

## President's Message

If you are reading this in Winnipeg or Teulon, Balmoral or Stonewall, Rosser or Stony Mountain, or anywhere in the large swath of land that reaches from the US border in the south, to (roughly) Gimli in the North, to the boreal forests in the east, to the sand dunes of the west, then you are on Treaty One land. The Interlake School Division, itself, is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe People and on the Homeland of the Metis Nation. The eastern border of the Interlake School Division is only 20km from the location just outside of Lower Fort Garry where Treaty One was signed. That treaty has not been honoured. September 30, Orange Shirt Day, is an annual day to remember wrongs perpetrated through residential schools and more generally the failure of governments to live up to the letter and spirit of Treaty One. The Manitoba Teachers' Society, The Interlake Teachers' Association, and the Interlake School Division, have all publicly acknowledged the wrongs of the past; and all acknowledge that a single day of remembering is only a start. With the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) as a guide, we must now take practical steps toward a different future. The TRC speaks directly to teachers. It calls for the education system to implement a "curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada [as a] mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students." In addition, it calls for such a curriculum to be integrated into existing curricula, not stand as something apart. We teachers are in a unique position to act directly in response to the TRC. And, indeed, a look around the division shows that many teachers and schools are embracing this call to action. Like anything in education, in order to teach, we must first learn. Some practical steps are below.

## Resources for Reconciliation

- **MTS Workshop: Understanding the Impact of Residential Schools  
The Circle and the Box**

Based on the work of Jann Derrick, The Circle and the Box is an interactive, experiential learning activity that explores the impact of residential schools on Indigenous families and communities. In addition, participants will have the opportunity to learn and talk about resources and initiatives that support the teaching of Residential schools and reconciliation in our classrooms and schools. Fee: \$75. Register through [MyProfile](#).



- **Orange Shirt Day Lesson Plans** are on the [MTS Website](#)
- **The BC First Nations Education Steering Committee** (<http://www.fnesc.ca>) has many [resources](#).

## Do you like pulling weeds?

There exists an activity, called WOOFing in which young people volunteer their time to **Work On Organic Farms** in (usually) BC or Quebec. I grew up on a hobby farm; to me, WOOFing sounds like a horrible vacation, having “volunteered” significant hours of my youth to weeding and harvesting. Personally, I volunteer on the MTS Collective Bargaining Standing Committee, a commitment that involves day-long meetings, sifting through financial and other relevant data on a number of Saturdays throughout the year –and, while I enjoy this work, let’s face it, some of you would rather pull weeds. My point is this, volunteering is doing something you like. Volunteers enjoy creating a satisfying end product and enjoy the process of getting to that end. This is why the Interlake Teachers’ Association has negotiated an article into the ITA/ISD Collective Agreement declaring extra-curricular activity as voluntary. Most teachers tend to volunteer somewhere. But, if life circumstances or personal preference lead in a different way, you are not required to perform extra-curricular work. If you do decide to volunteer, there is no requirement that those volunteer hours be spent at your place of employment; many worthwhile causes are looking for talented people. If you do decide to volunteer at work, it should only be because you have chosen to do so. In some cases, workload stress, can cause us to re-evaluate our extra-curricular commitments. If you are in this position, perhaps find time to talk with your principal about adjusting your extra-curricular activities to reduce the stress. As always, I am available to discuss this and any other issue facing teachers in the Interlake.

### Your Opinions are Needed

The Interlake School Division has dedicated this school year to formulating a new strategic plan that will inform division policy during the subsequent four years. Teachers are the primary vehicle through which the Division delivers a strategic plan, so it is vital that the school division hear from teachers about what should be in that plan. To this end, the division has planned three teacher input sessions regarding the next strategic plan. They take place on:

- **October 11**      **4:30**      **TCI**
- **October 25**      **4:30**      **WCI**
- **November 8**      **4:30**      **SCI**

Members are welcome to attend any session that suits them. Please make plans to attend at least one of these sessions; we need a strong voice from teachers, so the division can create a robust and viable plan.