consultation processes and other protocols as necessary to fulfill our role as the employer agent in relation to this new bargaining process. We thank the Government for extending its trust to the Association to fulfill this significant responsibility.

While formal negotiations with the Manitoba Teachers' Society are now underway, the timeframe for conclusion of this process, as well as the duration that will be addressed under the new provincial collective agreement itself, remains subject to many factors. There is every indication however, that a settlement is very likely to come into view during the 2023/24 Fiscal Year. Incremental harmonization of teacher collective agreements, as is equally anticipated to occur commencing with this first round of provincial teacher bargaining, is equally deserving of the Government's full consideration.

We will therefore need to work in partnership with Treasury Board, following the annual provincial budget announcement, to identify what additional funding will appropriately compensate those who deliver instructional programs, supports and services to Manitoba's students. Based on the current realities of available revenues and resources across all school divisions, it is critical that the Government of Manitoba understand that there is no means possible for our members to address any such related costs "from within" during this same Fiscal Period. Doing so would directly jeopardize our ability to deliver sustainable programming, supports and services across schools province-wide. This is especially applicable given the precarious operating context faced by several rural and northern school divisions who have experienced gradual funding loss over the previous budget cycles.

We therefore include this current update in the present brief by way of signalling in advance what will emerge as a significant funding pressure for all school boards, and also for the Government of Manitoba, in 2023/24. As this is the very first round of provincial teacher bargaining, collaborating with the Government to align our respective funding process will serve to promote the success of Bill 45 now and into the longer term.

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**Recommendation 2:**

*Given the forthcoming outcomes of the next provincial teacher settlement, likely in the 2023/24 Fiscal Year, we strongly recommend that critical dialogue and review of available funding resources continue to take place at Treasury Board to prepare for this likelihood. School Boards are not in position to fund any additional collective agreement costs ‘from within’.*

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**General operating increase– other expenditures**

In last year’s pre-budget consultation brief, MSBA highlighted that teacher compensation as a significant driver of divisional operating investments is but only one factor. Both last year and into the foreseeable future, school boards have equally been confronted with the reality that for all remaining operating expenses (accounting for approximately 45% of all public education expenditure or approximately \$1.1 billion), last year’s 3.3% average annual inflationary increase has now been followed by a 7.8% average annual inflationary expansion in Manitoba during 2022. This growing inflationary pressure provides a significant challenge to protecting status quo operating expenditures relative to our programming, supports and services.

In 2021, this inflationary impact already translated into the need for, at minimum, \$40 million in additional external funding support, through a combination of provincial grant funding and ongoing local property taxation revenues. We were therefore very grateful to Government under last year’s Funding of Schools Announcement for the important one-time funding grant of \$77 million that was provided to help address these expenditure as well as other general operating cost pressures, including those required for ongoing pandemic related expenditures. This one-time funding, combined with the added 0.55% to operating that was approved by Government, helped to promote a necessary response to many ongoing cost pressures.

This year, in view of the doubling of inflationary impacts, sustained additional funding support is once again needed. In 2023/24, approximately \$94 million in minimum added funding support is required to respond to these real inflationary impacts.

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**Recommendation 3:**

*That the Government of Manitoba consider an increase of, at minimum, \$94 million for other operating expenditures as premised on the current rate of inflationary growth when developing the 2022 Funding of Schools announcement and Provincial Budget.*

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### **Further recommendations for operating**

Among the several funding levers that are available to address such elevated demand arising from this fiscal context, we therefore trust and so recommend that the Government shall engage in efforts to achieve balance through respectable increases to base operating, capital, Property Tax Offset Grants (PTOG), and additional funding for replacement of all revenues rebated to ratepayers under Bill 71.

In the recent past, this has resulted in 0.5%-0.55% to operating, 8% to capital, 2% to the special requirement under PTOG, as well as continuation of equalization, maintaining the Formula Guarantee at 98%, \$36.7 million under General Support, zero decrease to the Tax Incentive Grant, and additional one-time funding arrangements and other adjustments to base and categorical grants.

To recommend precise increases to and for each of these levers however, is no small feat and, as an association we feel, given the Government's continued stated plans to further repeal education levies under its most recent Throne Speech, that determining which combination of increases and which lever will be used to do so, is best left to the Schools Finance Branch, Schools Capital Branch and Treasury Board to calculate.

We therefore offer no further recommendation beyond, at minimum, status quo funding in order to respond to the subtotal of \$174 million that is required to fund 2018-2022 teacher GPI annualization as well as general inflation to other operating in 2023/24. This said, containing and minimizing prior year impacts upon those boards that have realized gradual and cumulative revenue losses under the previous five Funding of School Program announcements, remains an important objective of our association on behalf of its members. We therefore would recommend that special emphasis be placed on increasing revenues to address the reductions that have been experienced by impacted boards who are consequently finding it more and more difficult to maintain the same equity and accessibility in programming, services and supports.

Indeed, progressive years of funding for school operating below the rate of inflation when added further to the existing half billion dollar inflationary funding gap between total revenues received in public education and actual operating costs (evident from mandated financial reporting and accounting under the longstanding FRAME report) have represented a fiscal noose around effective maintenance of the educational opportunities that all Manitobans should expect from their public schools. If steps are not undertaken to meaningfully address this growing funding divide in 2023/24, the gap will only continue to outpace available resources, to the detriment of our students and our communities.

In real terms, recent funding trends have witnessed budget decreases for nearly half of all school divisions, with only nine school divisions able to fund costs at the rate of inflation and over two thirds experiencing increases below the rate of inflation. Incremental approaches to school funding are not permitting public education to successfully address our call to quality education for all of our children. This funding pattern cannot be sustained.

Based on this precarious context, divisions province-wide have engaged in cost containment measures that are based on the least impact to those programs that are critical to student success, even while we are experiencing more and more impacts to these same core services and programming. Going into 2023, appropriate steps must therefore be taken by Government to reverse this alarming trend. We therefore strongly recommend that Government extend consideration for between a 4 to 5 percent

increase to operating expenditures, in an effort to redress the most recent inflationary adjustment gap as incurred by the public education system between 2017 and 2022.

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**Recommendation 4:**

*That the Government of Manitoba extend consideration to an annualized catch-up increase of between 4 to 5 percent to operating expenditures, in an effort to redress the most recent inflationary adjustment gap as incurred by the public education system between 2017 and 2022.*

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**Important qualification: pay for non-instructional essential support**

Once again this year, a full dissection of our schools' "other operating" costs is warranted for added context. It is important to remain aware that just under half of these "other operating expenditures" (approximately \$500 million) are vested in non-instructional compensation for our support staff.

School boards make every attempt to "hold the line" when it comes to achieving settlements that provide a fair and honest wage for our staff while also promoting fiscal sustainability. Bargaining with non-instructional staff therefore also occurs during evenings to ensure that staff are not redeployed from their duties. We are well aware that funding and human resources are finite and must be balanced with operational needs as well as, most importantly, attendant impacts upon our local ratepayer. In the 2023/24 context, what is fair reflects the cumulative context of fiscal and wage restraint measures beginning in 2017, combined with the specific circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, one which was followed by significant economic volatility.

Into the 2023/24 Fiscal Year, public school divisions continue to bargain with those support staff units who have completed the four year mandate established under *The Public Sector Sustainability Act*. As we noted in last year's brief, the experience to date with those units that have settled is noteworthy:

- 1) Last year, the average settlement across non-teaching units tended to reflect the same teacher wage settlement pattern, at a combined increase of 6.7 percent over a four year period. Moving forward into the next Fiscal Year, it is noted that in view of increases to the provincially mandated minimum wage under Bill 44 *The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Minimum Wage)* and with introduction of Bill 4 (*The Minimum Wage Adjustment Act, 2022*), these emerging developments do contribute to elevated expectations across all bargaining units. Under this legislation, the projected 4.8% increase that will become effective April 1, 2023, with a further 6% increase scheduled for October 1, 2023, signifies that an 11.1% increase will establish a baseline for our upcoming discussions.
- 2) To date, 53 support staff agreements have expired as of the end of the 2022 calendar year, with 23 more expiring as of the end of 2023, resulting in a total of 76 support staff agreements fully expired by the end of this calendar year. Based on progress to date, support units are insisting that divisions settle with Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) applied not just to the current but also applied to future budget years. The October 2022 trustee elections, combined with

economic variance, has delayed the ability of several school divisions to commence bargaining even as pressures mount on the part of employee representatives to come to the table. The bottom line is that when bargaining is scheduled over the course of the next year, employers will not be in position to absorb any compensation increase if, under the 2023/24 Funding announcements, extra-ordinary additional support for other operating expenditures is not forthcoming.

- 3) Where impasse occurs, strike action and alternatively, resort to binding arbitration is authorized and almost certainly “on the table.” The experience with the recent bus drivers strike in the Winnipeg School Division in 2020/21, the custodial staff strike in the Rolling River School Division in 2021/22, and support staff in the School District of Mystery Lake in 2021/22, demonstrate that support units are not averse to settling in that manner. The ultimate outcome where such developments occur is that divisional operations are significantly impaired and our students’ learning is often disrupted in terms of the services that and their schools they rely upon to access and provide educational opportunities.

It is without hyperbole to underscore then, that in respect of divisional “other operating” investments in to 2023/24, our revenue requirements will be much more elevated than the annual average rate of inflation in Manitoba alone.

### **Property Tax Offset Grant**

That Manitobans support the continuation of our shared responsibility for governing and investing in their local school divisions is clear. According to the Probe Research survey conducted on our behalf in December, 2021, it bears emphasis that eighty percent of Manitobans believe that directly electing their own representatives to oversee their local public schools is an important democratic right. A clear majority also favour keeping local school divisions to oversee and govern public schools on behalf of their neighbourhoods and communities. Such support is even stronger among those living in rural and northern Manitoba. It therefore closely follows that Manitobans’ support for “local voices and local choices” in education includes adequate and sustainable investment. Doing so will ensure that these voices and choices remain viable and can flourish well into the future.

A more recent Probe Research poll (December, 2022) has indicated that 58% of Manitobans would favour discontinuation of Bill 71 rebates in order to invest those revenues in social priorities, with a further nine per cent being unsure of whether or not to continue repealment of education property tax. The question of “who pays and for how much” was a priority long advocated by our association. Putting more money on the kitchen table remains a compelling objective but should not signify that any of that money comes away from the classroom table. The recent Probe survey demonstrates that Manitobans understand this key fact.

In partnership with other significant community stakeholders, including municipalities and chambers of commerce, the ability of school boards to retain a twenty percent share of operating investment remains unchanged to this day. A resolution to fully repeal all education property taxes as debated by the members of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities in 2017 was soundly defeated by its membership. What has therefore never been advocated was a full repealment of education levies, thereby resulting in 100% of operating revenues for public education coming from the provincial government. No stakeholder has ever argued that such redistribution ought to be achieved through any form of provincial debt-finance measures either. The Government’s own 2019 election campaign pledge

to repeal education property taxes made provision that such an initiative would only commence once the provincial deficit had been addressed. Nevertheless, repealment began well before such ideal conditions were in place.

We therefore remain very concerned regarding the overall sustainability of Bill 71 taxation repealment and how this can be successfully managed over time. In keeping with our members' interests, we can only issue a reminder that it is possible to promote lesser burden upon local ratepayers according to the Government's current Affordability commitments, while also protecting school boards' ability to retain the degree of fiscal autonomy necessary to equally promote local responsibilities for implementing programs, supports and services that remain aligned and responsive to the needs of our students and communities.

In view of the significant fiscal pressures we have already outlined and, in light of the need for further consultations on the promulgation of a new education funding formula (as announced by the Government on December 16, 2022), our association can only stress that incremental and ongoing implementation of taxation repealment will greatly constrain our respective responsibility to respond to the panoply of pressures described in this brief.

We are well aware, based on the most recent Throne Speech (November 15, 2022) that the Government intends to advance to a further 12.5% reduction of education property taxation in the coming Fiscal Year. To state that these revenues would well serve to address current needs is already evident. To reinforce that Manitobans understand the necessity of investing in social goods and services such as public education, rather than proceeding to further education tax rebates, equally so.

In 2023/24, we therefore recommend that the Government of Manitoba extend its consideration to arresting any forward progress on further repealment of Education Property Taxation, in order to successfully implement the 80/20 share in operating revenue split that has remained our own, and our community partners', longstanding position when it comes to local revenue generation.

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***Recommendation 5:***

*That repealment of education property taxation be capped at the previously announced 50% total reduction in 2023, with maintenance of the remaining 50% of locally collected revenues to address ongoing critical needs and resourcing shortages as anticipated in 2023/24 and also under Budget 2024.*

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**Capital increase**

Before closing, we would like to focus on the capital footprint of Manitoba's public schools. According to our most recent survey of members, that the vast majority of this footprint has now exceeded a fifty year anniversary goes without saying. We would like to thank the Government for continuing to identify and respond to new school capital requirements under the 20 new schools guarantee. The opening of six of these new schools, with construction of two more and the imminent design for five more (as announced January 11, 2023) responds to the ongoing growth and demand in many high need

communities across Manitoba. The announcement of design work on two further school buildings to meet population pressures, beyond the 20 New Schools Guarantee, is also sincerely noted.

In respect of our older infrastructure, maintenance and retrofit requirements continue to accentuate. Last year's increase of \$8 million in capital grants across 700 public schools, when situated in context of rising inflation and availability of a shrinking pool of qualified contractors to undertake completion of these priorities, deserves special attention.

Recent media focus has been placed on ventilation upgrades in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the year ahead, the Federal Government through Health Canada intends to implement new guidelines regarding air quality in schools. Lead testing of potable water sources in our schools has also recently been undertaken. Both air and water quality cannot be underscored enough when it comes to health and wellbeing of Manitoba's children. Every investment helps to address these needs given the age and state of our mechanical and physical systems, including those relating to plumbing, heating, cooling and ventilation. Responding to climate action initiatives designed to lessen the overall environmental impact of our footprint further runs into what can only be restated as hundreds of millions of dollars in needed funds.

Accessibility upgrades to meet the needs of all students, staff and community members who access our physical spaces also remains a compelling priority and these additional expenditures alone continue to be projected at over half a billion dollars. To state that the health of our buildings, and those who frequent them, require special attention in 2023/24 and with longer term plans and commitments, is an understatement.

We would therefore recommend that at minimum, new and expanded capital investments be made to rectify Manitoba's ongoing school capital deficit. In 2020/21, we presented to your predecessor the outcomes of a cross-Canada comparative study of school capital commissioned by the Fraser Institute under its "Education Spending in Public Schools in Canada" report. This report highlighted the fact that Manitoba demonstrated the second lowest growth in school capital spending across Canada, and was among only three provinces that registered negative investment due to underfunding.

The school capital mandate of Government now under the Department of Government Services must keep measured pace with the care needs of our most aged infrastructure. New schools to align with new communities is important but so too are sufficient investments in older schools, so that they continue to remain healthy and productive places for all members of our school society and for meeting the needs of their surrounding community.

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***Recommendation 6:***

*That the Government of Manitoba continue to proceed with implementation of the 20 New Schools Guarantee, even while considering significant increase for overall funding allocations to capital grants. In 2023/24, increased capital grants will be critical for addressing identified needs of Manitoba's aging school infrastructure while promoting renewal of its physical footprint.*

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## In summary

As always, Minister Friesen, our chief priority remains focused on our frontline— our students, staff and the resources that they need for educational success. This remains the enduring reality of the public school system in Manitoba, and also of the mission and mandate of the Manitoba School Boards Association in championing its cause.

As our province prepares to plan for the 2023/24 Fiscal Year, we cannot overstate the many mandates that will be impacted if our resources remain underfunded. We are well aware that the total revenue projection of \$174 million in operating funding alone represents a significant request this coming year. Particularly so when added to a further teacher GPI that remains yet to-be-determined and the requirement for manifold capital investments. However, the expectations that our communities have for the future of this province— for quality and equitable educational access and opportunity for our children— are just as significant.

Recently, you may be aware that the Department of Education has prioritized a new policy directive regarding school attendance. This is just one among many new policy developments that are identified under the K-12 Education Action Plan launched in April 2021. MSBA has always sought to be an active and willing partner to achieve shared interests in providing for the successful implementation and operationalization of such directives. In respect of attendance, we have long shared in the common purpose of promoting universal attendance so that pupils remain engaged and prepared for life and career beyond graduation.

Many voices were heard by the Department of Education officials who attended the stakeholder information session (January 16, 2023) immediately prior to the launch of the “School. Keep Going” campaign. From the northernmost to the southernmost region of Manitoba, these experts, who have dedicated their lives to the betterment of our students and their communities, overwhelmingly identified one enduring truth: if any policy seeking to address longstanding socio-economic and cultural-historical realities is to prove successful in the long-term, then the root causes of those realities must be sufficiently responded to. Pupil attendance cannot be affected through words alone. Actions and interventions must be resourced to address chronic and severe chronic absences.

Meal, nutrition, extra-curricular and summer programs, wrap-around services, individualized education plans, remedial/tutorial support, access to community service providers, family engagement and outreach; each of these are but threads in the patchwork of a comprehensive blanket of initiatives that will address the supports required by those children most in need. These supports are needed now more than ever due to the critical trends and patterns we are seeing at current time, not just among those vulnerable and high risk student populations that have historically demonstrated the highest absence rates but also within the general student population.

More and more, based on available research and data collection undertaken by school divisions across Manitoba, we are seeing that “pupil absence” is indeed no longer confined to those in highest need but has now become omnipresent in the general student population. Post-pandemic, the need for targeted and intensified funding for learning recovery, mental health, addictions and the other supports we have highlighted, are greater than ever before.

Meaningful expansion of these services does not come in the form of one-time funding envelopes. This requires a shift to dedicated, permanent base funding that will address a student population that is nearly 190,000 students strong.

We are grateful for the supports that have been identified by Government in the prior year to address many of these factors. That costs and demand are fast outpacing available resources must be addressed however, if we are to effect enhancements in responding to the challenge of chronic absenteeism. To render such resourcing cost neutral and within the scope of existing funding, we therefore recommend that the Government consider redirecting all remaining funding from the Teacher Idea Fund (\$5 million per year over the next three fiscal periods) to better align with the above programming priorities. It is our view that these are the three central priorities that will best address teacher needs now and into the foreseeable future. Without additional and meaningful investment, our staff will continue to balance each of these priorities against existing workload and demands and our pupils will be ill-served as a result.

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***Recommendation 7:***

*That the Government continue to grow multi-year funding under the Manitoba Education Funding of Schools Program envelope to support expanded services and supports for learning recovery and mental health/wellness programming and services in 2023/24 and future years, in recognition of the continuing burden that the COVID-19 pandemic has placed on students and schools province-wide in these key areas.*

*Furthermore, that the Government redirect all remaining funding (approximately \$5 million over the next three Fiscal Periods) from the Teacher Idea Fund to approve a new funding envelope that will enable each division to enhance targeted pupil absentee intervention as well as mental health and learning recovery supports, towards operationalization of the recent Attendance Policy Directive.*

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We remain ever cognizant of the multiple, challenging realities faced in the realm of Government finance. MSBA certainly appreciates the larger economic context faced by our province at current time. Yet, as we highlighted for you last year, that we cannot shortchange our children or their future also precedes any further fiscal or economic trade-offs in responding to this context.

With the release of your most recent Mid-Year Fiscal and Economic Report highlighting the important progress that Government has made both towards addressing its deficit and with additional projections of heretofore unanticipated revenues, combined with one of the most significant Federal investment transfers to Manitoba in recent history, we are hopeful that this coming year's Funding of School announcement, as well as Budget 2023, will reflect due prioritization of our province's schools and children. Only increased funding will serve them well in the year and future that lies ahead.

Lastly, in concert with the Government of Manitoba and other partners, we want to continue our support and work towards finalization of the current funding model review consultations. Review and replacement of the existing funding model will remain an important step towards correcting the means through which future funding is distributed to better serve our system's needs. Even as we would signal once again, our expectation that such a model will be achieved through ongoing assessment of demand and need to serve every school division's most critical needs.

While we understand that a review of funding adequacy was not a term of reference for the funding review task force, we would be remiss if we did not conclude by stating that it is only by reworking the model itself, while also addressing the system's ongoing requirements, that any innovation in fiscal modelling will become more than a basic exercise in "rearrangement." We commend the Government for the steps that have been taken to date to review what has long represented one of our most enduring challenges in context of any budget development cycle. In principle, many stakeholders were in accord with many of the preliminary features described under the new model. What remained to be seen was how that proposed model would then adequately serve to respond to the above-described pressures now culminating in a precarious outlook for Fiscal Year 2023/24.

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***Recommendation 8:***

*MSBA appreciates our invitation to participate on the Government's education funding model review task force. In view of the many draft features that met with mutual agreement regarding the implementation of a new funding model, we would recommend that on the near horizon, the Department of Education meet with stakeholders to identify priorities for establishment in 2023/24 even while longer-term consultations continue in relation to the questions of adequacy and sufficiency of funding under this new model.*

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We therefore trust that the recommendations presented to the Government of Manitoba in this pre-budget consultation brief continue to remain pragmatic and aligned with the expressed needs of our students and their schools, towards the development of Budget 2023. As always, the Manitoba School Boards Association is available for further consultation and advisement regarding the finalization of budget development, should you wish to discuss our recommendations. We are hopeful that, in keeping with established practice, this brief will well serve to inform your deliberations in the coming weeks with our sincere appreciation in advance for your review and consideration of our schools' requirements in 2023/24.

The children of this province are the greatest gift and most important resource that Manitoba has for actualizing its hopes and dreams for the future. Through the financial investments that are committed in 2023, we can continue to resource and equip them with the very best that this Province has to offer towards that enduring and critical end.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alan M. Campbell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Alan" being the most prominent.

Alan M. Campbell  
President

Cc. Honourable Wayne Ewasko, Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning  
Honourable James Teitsma, Minister of Consumer Protection and Government Services



## 2023 PRE-BUDGET BRIEF

### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **Recommendation 1:**

As outlined in the above brief, we strongly recommend that the Province of Manitoba extend consideration for annualization of the full \$81.1 million for 2018-2022 teacher wage settlement in 2023/24.

#### **Recommendation 2:**

Given the forthcoming outcomes of the next provincial teacher settlement, likely in the 2023/24 Fiscal Year, we strongly recommend that critical dialogue and review of available funding resources continue to take place at Treasury Board to prepare for this likelihood. School Boards are not in position to fund any additional collective agreement costs ‘from within’.

#### **Recommendation 3:**

That the Government of Manitoba consider an increase of, at minimum, \$94 million for other operating expenditures as premised on the 2022 rate of inflationary growth and staffing compensation trends, when developing the 2022 Funding of Schools announcement and Provincial Budget.

#### **Recommendation 4:**

That the Government of Manitoba extend consideration to an additional annualized catch-up increase of between 4 to 5 percent to operating expenditures, in an effort to redress the most recent inflationary adjustment gap as incurred by the public education system between 2017 and 2022.

#### **Recommendation 5:**

That repealment of education property tax be capped at the announced 50% total reduction in 2023, with maintenance of the remaining 50% of locally collected revenues to address ongoing critical needs and resourcing shortages as anticipated in 2023/24 and also under Budget 2024.

#### **Recommendation 6:**

That the Government of Manitoba continue to proceed with implementation of the 20 New Schools Guarantee, even while considering significant increase for overall funding allocations to capital grants. In 2023/24, increased capital grants will be critical for addressing identified needs of Manitoba’s aging school infrastructure while promoting renewal of its physical footprint.

**Recommendation 7:**

That the Government continue to grow multi-year funding under the Manitoba Education Funding of Schools Program envelope to support expanded services and supports for learning recovery and mental health/wellness programming and services in 2023/24 and future years, in recognition of the continuing burden that the COVID-19 pandemic has placed on students and schools province-wide in these key areas.

Furthermore, that the Government redirect all remaining funding (approximately \$5 million over the next three Fiscal Periods) from the Teacher Idea Fund to approve a new funding envelope that will enable each division to enhance targeted pupil absentee intervention as well as mental health and learning recovery supports, towards operationalization of the recent Attendance Policy Directive.

**Recommendation 8:**

MSBA appreciates our invitation to participate on the Government's education funding model review task force. In view of the many draft features that met with mutual agreement regarding the implementation of a new funding model, we would recommend that on the near horizon, the Department of Education meet with stakeholders to identify priorities for establishment in 2023/24 even while longer-term consultations continue in relation to the questions of adequacy and sufficiency of funding under this new model.