



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

January 18, 2022

Honourable Wayne Ewasko
Minister of Education
Manitoba Legislative Building
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

Honourable Cameron Friesen
Minister of Finance
Manitoba Legislative Building
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

Honourable Eileen Clarke
Minister of Municipal Relations
Manitoba Legislative Building
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

Dear Ministers:

The Manitoba School Boards Association would like to raise to your attention an item that, we feel, deserves consideration in view of the ongoing implementation of *The Education Property Tax Repealment Act*.

Of concern is the reality that there are, at present and until such time as the entire portion of education property taxes are repealed under the Act, inconsistencies between school divisions and also between different municipalities, on the ongoing issue of: 1) municipal authority to tax non-exempt school division properties through regular municipal tax assessment, and 2) municipal authority to tax both exempt and non-exempt school division properties through the introduction of municipal special levies.

Both of these authorities have been maintained under *The Municipal Assessment Act*. With the halving of the education assessment base to shoulder these costs, school divisions are then faced with paying for such municipal assessment and levies using school operating accounts and budgets.

Our association has long advocated for exemption of school divisions in levying a tax on its ratepayers to cover municipal operating costs. This is attributable to the fact that under such contexts, the same ratepayers are assessed twice, given they also serve as local ratepayers when the same municipal costs are levied upon their residential properties. For business owners, such practice can even sometimes result in the same ratepayer having to pay the municipal tax three or four times: residentially, commercially and also through school property taxes. This is a longstanding practice that leads to confusion and lack of equity and fairness for the ratepayer.

There are other instances where the revenues being assessed (under municipal taxation authorities) upon school division properties, is significantly different between communities even within the same school division catchment area. These inconsistencies then result in property taxes or levies raised by one municipality, being shouldered by ratepayers, through education levies, to fund municipal interests in a community other than their own.

We therefore urge the Government of Manitoba to consider either removing municipal special levy assessment on otherwise exempt properties, or moving to a grants-in-lieu system as currently used for provincially owned properties. This would allow school divisions to ensure education funding is used for its intended purpose— to support educational programming.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alan M. Campbell".

Alan M. Campbell
President