



IN THIS ISSUE:

- Working from Home Tax Deduction – p. 2
- Collective Bargaining Update – p. 2
- BILL 45 – p. 2
- Human Rights Programming – p. 3
- New Inuit Art Centre, Qaumajuq – p. 3
- Rapid Testing – p. 3
- Mental Health & Well-Being – p. 4
- Professional Development Free Online – p. 4

CONTACT:

president@interlaketeachers.ca
www.interlaketeachers.ca



MTS:

www.mbteach.org
Phone: (204) 888-7961 or
1-800-262-8803

PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE: A YEAR IN THE REAR-VIEW; AND WHAT LIES AHEAD.

As we begin 2021, and acknowledge a full year of living with a global pandemic, it is time to look at what we have gained, and to where we still need to get by way of union advocacy. MTS continues to actively promote our interests to government, and the results are beginning to show. Like the science of erosion, defined as a gradual destruction or diminution, MTS has used time, constant pressure, and commitment to wear down the stance of government on several issues, while safeguarding working conditions for all those working in schools.

Safe/sustainable return to school; health and safety of teachers

Gains: Mandatory masks 4-12; rapid testing for all staff; changes to school spaces/hiring to attain 2m; remote learning clarity and consistency, and teachers hired to sustain this.

Goals: Mandatory masks all grades; vaccine priority for teachers; calls for evidence/transparency on safety of schools despite test positivity/community transmission, including notification to subs; shift of focus to mental health, including increased visibility of mental health supports and care for teachers during *work hours*.

Workload, adherence to collective agreements, and the status of teachers as the most reliable source on teaching and learning

Gains: Reinstatement of 3 PD days; suspension of provincial exams; reduction of duplex learning; and MTS consulted as Remote Learning Support Centre takes on students.

Goals: Removal of contact tracing placed on principals; Eliminate duplex learning, "One Teacher = One Job"; decrease or eradicate non-teaching duties: data collection, administrative work, assessment and reporting, duty and supervision; and increase time for preparation and assessment.

Decision-making informed by public health & ongoing collaboration with education stakeholders

Gains: MTS on Response Planning Team (RPT) with MB Gov and Public Health, conversations with new Minister - Cliff Cullen

Goals: MTS building list of issues to be addressed to see the Remote Learning Centre improve and benefit all; voice in the implementation of K-12 review recommendations.

“Classroom teachers should not be solely responsible for providing both in-class learning and remote learning.” See [K-8 Remote Learning Guidance](#).

Benefits You are eligible to claim a deduction for home office expenses for the period you worked from home in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

There are two ways to claim, but the new **temporary flat rate method** applies if you worked more than 50% of the time from home for a period of at least four consecutive weeks in 2020. You can claim \$2/day to a maximum of \$400 (200 working days) per individual. [LINK](#) to CRA site and details. Note: You do not need a letter from the employer, simply fill out the temporary method portion of [Form T777S](#).

Is starting a family in your future? Access the Maternity & Parental leave information Video [HERE](#)

COLLECTIVE
BARGAINING



The function of collective bargaining is to negotiate work-related issues such as, but not limited to: wages, benefits, sick time, prep time, medical time, extracurricular, sub teacher pay & benefits, various leaves, administrative allowances, etc. For ITA this process takes place between the employer (ie: INTERLAKE SCHOOL DIVISION), and the workers, represented by the local collective bargaining unit (ie: INTERLAKE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION). Our collective bargaining team works closely and with the guidance of MTS, but it is the ITA that holds the bargaining certificate.

A **collective bargaining agreement (CBA)** is a written legal contract between an employer and a union representing the employees. You can find the latest CBA between ISD and ITA [HERE](#).

Current status is that we are not actively negotiating with the ISD at this time. In April 2020, we once again sent a letter to open negotiations. All bargaining units across the province are in the same pattern while we await the Pembina Trails TA arbitration hearing that ended Jan. 8, 2021. A decision is expected within 60 days (early March), and will influence movement for other locals, including the ITA. We will then work to solidify meeting dates and present our opening package, which has been prepared since before our current agreement expired as of June 2018. Until a new contract is negotiated, or until Provincial Bargaining takes over, we revert back to this Collective Agreement, [LINK](#).

Bill 45 – The Public Schools Amendment and MTS Amendment Act would initiate the Provincial Bargaining Process. The Manitoba Teachers' Society has established and passed its Provincial Bargaining Protocol, [LINK](#). The Society is prepared to negotiate on behalf of all members (except DSFM), should Bill 45 be proclaimed, (it has received 1st reading in legislature). We as an association are ready. The ITA has your best interests in mind and at heart and will bargain as a team for you and your new collective agreement, in whatever fashion it presents itself. Until then, take care of yourself, be kind to yourself and be the amazing staff you are in each of your buildings. We will get through this as a team!

Maria Nickel

Collective Bargaining Chair, ITA

Equity & Social Justice

The Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center (FSWC) – [LINK](#), has a collection of **FREE** virtual programming options available for your classroom.

All programs are curriculum-compatible and encourage discussions regarding both historical and contemporary human rights issues.

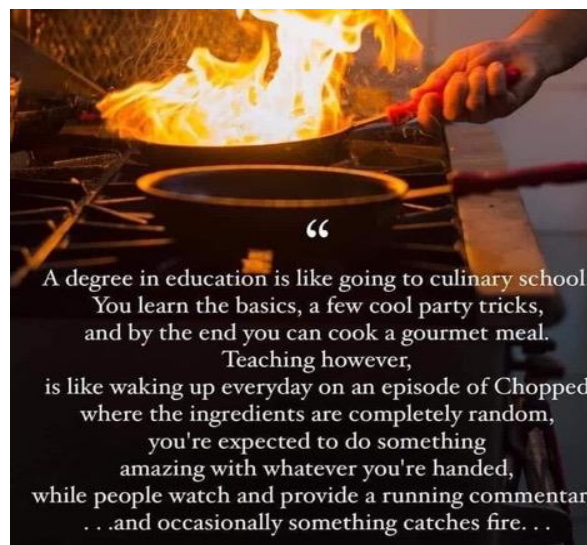
Indigenous Voice & Action New Inuit Art Sculpture Honours Teachers

Winnipeg Art Gallery's new Inuit Art Centre, Qaumajuq, and The Manitoba Teachers' Society have dedicated a new permanent outdoor sculpture to public school teachers.

The Verde Guatemala marble carving by Inuit artist Goota Ashoona will welcome visitors and school groups into Qaumajuq, on the corner of St. Mary Avenue and Memorial Boulevard in downtown Winnipeg.



The artwork was commissioned by The Society “to honour teachers all around us - in the land and in our lives - who reveal the truth, wisdom and beauty that connect us all.” Titled Tuniigusia/The Gift, Ashoona's multifaceted sculpture reflects knowledge transfer through education and storytelling, as well as the important role teachers play in our communities. Follow this [LINK](#) to watch a video and to learn more about the sculpture and the artist, or go to the WAG site at <https://wag.ca/qaumajuq/>



Rapid Testing FAST PASS ACCESS FOR ALL STAFF

To be eligible for a rapid test, education staff must:

- Have symptoms of COVID-19; or
- Be identified as a close contact of a school exposure;
or
- Live with someone who has symptoms.

The rapid testing site in Winnipeg is located at 1066 Nairn Ave. Appointments must be made ahead of time by phoning 1-855-268-4318.

Mental Health & Well-Being CTF Survey says...

In October 2020, the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF/FCE) ran a Teacher Mental Health Check-in Survey. Over 14,000 teachers from across Canada completed it, and this information has been used by the CTF/FCE and by your teachers' association to continue to advocate for the teaching profession. Access the public report [HERE](#).



[Life Speak Wellness Platform](#) - Looking for support, or information?



Life Speak experts can help you carve out some peace of mind in your world by giving you tips and strategies that are easy to implement, right now. Share this information with your loved ones or colleagues; we can all make a difference. **Go to the MTS Life Speak Library link [HERE](#).**

[The MTS Educator Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#) services are there to help. The rules for the types of services you can access and still be covered under Blue Cross have changed to help members access help sooner and more often. Click [HERE](#) or call EAP for info.

Professional Development

- For a list of **FREE ONLINE PD** being offered by MTS - [LINK](#). PD events include Online Workshops, Interactive Webinars, and even an Online Book Club. **[STAY TUNED FOR A LOCAL ITA BOOK CLUB STARTING UP SOON. INFO TO FOLLOW NEXT ISSUE!](#)**
- **NEW TEACHERS**, click [HERE](#) for resources and the **Beginning Teacher Handbook**.



I NEED A DAY BETWEEN EVERY DAY TO RECOVER FROM THE DAY BEFORE, AND PREPARE FOR THE DAY COMING.

What's Next: The Society will begin to use “pulse surveys” as a member engagement tool to address teacher needs during the pandemic. This approach will help them to be responsive to member concerns and realities, resulting in consistent, member-informed advocacy. As members, what can you do? Continue to use your voice, take care of each other, and reach out. With arbitration rulings, vaccines and K-12 recommendations in sight, united in solidarity we can say, “Bring it!”