

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Spring break is approaching quickly. We could all use a break from the long winter months. Hope you will find time to relax!

At this time, we would like to congratulate Paul Olson on being appointed MTS President for 2011-13. **Good luck in your new position Paul!**

In this issue, I hope to provide you with an update on 3 key items.

Division Budget

On March 10th, 2011, the Board of Trustees passed the Division's 2011-2012 budget and in doing so approved a net increase of 0.2582 teachers. This was a change from the draft budget presented on February 10th, 2011 which showed a net decrease of 2.52 teachers. There is no overall decrease in the number of classroom teachers and the contingency number was increased from 5.5 to 8.5. This is a positive change to the net decrease in the number of teachers over the last few years.

At the February 28th PTSD Board Meeting, PTTA presented our view that it is the education program goals that should drive the budget process. Our members tell us about the daily challenges in meeting the needs of their students. For example, Pembina Trails ranks third provincially for the number of students identified with English as an Additional Language needs. International Students, who present similar needs, are not factored into the enrolment projections used in the current budgeting process. Yet, the needs of all these students have to be addressed.

PTTA feels that a careful, long term education plan for supporting our students' needs is a critical factor in determining the Division's budget. We have invited the Board of Trustees to meet with the Association to further discuss our ideas.

Provincial Report Card Update

MTS President Pat Isaak and Vice President Paul Olson sit on the Oversight Committee which monitors the development of a provincial report card. The government has indicated that their mandate is to create a report that provides clear and consistent information to parents. Pat and Paul have been gathering feedback from local associations and providing regular updates to Association Presidents.

What are some of the concerns and questions?

- Ensure that the discussion at this committee is about report cards for reporting to parents and not about ongoing assessment practice.
- Ensure that the Provincial Report Card is not in addition to a Divisional report. If these reports are to provide clear and consistent information, they should stand alone in terms of a written report to parents.
- Consideration of teacher workload for completing reports.
- How often will the reports be completed in the school year?
- What supports will be provided to teachers participating in the pilot?
- When will the pilot report card be made available to teachers in the pilot schools?

Three PTSD schools have indicated their interest in piloting the provincial report card. At this time, we have not heard that pilot schools have been identified. I would be happy to hear your concerns on this topic, and forward them to Pat and Paul.

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Change your thoughts and you change your world.
 Norman Vincent Peale



What's with all of the Arbitration Talk?

There has been some recent media attention on teacher bargaining in Manitoba. It is no surprise, given the reports, that teacher associations across the province are having a difficult go of things at the table. This has resulted in currently 4 teachers' associations in Manitoba in line for arbitration, and the number is sure to grow. As a result, it is essential for all teachers to be aware of the process. Although we are still in negotiations and **not** headed to arbitration, the result of arbitrations in other jurisdictions is likely to impact directly on bargaining right here in Pembina Trails. This article is to remind members of this process, and the reason why it often takes many months to complete.

In Manitoba, arbitration is the final step in the settlement of disputes between management and an employee union, and usually occurs when all other means of settling a Collective Bargaining Agreement have been exhausted. Since, according to the Public Schools Act, teachers in Manitoba can not strike, binding interest arbitration is the final resolution. It is conducted by an impartial third party as set out in legislation.

The first step in preparing for arbitration is to name a nominee. The School Division also selects a nominee, and then these two representatives select a mutually agreed upon Chair. The Chair and the two nominees act as the Arbitration Board.

In arbitration, the two sides revert back to their opening positions, unless the parties agree to arbitrate from a certain position, with only certain items in dispute. The Arbitration Board listens to the arguments presented from both sides, and then a ruling is made. This ruling is binding, meaning that both the teacher's union and the School Board must adhere to the decision. The award sets out the decisions of the arbitration board, including reasons on which it is based.

Lucky for us in Pembina Trails, we have not hit an impasse and we are still currently in bargaining, with four upcoming negotiations meetings set with the Board. It is our sincere hope that Pembina Trails can avoid this process and reach an agreement in committee at the table.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding Collective Bargaining, Ed Finance, Workplace Safety and Health or anything else related to Teacher Welfare, please contact me by email at pttacb@mts.net or on my cell, 803-6499.

*Wishing you a restful and fun
spring break! Hopefully you can
get out and enjoy the world!*

Arlyn



President's Message . . . Continued

Driving Students in Private Vehicles -I hope that everyone read the information entitled **Caution on Driving Students** in the most recent Manitoba Teacher publication or on the MTS website www.mbteach.org. In addition, Division policy **IJOA Field Trips and Off-Site Educational Programs** has been revised to provide clarity to the requirements and required forms when transporting students in private vehicles. While we recognize that these situations occur, we continue to caution teachers about the risks of transporting students in this way.

Feel free to call me at PTTA (896-4857) or email me at: pttapresident@mts.net

Cathy

Vice President - Professional Development



PTSD/PTTA Joint PD Fund

There is still money for PD from the Joint PD Fund. The guidelines and forms can be found on the Divisional website on the Staff page. Click on the Joint PD Fund tab on the sidebar. If you have attended a PD event that you received approval for, send in your claim with appropriate receipts. If you need to cancel an approval, the cancellation procedure is also found on the Joint PD Fund tab. It is important to release funds that are being held if you no longer plan to attend the PD opportunity for which you were approved. I have included this information below.

CANCELLATION PROCEDURE

Any cancellation of an approved PD activity must be submitted in writing (preferably via email) to the attention of Craig Stahlke, Secretary- Treasurer (csstahlke@pembintrails.ca) and Donna Gray, Secretary to Assistant Superintendent H/R (dgray@pembintrails.ca). Include the Joint PD approval number and the dollar amount of the approval in the cancellation request.

July and August events come from the 2011-12 budgets, and you must apply before the beginning of the event or course. If you are not sure of the full costs or exact content, contact me for clarification. Next application deadline is Monday, May 2, 2011, followed by June 6, 2011. If you decide to apply after the June date, carefully read the criteria for the event, and if they fit, apply. The application will not be considered until the committee meets in the fall, but it is necessary to apply **before the event/course begins**.

PD opportunities are listed at <http://www.ptta.ca/professional-development.html>. If there are any **suggestions for changes** to the Joint PD fund criteria, please forward them to me at pttavp@mts.net. The criteria are reviewed yearly and we value your input. We aim to have the brochure printed and distributed in early June as PD approvals beginning July 1, 2011 are taken from next year's budget.

The Manitoba Teachers' Society

2011-12 Reflective Professional Practice Grant- Each year MTS makes funds available for projects by members and local associations. The Reflective Professional Practice Grant must focus on projects related to issues such as innovations in the classroom, social relationships in schools or equity or diversity issues. Deadline: Must be submitted by June 1, 2011. These grants are available for MTS members and are for PD that occurs in 2011-12. Current forms will be available soon on the MTS website.

MTS Provincial Meeting February 11 and 12, 2011

Provincial PD Chairs Winter Seminar was held February 11 and 12. Highlights included: Goals for PD; Panel titled: *Talking with Decision-Makers*, with a representative from COSL (principal), an Association President (PTTA-Cathy O'Donnell), and an Assistant Superintendent (Lakeshore SD). A video conference with Joellen Killion from Learning Forward shared a structure for team meetings, which would fit with Category 4 projects and *Finding Time*, which is a resource for timetabling PD into the school day.



Ha ha ha, etc...

More T-shirts I have seen:

- ◆ I started out with nothing and still have most of it left.
- ◆ With luck and planning I'll retire at 149.

Enjoy a well deserved rest! See you when the snow melts (if ever!)



Wayne

Equity and Social Justice Resources

By Kenn Burgess, ESJ Chair

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

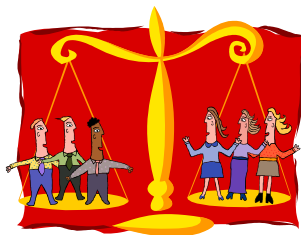
Check out this website for resources and ideas related to GBLT education.

<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>



Frequently Asked Questions



Do I have to attend all evening activities at our school? Would I “get into trouble if I don’t?”

It is our opinion and position that with the exception of staff meetings and parent teacher interviews, evening events are voluntary. Although we recognize that many of these events are valuable to the school and the students, the final decision on the use of your personal time is yours. If you are required to attend, you must obey and may grieve later. If you are not sure if you are required to attend, ask if you are. Try to get this in writing. In fact, in all cases, you must obey. We can grieve immediately after.

I work in two schools. Do I have to attend both staff meetings each month?

We are required to attend staff meetings. We have an understanding with the division that if a teacher works in two or more schools, you alternate staff meetings and be briefed by the administrator/teacher of the school where you did not attend in a given month. We also agreed that if you are a part-time teacher who is not working on the afternoon or day of the staff meeting, you are not required to attend. Set up a plan to receive the information from the administrator/teacher of the school if you have not attended. However, if you work any part of the afternoon, you will attend the after school staff meeting.

I am a part time teacher, and sometimes miss out on PD opportunities at my school. What am I entitled to receive?

Legislation provides for five professional development days and five administration days each year. A full time teacher is entitled to all five PD days. Your entitlement is prorated with your contract. For example, if you are .5, you are entitled to 2.5 days. As per our Collective Agreement, the Division is not obligated to pay excess time for PD beyond your entitlement, unless you are required to attend. Be sure to confirm that you will be paid excess time before attending. If you work in two or more schools, and by the luck of the draw you are missing out on PD, talk to your administrator about release time to ensure that you receive PD to the extent to which you are entitled.

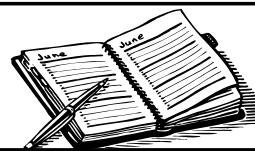
Are there any guidelines as to the length of staff meetings and should PD occur at staff meetings?

There are no policies in place governing the length of staff meetings or whether or not PD should, in fact, take place at staff meetings. From the feedback we receive from Council, staff meetings are generally about an hour long, and in most cases take place after school. The practice of PD at staff meetings differs from school to school. Professional Development provides valuable learning opportunities for teachers. However, according to the PD needs assessment conducted by PTTA and feedback from teachers in PTSD and other divisions; this is the most unproductive time to do PD. In fact, a mere 4% of the respondents in the recent 2009/10 PD Needs Assessment indicated a preference for PD after school. We must recognize all that teachers do. Assisting students, preparing for classes and running extracurricular events at the end of the school day are just a few examples of the variety of activities teachers engage in at the end of a school day.

What is the difference between Administrative and PD days?

Administrative days include training or meetings that support the running of the school, staff or department/team meetings, emergency/medical knowledge or procedures, writing reports, conferences, writing and meeting around PGM’s, as well as learning about school procedures. PD refers to the pursuit of knowledge that enhances our craft and conceptual skills. Professional Development leads to changes in professional practices which impacts student learning.

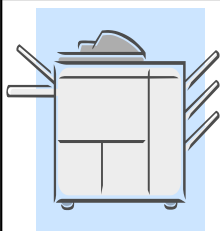
REMINDERS AND IMPORTANT DATES



BEGINNING AND MID-CAREER PENSION AND BENEFITS SEMINARS

The seminar will be held Thursday, April 14th, 2011 at McMaster Auditorium from 5:00 – 6:30 pm. This seminar is open to only Pembina Trails, Seven Oaks and St. James-Assiniboia Teacher Associations. This seminar will help you understand the basics of your pension and benefit plans.

Information was sent to members and all schools in March. Interested members are asked to register online. www.mbteach.org—Click on Health and Benefits then Pension and Benefits Seminars.



Caution:

Any item copied or emailed via Divisional technology can be traced or reproduced. As well a cautionary reminder to use technology for business or school purposes and not work related to the Association.

Maternity/Parental Leave Workshop

This workshop will take place on Monday May 9th from 4:15—5:30 p.m. at the PTSD Administrative Office on Henlow Bay. The presenter will be Nancy Kerr, Staff Officer, Manitoba Teacher's Society.



To register: Log in at: <http://ptsdpdevents>.

SAVE THE DATES

PTTA/PTSD Annual Golf Tournament



Thursday, June 2, 2011

River Oaks Golf Course

Watch for more details in late April, early May.

PTTA ANNUAL RETIREMENT DINNER

Thursday June 9th, 2011

5:00 p.m. Cash Bar

6:00 p.m. Dinner

Caboto Centre

Dinner order forms will be up on our website after spring break.



Online Safety for Teachers

The Manitoba Teachers' Society has published a brochure about online safety for teachers.

Link to original document:

<http://www.mbteach.org/library/Archives/Brochures/Profession/bro-OnlineSafety.pdf>

**"Your professional reputation is one of your most
valuable assets as a teacher.
Protect it always—including online."**



REMINDER TO WORKPLACE SAFETY AND HEALTH COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

As a WS&H committee member in your school, you are entitled to up to two days of paid training in matters related to safety and health in your workplace. Safe Work Manitoba offers courses in a variety of areas. If you have not yet attended a training session for 2010/2011, we encourage you to try to get to one before year end. Go to the Safe work website for a complete list of programs and dates at http://safemanitoba.com/wshd_training.aspx. Below is a list of training sessions in Winnipeg that we thought might be relevant to the type of work teachers do:

SAFE Committee Basics (1-day course)

An overview on the rights and responsibilities of people in the workplace for meetings, hazard recognition and control, inspections and right to refuse situations. This course is useful for committee members, employers and supervisors of workers. This course is being offered on the following dates: April 5th, 14th, 20th and 28th, May 5th, 11th, 19th and 24th, and June 2nd, 8th, 14th, 23rd and 28th.

Musculoskeletal Injury Risk Assessment

Specific instruction on MSI risk assessments. This course will teach participants how to perform a MSI risk assessment and how to use this assessment to reduce injuries. This course is being offered on the following dates: April 6th, May 4th and 27th and June 1st and 29th.

SAFE Work Procedures

This course provides an overview of hazard assessment, risk assessment and controls. The main emphasis of the course is job hazard analysis and how that translates into a SAFE work procedure that can be used on the job. Taking SAFE Committee Basics or Supervisors and SAFE Work prior to this course is recommended. This course is offered on the following dates: April 8th and 19th, May 3rd and 25th and June 7th and 24th.

Harassment & Violence Prevention - NEW

This one-day course will help employers, supervisors and workers understand their rights and responsibilities to maintain a workplace that is safe and respectful for all. This course is offered on May 12th only.

Again, find the course you are interested in at http://safemanitoba.com/wshd_training.aspx, inform your principal of your desire to attend and register online. Please contact Arlyn Filewich or Cathy O'Donnell if you have any questions regarding training or any other Workplace Safety and Health related matter.

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 PTTA is a member of the **Manitoba Teachers' Society**.
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Judge each day not by the
 harvest you reap but by the
 seeds you plant.

Robert Louis Stevenson


 A stylized illustration of a globe with a single leaf sprouting from the top right, symbolizing global impact and growth.