



President's Message: Time for change or change of time?

Teachers by nature, are creatures of habit with innate time-of-year senses that tick from within. We work in fixed time frames around cycles, blocks, and classes, and are guided by bells, seasons and term reporting periods. So yes, the method of delivery may have been altered, but the message remains the same. We love what we do; our students and colleagues drive us to do more and better; and we are invested in their trials and successes, often more than we are our own.

I have been thinking of all of you in your various roles, and wondering how you are doing with the recent impact that current events have had on your professional clock. It seems it hasn't been as straight forward as fall back or spring ahead, but rather a feeling of; "Holy Cow! What day is it? Which Microsoft Team meeting is this? and When will I see my students again?" As educators, we can easily get lost in the fact that we are committed to being experts at our craft, being there academically and emotionally for our students, and providing the best and most equitable learning opportunities possible. As professionals, we are flexible, resilient and creative. As life-long learners, we are trying new things, attempting to master new programs, and some are no longer putting off methods we have always wanted to try. My hope is that as people, you have the supports you need to pull it all off. We will get through this together.

The division has provided very detailed K-12 learning guidelines to carry us through the suspension of in-class learning. I want to remind members that you have autonomy when planning lessons that you feel best meet the needs of your students. Just as with in-class planning and teaching, professional autonomy applies to at-home delivery of learning. It is important to remember that during these unprecedented times, planning is taking place with senior administration and Manitoba Education continuously. New information may be coming or changing. The most important thing now is to balance what is realistic and manageable and what works for you, your students and your families. Every teacher may be doing something different, and that is ok.

Do what brings you joy in your new classroom setting. Do not feel obligated to use everything that's out there and new, unless it is helpful and manageable. If direct instruction live from your home via video platform isn't for you, phone calls and emails are working. If paper copies or physical packages of activities works for your students, plan with your principal for that. You have the autonomy to use your professional judgement on how to provide your students meaningful learning opportunities and what that looks like is up to you. In all that you do with students, be mindful to follow professional practice, and on page 2, I have included a variety of links to help in this.

The point is, do what you can, not what you think you must. You too, have families at home, to navigate through this. Be mindful the amount of time you are giving to students, how much access they get to your space, and the amount of time you are spending "at work". Now is not the time to do more. If you have questions or would just like to reach out, I hope you do. Stay safe and be well.

Important Documents:

LINKS on this page can be found with one click on www.interlaketeachers.ca.

- Click this [LINK](#) for the MTS Guide to Working at Home for Teachers.
 - This document **specifies our professional responsibilities**, and gives suggestions and links to access Health Links on-line screening tool, donate blood, and tips for working at home. A reminder that the Manitoba Teachers' Society *Code of Professional Practice* still applies while you work from home.
- This [LINK](#) is titled Coronavirus Updates, What You Need to Know, for MTS members. It shows a chronological list of ALL of the Covid-19 related MTS posts. This is updated as new are released.
- MTS answers recent questions – <http://www.mbteach.org/mtscms/2020/04/22/most-recent-questions/>
 - Teachers have questions and we have answers. Here you'll find a list of questions raised to date, and our responses to them. Check back regularly for updates.
 - *Is it alright to use Social Media while working from home?* - You wouldn't post to social media while at work under "normal" circumstances, so the same caution applies now. Avoid posting or interacting during the regular work day. Wait until [after working hours](#).
 - *Can I use my personal devices to communicate with students and families?* - When it comes to interacting with students and parents, don't provide or use your personal email or phone number if at all possible. [Boundaries are important](#).
- Virtual Meeting Etiquette - http://www.mbteach.org/pdfs/news/MTS_Virtual_Meeting_Etiquette.pdf
 - Helpful reminders when meeting with colleagues or students.
- How to **"Take Care of You"** – <http://www.mbteach.org/mtscms/2020/04/13/the-bounce-sheet/>
 - This document helps with how to manage all the new stresses we now face, and gives **direct links to crisis lines** and support. Also, you can find help at [MTS LifeSpeak](#). Log in to access through group account, Use the client password: MTSBalance.
- EAP Services & MTS Staff Officers are still working for members.
 - Here is the [LINK](#) to EAP. **Or Phone: 204-837-5801**
Toll-free: 1-800-378-8811
 - Here is the MTS contact page [LINK](#) to reach a staff officer. **Or Phone: (204) 888-7961**
Toll Free: 1-800-262-8803
- **UP-COMING EVENTS:**
 - **Annual General Meeting** – The 2020 AGM of the Interlake Teachers' Association will take place virtually. An email was sent to members detailing the process and motions. All pertinent documents are now on the ITA website at www.interlaketeachers.ca on our [Annual General Meeting 2020](#) page. Voting will occur via Election Buddy, starting when members receive an email on **Tuesday, May 19, until Friday May 22 at 12pm.**

TRAF News: View the many digital presentations available through your Online Services account. These presentations contain all of the same information you would receive at a live seminar or webinar. Log in to your [Online Services](#) account at traf.mb.ca and click "Digital Presentations":

- **Your TRAF Pension**
- **Preparing for Your Retirement**
- **Maximizing Your Pension**
- **Making Additional Voluntary Contributions**
- **Understanding Your Annual Benefits Statement**
- **Purchasing Your Maternity/Parental/Adoption Leave(s)**

If you have any questions after watching these presentations, please contact TRAF by phone or email. Our Member Services staff are available to assist you.

Reminder that... teachers have until April 30 (if hired on or after December 7, 2004) or May 31 (hired before December 7, 2004) to give retirement notice effective June 30.

Tips and suggestions to mind your time:

Be mindful of these tips when you feel your time is not working in sync with the demands on you.

- Keep regular school day hours. Your inbox will always be full. Walk away. Evenings and weekends are your own. The idea is not to do more. Keep work to work days and hours.
- Let students/parents know you will be keeping to school hours for connecting with them. Then all are aware of expectations, and no stress need be attached to communication.
- Your lunch break is still duty free. Take it, have lunch with your new "co-workers", take a walk or just be. It may help you feel refreshed for an afternoon back at work.
- Movement is meaningful. At school we are constantly moving. Your body misses this.
- Music can be magic. School is noisy, and some of us need that environment to function.
- **"BOUNCE"**, **B**e kind (to yourself), **O**rganize, **U**nwind, **N**ourish, **C**onnect & **E**ngage. By clicking on this [LINK](#) from above, the document that opens reveals more tips.
- Connect with colleagues during work hours, if that is what you need. Pick the brain of your co-workers, as they may have been wanting to try the same new thing also.
- Take leave of your devices for a spell if you need. If you are working on something job related, don't feel you have to communicate instantly. Just as if we were teaching in class, we can take a fair and reasonable amount of time to get back to emails and messages.
- Take your days! If you need a sick day, book on CIMS,... and don't work! To juggle children at home and work hours, discuss with your principal. In all cases, communication with your supervisor is key. We can make it work together, while apart.
- If you have personal days or extracurricular days to use, enjoy them! They are a part of our current collective agreement which is a legal and binding document. Therefore, normal rules regarding these days will not be adjusted. You are encouraged to use them, **and truthfully under these circumstances, might be the time you need them most.** Book them as normal in CIMS and as before, touch base with your principal.
- Find joy in "Little Wonders". What fills you, and can you work joy into your work day? The hours, days and months ahead, will feel lighter. Reach out, stay safe and be well.

Final thoughts: Recently, I paid closer attention to the lyrics below. It made me mindful of how inspiring it is to witness, all that you are doing to connect and work with students, families, and colleagues, and the ingenuity and emotion with which you are performing it all. In the words of Sir Winston Churchill, as he closed his speech to the British Commons on June 18, 1940... ([LINK](#))

"Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves that if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say, 'This was their finest hour.'"

Little Wonders - YouTube link to the song [HERE](#). You know you want to listen now!

Rob Thomas

Let it go
Let it roll right off your shoulder
Don't you know?
The hardest part is over
Let it in
Let your clarity define you
In the end
We will only just remember how it feels

Our lives are made
In these small hours
These little wonders
These twists and turns of fate
Time falls away
But these small hours
These small hours still remain

Let it slide
Let your troubles fall behind you
Let it shine
'Til you feel it all around you
And I don't mind
If it's me you need to turn to
We'll get by
It's the heart that really matters in the end

Our lives are made
In these small hours
These little wonders
These twists and turns of fate
Time falls away
But these small hours
These small hours still remain

All of my regret
Will wash away some how
But I cannot forget
The way I feel right now...

