



Equity and Social Justice Information

Kenn Burgess
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April, 2012 Update

Trayvon Martin “Am I Suspicious?”

A NEWMecca Movement Production, shot by John "JayDex" Ledbetter presents a video depicting Howard University men standing against racial profiling and the killing of Trayvon Martin in February 2012. More information on the efforts of the Howard Community to raise awareness can be found at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=rH5bB8HUWFs&safety_mode=true&persistent_safety_mode=1&safe=active

On a positive note, CBC interviewed a number of people new to Canada and none had experienced the racial intolerance that exists in the USA. Their comments echoed the sentiment that Canadians are very accepting of differences and they did not feel isolated nor did they perceive the existence of social exclusion.

Target Targets Zeller's Workers

The latest [Fast Facts](#) provided by Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives outlines the devastating impact of the purchase of Zellers Stores in Canada by the American giant, **Target**.

Growing Inequities in Canadian Society

THINKING ALTERNATIVES is the title of this rather anti Conservative blog as noted in the opening paragraph: *It is essential that we oppose the terribly destructive policies being imposed upon us by the federal Conservative government, but it is equally if not more important that we think and talk about the kind of alternative approaches that we need.* The article does focus on the need to review the society's stress on individualism and material gain at the expense of the whole social fabric. The article may be accessed through this link: [another great Fast Facts](#) from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

No Student Left Untested - It Gets Uglier!

This article highlights the growing reliance on test scores to evaluate teachers - and the negative consequences for education. What I find especially disturbing is the article is found in the first paragraph: *Last week, the New York State Education Department and the teachers' unions reached an agreement to allow the state to use student test scores to evaluate teachers. The pact was brought to a conclusion after Governor Andrew Cuomo warned the parties that if they didn't come to an agreement quickly, he would impose his own solution (though he did not explain what that would be). He further told school districts that they would lose future state aid if they didn't promptly implement the agreement after it was released to the public. The reason for this urgency was to secure \$700 million promised to the state by the Obama administration's Race to the Top program, contingent on the state's creating a plan to evaluate teachers in relation to their students' test scores.*

Please use the link: <http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2012/feb/21/no-student-left-untested> to access the full article in the *New York Review of Books*.

February, 2012 Update

Equity and Social Justice Chairs Winter Workshop Winter Workshop, February 4th, 2012

“Keeping Our Schools Safe for Everyone!” Dr. Mary Hall, Director, *Safe Schools Manitoba*

Bullying Tools

"The worst part of the day is **trying to get enough courage** to go to school".

Cyber bullying takes many forms including: emails, text messages, chat messages, cell phones, camera phones, online polls, blogs, social networking sites: *MySpace* and *Facebook* (the latter social networking site has seen a reduction in use by older students, perhaps due to distrust in security)

Blanket policies prohibiting electronic device usage will often be ignored by both students and staff. There are legitimate educational reasons for such use. What needs to be reinforced is responsible use of electronic devices.

See **Safe Schools Manitoba** <http://www.safeschoolsmanitoba.ca/> for: WORKSHOPS & RESOURCES for EDUCATORS, PARENTS & COMMUNITY, and STUDENTS. This site has a plethora of information and links (see below) on a wide variety of bullying related tissues be it physical, mental, emotional or, electronic in nature. Resource topics include: **Bullying, Character Education, Child Abuse, Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation, Cyber Bullying, Drug and Alcohol Abuse, Depression and Suicide, Gangs, Homophobia, Mentoring, Racism, Resiliency, Responding to Critical Incidents, School Violence and the Media, School Violence Prevention, Violence by Female Juveniles, Zero Tolerance Policies**. The site also has games, a help line, and an interactive dialogue component.

Incredible Links!:

Local

[Aboriginal Education Directorate](#) [Block Parent Program of Winnipeg](#) [Boys and Girls Clubs of Winnipeg](#) [Child Find Manitoba](#) [Council of School Leaders](#) [Graffiti Gallery](#) [Healthy Child Manitoba](#) [Macdonald Youth Services](#) [Manitoba Association of Parent Councils](#) [Manitoba Association of School Superintendents](#) [Manitoba Crime Stoppers](#) [Manitoba Education](#) [Manitoba Federation of Independent Schools](#) [Manitoba Human Rights Commission](#) [Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre](#) [Manitoba Justice](#) [Manitoba Parent Zone](#) [Manitoba Safer Communities](#) [Manitoba School Boards Association \(formerly MAST\)](#) [Manitoba School Counsellors' Association](#) [Manitoba Student Services Administrators' Association of Manitoba](#) [Manitoba Teachers' Society](#) [N.E.E.D.S. Inc.](#) [Rainbow Resource Centre](#) [Spence Neighbourhood Association](#) [Sport Manitoba](#) [Teen Talk](#) [Winnipeg Community for Safety](#) [Winnipeg Police Service](#) [Winnipeg's Aboriginal Restorative Justice Program](#)

National and International:

[About Kids Health](#) [Bully Beware Productions](#) [Bullying.org](#) | [Bullyingcourse.com](#) [Canadian Association of Principals](#) [Canadian Centre for Child Protection](#) [Canadian Red Cross - RespectED](#) [Canadian Safe School Network](#) [Canadian Teachers' Federation](#) [Concerned Children's Advertisers](#) [Cyberbullying.ca](#) [Cybertip.ca](#) [Define the Line](#) [Education World](#) [Egale Internet 101](#) [Kid's Help Phone](#) [Kids in the Know](#) [Media Awareness Network](#) [National Education Association](#) [Royal Canadian Mounted Police](#) [Parents, The Anti-Drug](#) [Parents Matter](#) [Peaceful Schools International](#) [Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports](#) [PrevNet](#) [Safe and Caring Schools and Communities](#) [Stop Bullying Now](#) [WITS Program](#)

November/December 2011 Update

Digital Citizenship and Social Action

\$500 or \$750 subsidies available for school community social action projects!

The Canadian Teachers' Federation in partnership with the Media Awareness Network is pleased to announce funding for projects to support a special initiative focusing on Digital Citizenship and Social Action.

Technology and social media:

How to use it to engage youth

How to use it to mobilize for a cause

Put your research into action at the community level

Applications for subsidies of \$500 or \$750 per project must be received by **Sunday, December 11, 2011**. Projects must be completed by the end of the 2012 school year. Application is through www.imagine-

[action.ca](#). Once teachers have created a profile, they will be able to apply for funding. All projects registered with Imagineaction will receive recognition and access to material, human and cash resources.

Thousands of students and their teachers are already making a difference through Imagineaction-supported projects that provide curriculum-based, student-centered, authentic learning in real life situations.

Imagine the possibilities – join the movement now! [Register](#) or [Login](#).

Need some inspiration? Check out these ideas:

How to make new immigrant and refugee students feel welcome at school:

Looking at the issue of multiculturalism and citizenship, teachers could invite a community organization to present a citizenship issue – e.g. a neighbouring organization that works with new immigrants and refugees to sensitize the students and school to the cultural shock experienced by new students upon joining a Canadian school.

A project of this nature would address issues of understanding, fitting in, cultural values, etc. in addition to ongoing school issues such as competition, bullying, etc.

The digital citizenship piece could blend in a review of the issue in various media, followed by discussions and brainstorming on how best to send a message from the students to the community – using a medium to increase awareness and illicit support from the public at large.

Looking at what citizenship looked like then and what it looks like now:

Looking at the issue of citizenship today through the lens of a historical perspective – e.g. interviewing elders on how they perceived citizenship during their youth; memories; activism; school; church; etc.

A project of this nature could entail an analysis of how citizenship issues today are addressed using diverse digital media.

The digital citizenship piece could be the development of a message through the use of a medium on if and to what extent citizenship perception and activities have changed over generations.

Choosing a local cause and working with a community organization to help get their message out:

Choosing a cause that falls under one of the six Imagineaction themes and scoping out your neighbourhood to find out which community organizations are working in the area you selected. (Homeless Mission; Food Cupboard; Animal Shelter; Nursing Home; Boys and Girls Club; Group home, etc.)

Approach an organization and find out more about their work and how you can help with awareness building using social media and other mediums to support their cause.

Set up a plan of action and develop tools that can be used by the organization (e.g. drawings, posters, web site, blog site, video, etc.).

October, 2011 Update:

What's Happening Elsewhere?

I've collected a few sites which I thought our members may find quite interesting. The coverage diverse on a wide range of ESL related topics.


If you are looking for information from teachers across Canada, the Diversity, Equity and Human Rights Committee of the Alberta Teachers' Association publishes [Just In Time Newsletter](#) three times annually and [B.C. Teachers' Federation Social Justice newsletter](#) is also available on line here.

Another great resource is an online publication entitled [Straight Goods](#) which provides well-researched and well-written perspectives on topics in the news.

[Education International](#) represents more than 30 million teachers around the world and works with their national teachers' organizations in promoting social justice.

EI News, [Connect](#), provides timely updates on important education issues worldwide.

“To the Left or the Right?”

Executive Director of Public Interest Alberta, Bill Moore-Kilgannon, presented a public session on February 3, 2011 on "The Erosion of Public Services." The attached Minutes of the session have been taken by Anne Kresta of Community Living Manitoba. A strong argument is made by both the left and the right wing re public policy making in Canada.  [notes from presentation by Bill Moore-Kilgannon.doc](#)

The Aboriginal Day Live Flag Contest 2011 is held by Aboriginal Peoples Television Network Incorporated ("APTN"). Please see aptn.ca for the great contestant entries and results.



The attached PowerPoint highlights the fantastic work being undertaken at [Chancellor School](#) in the area of Equity and Social Justice. The MTS ESJ Initiative Grants have helped this school achieve some amazing results with their diverse student body. Congratulations on a powerful presentation! [Thinking Outside the Box Final - Chancellor School.pptx](#)

Chancellor School, in association with A.A. Leach School has produced a fantastic video aptly titled *Back to the Land: A Dream Catchers Journey*. If you want to borrow the DVD please email me kburgess@pembinatrails.ca and I will send a copy via PTSD mail.

The Girl Effect: The Clock is Ticking video, shows how a 12-year old girl can be a solution to the 50 million girls globally who are living in poverty, abuse and, disease. What the video is doing will hopefully allow some girls, normally with a slim chance of broadening their traditional role in society, to experience and be a part of modern human life.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=1e8xgF0JtVg

Federal Election: Education, Children and Youth. The Canadian Teachers' Federation has prepared the attached document highlighting issues of importance in the recent Federal Election. The report is very comprehensive and includes such topics as: Child Poverty and Child Care, International Cooperation, Human Exploitation and Trafficking, the Status of Women and Women's Rights as well as cybernet issues. I will gladly send a copy in PDF format, please just email me a request and in the mail it will be.

September, 2011 Update:

Union isn't a dirty word ...

How would you respond to: "Everyone is hurting and jobs are scarce. So why are unions taking job action under these conditions?" Several of the issues examined include:

American government employee unions are under attack in Wisconsin, the very birthplace of unions in the United States.

The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation is involved in job -action, including strike action.

The Canadian Union of Postal Workers is involved in rotating strikes.

Alberta's Premier Stelmach blames the Alberta Teachers' Association and the teachers it represents for education being underfunded this year. He says this despite having been a signatory to the memorandum of agreement that was to guarantee labour peace for five years.

This article provides interesting and important insights on Unions from the Alberta Teachers' Association. The article highlights how organizations are under threat in many jurisdictions in North America and elsewhere. Pressure on present and future Manitoba governments may cause changes here as well. Please check out the link below for the full article, June 14, 2011, Peter Kalis, ATA Executive Staff Officer, Teacher Welfare. <http://www.teachers.ab.ca/Publications/ATA%20News/Volume-45-2010-11/Number%2019/Pages/Union-isn%E2%80%99t-a-dirty-word-%E2%80%A6.aspx>

The Great Debate: What we can learn from Canadians

There is a debate, if that's what you can even call it, raging in America about how to improve their public education system. While disparate groups rip each other apart, it would seem wise that Americans look to us and learn from our educational systems. Americans love to casually pick on Canadians, but they should be seriously analyzing our public school system, which has emerged as one of the most successful school systems in the world. To read the intriguing article and validate how well we are doing compared to how well they are not doing, please activate the link below.

<http://blogs.reuters.com/great-debate/2011/08/24/what-we-can-learn-from-canadians>

Patriotic Millionaires

At Warren Buffet's urging, 146 American millionaires have signed a petition asking the President of the United States to more enthusiastically tax the 'mega wealthy'. The letter states that:

We are writing to urge you to put our country ahead of politics. For the fiscal health of our nation and the well-being of our fellow citizens, we ask that you increase taxes on incomes over \$1,000,000. We make this request as loyal citizens who now or in the past earned an income of \$1,000,000 per year or more. Our country faces a choice – we can pay our debts and build for the future, or we can shirk our financial responsibilities and cripple our nation's potential.

Our country has been good to us. It provided a foundation through which we could succeed. Now, we want to do our part to keep that foundation strong so that others can succeed as we have. Please do the right thing for our country. Raise our taxes. The Republicans have not met this appeal with enthusiasm. Arguments for and against this appeal make interesting reading and can be found at

<http://patrioticmillionaires.org>

Where's Canada's Warren Buffett?

"My friends and I have been coddled long enough by a billionaire-friendly Congress." Warren Buffett http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/15/opinion/stop-coddling-the-super-rich.html?_r=1

This blunt assessment of U.S. tax policy came from renowned billionaire investor Warren Buffett in a recent New York Times article.

As these wealthy Americans are calling for higher and more progressive taxation, we have to ask: Where is Canada's Warren Buffett? When will we see ultra-wealthy Canadians offering to pay higher taxes?

Currently the top federal tax bracket in Canada kicks in at \$128,800. Every dollar in taxable income over that level is taxed at 29 per cent, whether your taxable income is \$130,000 or \$1.3 million or \$13 million.

According to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, adding two new tax brackets of 32 per cent on income over \$250,000 and 35 per cent on income over \$750,000 would generate about \$12 billion in new revenue over the next three years. Those modest tax adjustments could fund a new national pharmacare

program, or launch a national child-care program, plus allow university tuition fees to be rolled back to 1991 levels.

Those are just examples. The appropriate tax brackets and rates should emerge from a more thorough study and public debate. But the point should be clear. A more progressive tax system could fund programs that benefit virtually all households in Canada. Modest tax increases for high-income earners could be implemented with little or no effect on their lifestyles or investment decisions.

Grumbling about taxes may be a favourite pastime, but there is not a better or fairer way than democratic government to identify, prioritize and share the costs of meeting our common needs. It is foolhardy to respond to frustration with the democratic process by financially starving and dismantling government. Our challenge is to make democratic government more accountable, transparent and effective, and fund it accordingly.

There are some encouraging signs that the richest among us recognize it is time for change. Canadian-born businessman and philanthropist Edgar Bronfman, now living in New York, wrote in a 2008 article in the Huffington Post: "Raise my taxes. And raise them now. . . . The rich now should pay disproportionately for the (economic) corrections that are needed."

TD Bank CEO Ed Clark told a Florida audience in February 2010 that fellow CEOs attending a meeting of the Canadian Council of Chief Executives discussed the need for raising taxes to help address the deficit. "Almost every single (CEO) said raise my taxes," according to Clark.

The Conference Board of Canada, the leading voice of corporate Canada, just issued a study on growing income disparities. This follows recent warnings from the World Economic Forum and the OECD that growing disparities are a significant threat to the global economy.

Thoughtful business leaders get it. A growing underclass, stagnated middle class and crumbling infrastructure are bad for business.

Now is the time for a Canadian Warren Buffett to step forward. Canadians are ready for an adult discussion on tax fairness. Let's kick off that discussion with one or more of Canada's wealthiest citizens announcing their readiness to contribute more to the public treasury.

Larry Gordon is the co-founder and coordinator of Canadians for Tax Fairness, a national advocacy organization calling for a stronger, more progressive tax system.

<http://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorialopinion/article/1045149--where-s-canada-s-warren-buffett>

Here are a few of the many topical resources available to members through the MTS Equity and Social Justice Committee. Members are encouraged to contact Kenn Burgess for resources or further information. kburgess@pembinatrails.ca

1. Gender and the Media - Blurred Images

Students from three schools in St. James-Assiniboia School Division participated in a media event as part of the National Media Awareness Week sponsored by Media Awareness Network and Canadian Teachers' Federation. The theme for the week has been the portrayal of gender in the media. The students have all undertaken projects on the theme - Blurred Images

<http://videocitytv.com/video/detail>

2. Belonging, Growing, Learning - Diversity Education Website for Educators and Youth

This is a new section of Manitoba Education's internet site dedicated to diversity education. The site has a new look and will focus on resources for educators and youth interested in diversity education and equity. The site will be built over time and will incorporate additional features.

<http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/index.html>

3. The Ten Most Significant Women's Rights Cases

The Court commemorates the eighty-first year anniversary of *Edwards v. Canada (Attorney General)*, [1930] A.C. 124, commonly known as the *Persons case* – significant for its advancement of gender equality – women were accepted as "qualified persons" who could therefore enter the Senate. The Court has made a list and summary of the ten most significant women's rights cases since the *Persons case* – a number of these cases are employment related.

<http://www.thecourt.ca/2010/10/15/amici-curiae-the-80th-anniversary-of-the-persons-case>

4. Homophobia and Related Issues

Check out this website for resources and ideas related to GLBT education.

<http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/home/index.html>

5. Canada's World

This research project takes aim at the gradual erosion of Canada's status as an international peace-keeping nation. For the first time since the end of World War II, Canada is much less focused on social justice internally and externally than ever before in its history.

<http://www.canadasworld.ca>

