

President's Message: Interesting Times

Recently, the Manitoba Government released the annual funding report. Education funding will go up in Manitoba by 0.5%. Given that inflation is running at around 2%, this is a de facto 1.5% cut in funding. The Interlake School Division will see even deeper cuts. The ISD will experience its second consecutive cut of 2%, which is an 8% inflation-adjusted cut in funding from the government over two years. Additionally, school divisions in Manitoba have been directed to limit any increases to their local education property tax to 2%. If you received the email from our president, Norm Gould, none of this is news to you. (If you did not receive the email, please register on [MTS Member Services](#) so that you can receive all future correspondence from the Society.) This funding announcement, combined with other recent moves by the government will put significant stress on the public education system. Bill 28, the end of the 20K3 initiative, back-to-back funding cuts, and the reduction of funding to the Bureau de l'éducation française are some of the regressive steps taken by this government. Norm suggested that you might wish to write a letter to your MLA if you have concerns about these decisions. Since that time, MTS has published a small guidebook that you can use, should you wish to write such a letter. The guidebook is [here](#). The list of MLA's is [here](#).

As your president, it is my privilege to serve on the provincial Collective Bargaining Standing Committee, act as Regional Bargaining Coordinator, and attend Presidents' Council. In all these roles, I will act on your behalf as we move forward in these interesting times. Which leads me to my last point. As members, we do have spokespeople. The MTS President speaks on behalf of the Society and the ITA President speaks on behalf of the Association. In this era of sound bites, twitter screen captures, and, legislative legal challenges, we must all be careful of our voice and our message. The [guidebook](#) mentioned above just as useful in framing conversations at the curling rink as it is when we write to our MLA.

Short Term Disability: Costs

In the previous two newsletters I have outlined the purpose of short term disability and some reasons this Association might consider implementing it. To recap: short term disability insurance provides income replacement for those teachers who are ill and have used all their sick days. This might be those who are new to the division or those who are returning from a lengthy illness and have used all their previously accumulated sick days. We would buy this insurance because we might need it or because we know one among us will. But how much does it cost? Short term disability insurance rates have been very stable over the past number of years at 0.17% of income. For a teacher at class 5, max, this cost is \$156.00 per year or \$6.50 per paycheque.



Provincial Bargaining

The following is from a [government news release](#).

The minister signalled the intention to move to a streamlined, single provincial bargaining table for public school teachers from the existing 38 collective bargaining units. The last round of contracts is set to expire June 30...

“We want to put teachers back in the classroom, where they want to be and where students need them most, instead of being at the bargaining table,” said Wishart. “We want to give trustees more time to focus on the quality of learning for students and free up resources currently tied up by negotiations.”

The province will hold a consultation process with affected stakeholders to shape the transition to a more efficient system.

As of this writing we have very little additional information regarding provincial bargaining. Members are asked to remain patient as the Society endeavours to determine the nature and meaning of this announcement. When I have solid information that I can pass on, I will do so.

More MTS Regional Meetings; this one in Stonewall (from MTS)

We need you! Join us on March 19 at Stonewall Collegiate. The purpose of this meeting is to bring teachers together to talk about teaching and learning in Manitoba. As innovations continue to be planned with less and less teacher input, it is time to take back the narrative with the voices of trained and experienced educators. Let's talk teaching.

4:45 pm	Dinner provided
5:15 pm	Round table discussions
6:25 pm	Concluding summary and remarks

Our dialogue will focus on four topics: effective teaching practices, literacy, numeracy, and early learning. For each topic, we will gather information about:

Specific instructions on how to register for this seminar will be provided to you through your president in the coming days.

Young Humanitarians

They're kids with a cause – compassionate, creative, and courageous. You see them at every grade level, students who love serving in their schools and communities.

Thank them for their goodness with a Young Humanitarian Award nomination. They could win one of four \$1,000 prizes. Deadline for submissions is **March 1, 2018 at 4:00 pm**.

Join us at our MTS YHA Awards April 12, 2018, 7:00 PM at the Manitoba Theatre for Young People.

Nomination forms are available here in [English](#) or [French](#).