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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: THE ART OF CONVERSATION

It has often been said that conversation is an artform. As teachers, we spend much of our career honing this skill in all facets of our job. With students, colleagues and parents, our day consists of endless moments of conversation. But do we sometimes miss opportunities for other impactful conversation?

We are in a time when conversations outside school, about school, are the new norm. The pandemic, ironically, while keeping schools locked down and inaccessible, has shed light on what we do in our classrooms, and opened the public eye to our work. We rallied community members to recognize the importance of their unique voice and the impact of public education on the identity of a community itself. The public responded with unprecedented support for teachers, and we gratefully find ourselves at an important juncture.

Schools are cornerstones of the community, and that responsibility goes two ways. Good PR strategies don't just work when you need them. They are effective even when there isn't an imminent crisis. We have control of the narrative right now, and teachers, rather than reacting, have an incredible opportunity to blitz society with what is required to improve public education. We are the experts, and must have these conversations with friends, family, and community. Education reform is coming, and it is our job to ensure the public knows what will work and what won't from its frontline. It feels like our words are worth more than they used to be, and we should grab that momentum.

October 25-30 is Media Literacy week – ([LINK](#) to some MTS resources for your classroom), and it was social media that helped us storm the legislature this time. But there is no time to sit and admire the rainbow. Be the media; spread the message.

“The medium is the message.” Marshall McLuhan

Flashback to this Canadian Heritage vignette – [LINK](#).



New! Important Changes to Member Benefits:

- **MTS Member and Family Assistance Program (MFAP) takes effect January 1, 2022**
- **MTS staff to build new suite of services for teacher mental health and wellness**

The MTS Educator Assistance Program (EAP) has offered valuable, vital counselling services to Manitoba public school teachers for many years. Over time, the need for these services grew dramatically, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. **It became clear that access to services needed to be provided in a timely way, and the types of counselling services our members required had become more varied.** And so new ways in which to respond and ensure effective service delivery were explored, with MTS Provincial Executive voting this fall to adopt a new model of service built on not one, but two pillars.

Counselling

We're pleased to announce that on January 1, 2022, counselling services to MTS members—and now their eligible family members too—**will be provided through HumanaCare**, an integrated provider of counselling and support services in Canada with more than 150 counsellors right here in Manitoba. Services include individual therapy, and counselling for family and couples, legal and financial needs, grief and bereavement, diet and nutrition, substance abuse and crisis and trauma.

Support, Educate and Advocate

Our EAP counsellors are still here at MTS, migrating in the new year to a role that will build services to support, educate, and advocate for teacher mental health and wellbeing. Their experiences with members and unique understanding of the needs of teachers and landscape of education will inform this work.

Any MTS members in an existing clinical relationship with an EAP counsellor will continue to receive those services for the duration of their sessions, up to March 31, 2022.

Watch for [updates here](#) and in upcoming issues of the MTS all-member newsletter, *The Sub*.

Dental plan changes approved:

This month, your ITA executive heard from Glen Anderson – MTS Benefits Department Head. He presented changes required to our dental plan as we move to one bargaining unit under MTS.

The changes include:

- a decrease in premiums by ~10% (official amount calculated after 2021 COLA calculation) The plan is currently well funded, and a decrease in premiums is viable.
- An increase from \$1500 per family member to \$1750, per year. All this due to the fact that we will be joining a larger plan with more contributors as part of the provincial plan.

Public Education Matters. Let's Get it Right!

- A new MTS website (www.educationmattersmb.org) has been dedicated to the new ad campaign. By now, hopefully you've seen the [TV ad](#). See the ad, refamiliarize yourself with the [MTS K-12 Review Recommendations](#), and encourage everyone to [sign the petition](#) to support better education. Follow on Twitter @InterlakeTA, or MTS @mbteacher, or follow MTS on Facebook or Instagram.

Update on Bills Impacting You:

- [Bill 16](#) – Labour Relations Amendment Act – MTS was concerned about the affects on binding arbitration in the wording of this act. This Bill was dropped along with 64.
- [Bill 28](#), Wage-freeze Bill - The MB government appealed the ruling that Bill 28 was unconstitutional. Unfortunately, their appeal was upheld this month. Next steps: The Partnership to Defend Public Services (PDPS, of which MTS is a member) will weigh their options when they meet in November, and are considering an appeal to the Supreme Court.
- [Bill 45](#) – moves us to Provincial Bargaining under MTS. At October Presidents' Council, Deputy Minister of Education – Dana Rudy, suggested the proclamation date will be soon.

Collective Bargaining:

- The MTS Provincial Bargaining Protocol ([LINK](#)) has been enacted in anticipation of the proclamation of Bill 45. At Provincial Seminar 1 held October 1 & 2, the Provincial Bargaining Committee was elected, and regional wants & needs were collected. The opening package will be constructed by the committee and presented at Seminar 2 in March 2022. Details of the package can not be shared to maintain the integrity of the bargaining process.

Join a NEW Women in Educational Leadership initiative beginning October 2021

- The FemLightenment Series is designed to bring those who identify as women together to share their experiences in educational leadership. Click [HERE](#) for the full program.

New Teachers: MTS has many New Teacher Resources and tools online [HERE](#).

School visits & ITA lunch:

We look forward to resuming school visits this year. Watch your staffroom bulletin board for your date for conversation & treats, as well as an ITA sponsored lunch soon. Thank you for all you do to nourish your students.



Maternity & Parental Leave:

The **Lakewood Regional Seminar is in-person**, Thursday November 4, 2021 @ 4:30 pm

Location: Ecole Selkirk Junior High, 516 Stanley Avenue, Selkirk, MB – **Dinner provided!**

Register: Carla Mroz – LSTA President - lstapresident@gmail.com ASAP

More MTS Maternity/Parental leave info...

Are you planning to take maternity and/or parental leave? There are two sources that define a teacher's right to maternity and/or parental leave – the Employment Standards Code and your Collective Agreement. If you have questions regarding any provisions of maternity and/or parental leave please contact your local President or MTS Staff Officer **Andrea Zaroda** at:

Phone: 204-831-3059/1-866-494-5747 (ext 223)

Email: azaroda@mbteach.org

- [Watch the MTS Maternity & Parental Leave information video](#)
- [View the Maternity & Parental Leave booklet](#)

Contact & Information:

- School-based, schedule or workplace safety concerns should go to your direct supervisor/Principal first.
- Further questions or concerns regarding teacher welfare, safety, and how to navigate your union can be sent to President, Cathy Pleskach, at president@interlaketeachers.ca, or call/text (204) 792-8406. Responses can usually be expected within 24 hours.
- If you have questions or concerns in a specific area, and wish to speak to one of the executive chairs, see who they are [HERE](#).
- Stay informed at www.interlaketeachers.ca and www.mbteach.org.
- If you are not receiving the MTS all-member email *the SUB*, please update [MyProfile](#).

