

## President's Message: Bargaining Collectively

On October 5, members of the Interlake Teachers' Association Executive took part in the annual day of training. This year, that training focussed on bargaining and the bargaining process. This is the final year of the Collective Agreement between the Interlake Teachers' Association and the Interlake School Division. As such, we take this year to prepare for a new round of collective bargaining. Our Collective Bargaining Chair, Maria Nickel, will lead that process. In due course, you will be seeing a call for volunteers to serve on the Collective Bargaining Steering Committee (CBSC) and, later, the Collective Bargaining Table Team. The CBSC creates the opening package; the Table Team sits in negotiations with the ISD Board. The important thing to remember is that this is *collective* bargaining. We are in this together: practically, philosophically, and legally. Bargaining collectively allows us to operate from a position of strength. When we sit down at the table with ISD representatives, we are sitting down as equals; both parties are legally required to negotiate in good faith. The collective is the only method for bargaining with the employer. There is no vehicle in this system for individual members to make side deals. Almost all local associations, including the ITA, have agreements with the employer that affect single employees; the important part of these agreements is that they were made through the collective process. The Interlake Teachers' Association is a strong collective. We are principals, vice-principals, clinicians, and teachers. Through monitoring our current Collective Agreement and through negotiations, the wages and working conditions of the members of our collective will always be top of mind.

## The Results are In

In the 2016/2107 school year, you, the members of the ITA, completed two surveys. One was the paper-and-pencil workload survey sponsored by the Teachers' Society and the other was the online ITA Bargaining Survey. The results from both surveys has been shared with the ITA Executive and will be analyzed over the coming months. We will use this information to prepare for bargaining and also in conversations with the division – especially at the Joint Advisory Group on Workload. What this means, however, is that we will not be releasing this data publicly. I wish to reassure all of you that the data from these surveys does not go into a black hole, quite the contrary; the data is vitally important for our work. Thank you to everyone who filled in the surveys – the large response rate we enjoyed validated the data making it that much more useful to us when we speak with the division.

### Reminder

**The next  
ISD Strategic Plan  
Input Session for ITA  
members is  
October 25, 4:30PM,  
Warren Collegiate.**

**Plan to attend to  
attend to the plan.**

## Bill 28: The Public Services Sustainability Act

At this writing, [Bill 28](#), has been passed by the Manitoba Legislature, but has not been proclaimed and therefore is not legally in force. Nevertheless, it contemplates a restriction on teachers' salary increases of up to a maximum of 0% in 2018/2019, 0% in 2019/2020, 0.75% in 2020/2021, and 1.0% in 2021/2022. The Manitoba Teachers' Society has joined other public sector unions in the province in challenging Bill 28 in the Court of Queen's Bench.

MTS President, Norm Gould, to members:

**"Bill 28 is legislation which we believe is both illegal and unconstitutional. It has been passed by this provincial government and—if implemented—will strip you of your bargaining rights. Those rights have been protected by the Supreme Court of Canada as recently as November 10, 2016. But, the Pallister government is rolling the dice to either implement it, or hold it over your head as a bargaining tactic to ensure that for the next four years your compensation is 0 percent, 0 percent, 0.75 percent and then 1 percent – not anywhere close to keeping up with inflation. Make no mistake. Your right to collective bargaining is one of the most precious rights you have as a teacher and member of The Manitoba Teachers' Society. It is fundamental to your long-term security, to the health of Manitoba's public school system, and to our own Mission Statement. The Society, as a union and professional organization, is dedicated to advancing and safeguarding the welfare of teachers, the status of the teaching profession, and the cause of public education in Manitoba. The Society will communicate with members to keep you on top of the latest developments. There is strength in numbers and together, all public sector workers together, we cannot be ignored."**

Any questions on this matter are to be directed to Norm Gould: [ngould@mbteach.org](mailto:ngould@mbteach.org).

## Some Personal Notes

I have received from you numerous communications of congratulations and support regarding my new position. I thank you all for your kind words and encouragement. The philosophy I bring to this role is embedded in its name: Program Support. I look forward to acting in this new capacity to support those who perform one of the most challenging, rewarding, and profound professions in our society. It remains an honour to serve as your president; nothing there has changed.

Thank you also to the ITA members who, on October 11 at TCI, engaged the division in forming the next strategic plan. The next such opportunity is at Warren Collegiate on Wednesday, October 25, 4:30. See you there.

