

President's Message

Welcome back. As a teacher, I have always looked forward to the January to March time period. Yes, there is only one stat holiday in that stretch and Good Friday is again swallowed by Spring Break, but still, this run of school days always seemed the place to get things done. Classes are well established by now and we are well into the rhythm of the days. I hope this message finds you well rested for the winter run. Yes, there might be the odd indoor recess looming in the future, but just think, the winter concerts are over, that crazy last week of school is done, and Quiz Night is less than a month away. Neither our government nor our Union has been sleeping over the winter break, so there are few stories to tell, but before we get to those, remember that we are a profession that is fundamental to our society; each day we do good and we would do well to repeat that to ourselves each day. So, if you want a resolution that's easy to keep, resolve to say to yourself as you walk or drive home, "I did good today," because you did.

Literacy and Numeracy Summit

On January 9-11 the Manitoba Government is hosting a Summit on Literacy and Numeracy, The stated goal of this summit is to "co-develop a long-term provincial literacy and numeracy strategy" - all Manitobans are invited to participate. The province lists one of its intended outcomes as: "the Summit will guide participants through a co-creation process, providing Manitobans with the opportunity to help develop a provincial literacy and numeracy strategy," which is not exactly an outcome, but we get the point. The province is seeking input from all Manitobans in order to "raise the bar for literacy and numeracy."

A request for public input is a good thing. Such input can give experts in the field valuable insight of the landscape over which they are making decisions. All data confirms that Manitobans hold teachers in high regard. Hopefully, that is the message the government hears - that teachers need to be supplied with proper resources to effectively deal with the challenges of teaching in the 21st century. It will be an interesting few days; I'll let you know how it went in the next newsletter.



All Hands on Deck

While the province goes about consulting the public, the Manitoba Teacher's Society wants to make sure you know how all of this will affect you. To that end, the Society has planned several Regional Meetings to keep you informed on what they are doing in response to provincial and federal government action.

Topics for the Regional Meeting Presentations are:

- TRAF (teacher pensions) Update
- Bill 28 (public sector bargaining limits)
- Sec. 43 Criminal Code (amendments)
- BEF (Bureau de l'éducation française) changes
- Provincial literacy and numeracy plans (private interests in public schools)
- Local teacher and school issues

Dates in our Region

- Monday, February 12, 4:45 to 6:30 – Gimli
- Tuesday, February 13, 4:45 to 6:30 – Beausejour

Other Details

- Dinner is provided
- Mileage costs will be covered by MTS.
- You must register through MYProfile on the MTS website.
- You may register for sessions in other regions including the Winnipeg session and will be accepted as long as there is room

This is an important opportunity to become informed about your rights and the actions your Society is taking to defend them. Please plan to attend.

Standing Committee Sits Down

I am privileged to have been appointed to the Manitoba Teachers' Society Collective Bargaining Standing Committee (CBSC). This committee, comprised of MTS members from every region of the province, consults with MTS staff on matters relating to Collective Bargaining. The most recent meeting of the CBSC was on Saturday, December 2, where we sat down to discuss the unique situation in which we find ourselves. In Manitoba, each Local Association bargains separately with its Board of Trustees. As a result, we generally have had the various collective agreements terminating in different years across the province. This next round of bargaining will see every provincial Local opening negotiations at the same time. MTS staff play a major role in all local negotiations, so this will be a busy time for them. As you know, our own collective bargaining team has been hard at work preparing for negotiations. Their second meeting is scheduled for early in the New Year. As always, collective bargaining ideas should be directed to our chair, Maria Nickel.