

President's Message: Winter Respite

As we flip the last page of the calendar on another year, many seasonal events are revealed. The first official day of winter initiates conversations of almanacs, weather, and how many storm days we will battle. The start (and soon, an end) to the winter concert season has teachers and students bustling, parents up late adding bits to costumes, and community centres and school gyms beaming with lights, talent and pride. The ultimate prize on the horizon is a window of winter respite for all. It is meant to be time filled with family, friends and traditions, but also a chance to rest, re-energize and settle into the winter season, with hope that spring will soon be there.

The approach of winter and our desire to hibernate is not only welcome by many people, it can be argued that it is embedded in our natural instincts. Hibernation is defined as the condition or period of an animal spending the winter in a dormant state. **Hibernation functions to conserve energy, and the word itself can be used for any state that is dedicated to the purpose of getting rest.** As teachers, we should heed that last portion, in particular.

Teachers it seems, tend to follow certain animal groups when it comes to winter hibernation. Bears hibernate to escape the cold and conserve energy due to scarcity of food. (Actually, what bears do is called torpor and not true hibernation. They do go into deep sleep, but can wake, move around, and even have their young in the den.) The bears of the teaching community are our early and middle years colleagues. They have this amazing ability to multi-task, by amassing huge stores of energy and conserving it for long arduous days of concert prep and outdoor duty in -40 weather. They gracefully do this while engaging and encouraging post-recess students who are often runny, melty, cold and wet. Squirrels partially hibernate in order to relieve the stress of the change of season, but do not build up fat stores in order to remain asleep. They store food with them and will often wake up, eat, and may return to their dormant state. The squirrel is symbolic of our high school colleagues as they work through January exams. They shore up outcomes, review and provide extra teaching time, in order to help students and parents avoid the stress of this time. Most will work on hours of exam piles, in isolated dens, surrounded by many snacks close at hand. Rabbits do not hibernate. They forage and make due with what little nourishment they can find, and mostly do so at night in order to remain out of the sight of sleeping predators. These are our Kindergarten teaching colleagues. They exhibit an endless source of energy while remaining under the radar of napping, spiritous little ones, (does Kindergarten still have nap time?), and they never stop moving, encouraging or foraging for more learning nourishment, to provide all a good start.

I encourage you to seek out and embrace your hibernation spirit, however it suits you. Spend time doing things that enable you to come back as the best version of you. Read or be active; visit or reflect; nap or celebrate. For our colleagues who will embark into retirement as of the end of 2019, we wish you well. Enjoy your hibernation a little longer, (especially in the mornings!) To all ITA colleagues, enjoy a peaceful holiday, best wishes in the new year, and to all a good night!

Of News and Note:

- **Budget time:** The Board of the Interlake School Division is conducting a survey to provide an opportunity for all stake-holders to engage directly in the budget process. A budget info sheet with a link to the survey can be found by clicking [HERE](#) . If you wish to complete the survey on paper, copies will be available at all schools. The deadline is January 15th at noon.
- **The LifeSpeak App** is available in both English and French at both Google and the App Store.
- MTS link to coping with PISA panic, for teachers and parents. [LINK](#)
- What exactly are our colleagues in Hanover dealing with in the copyright lawsuit? Click here <https://www.steinbachonline.com/local/what-exactly-is-the-lawsuit-afflicting-hsd-teachers>
- MTS is recruiting for their **Presiding Officer Cohort**. Members could be called on to act as 'Chairperson' of various MTS meetings. All training for cohort volunteers is at McMaster House and take place after regular school hours. Reply to GOVERNANCE@mbteach.org by **Friday, January 17, 2020**.
- Many of your ITA executive chairs have spent October through December attending training and collaborating with colleagues from other MTS locals. Watch for information in future editions.

From your Indigenous Voice and Action Chair – Cora-Leigh Mazurat, New Haven School

- I still have copies of the resource Beyond 94 for teachers who are looking to do some work with the 94 calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation. Please email me and I will send a copy in the courier. **Some PD to consider** <https://fullcircleindigenous.ca/conference/>.
- Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba- <http://www.trcm.ca/> - Access to the speakers bureau and some great resources for your classroom!

A few On-going Collective Bargaining items:

The Bill 28 hearing wrapped up late in November, and the arbitration hearing for the Louis Riel Teachers' Association wrapped up early in December. MTS officers, legal representation and staff have worked incredibly hard on our behalf, and are very optimistic respecting the trial. Briefs in the Bill 28 trial will be submitted to the judge by both sides in January, and closing arguments are set to occur February 18-20. The LRTA arbitration ruling is expected in Spring 2020. Pembina Trails is scheduled to begin arbitration in April. ITA and ISD have not met regarding bargaining at this time. If you have any questions re: the Collective Agreement or bargaining info, don't hesitate to ask.

Upcoming Events/Dates:

- **Women in Educational Leadership Forum:** For every woman teacher who wants to lead, read and learn with colleagues online, the *Women in Educational Leadership Forum* Group is for you. *** We have an engaging live broadcast every Wednesday night on Facebook. ***
- **Educating for Action; Our Learning Journey: MTS/MASS Conference** focuses on the why, who and how of education, enhancing teaching practices, and supporting teacher inquiry and collaboration. Dates: February 27-28, 2020. Registration is now open at www.mbteach.org.
- **Annual ITA Quiz Night:** Thursday, January 30, 2020. Parochial Hall, 310 1st ST. W, Stonewall. Doors open at 6:30, quizzes to start at 7pm. Open to all ISD employees and significant others. Sign-up as a team or we are always looking for individuals to fill teams as well. \$10/player. Some refreshments for sale, and bring your own snacks. Reply to Cathy at cpleskach@isd21.mb.ca .

For Fun... Go to www.mbteach.org to watch the MTS Holiday Greeting, or follow this [LINK](#).



ITA Quiz Night



Thursday, January 30th @ 7:00PM

Doors open at 6:30 pm

Parochial Hall 310 1st St. W., Stonewall

Enter a team (max. 8) or as an individual

Open to all ISD staff and significant others

\$10.00 per person

**Email Cathy (cpleskach@isd21.mb.ca) to
enter**

Refreshments available for purchase

Bring your own snacks