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## CONTACT:

[itapres@mbteach.org](mailto:itapres@mbteach.org)  
[www.interlaketeachers.ca](http://www.interlaketeachers.ca)



## MTS:

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

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: **NORMAL RESISTANCE**

Nothing about the last two years has been normal, particularly these last two months. February seemed to last 14 days not 28, and “inclement weather” entered everyday lexicon. March hasn't exactly put on the brakes either, and we find ourselves on the eve of Spring Break. Some of you will say it came so fast, and others that it can't get here fast enough. So why does none of it feel normal? When and how do we let the normal back in?

The definition of normal implies standard, usual, typical or expected. Restrictions became the new normal, shopping without a mask feels like forgetting pants, and being close to others is now extremely uncomfortable. Hesitancy is bolstered by worry of future waves, and we feel left to our own defenses by those who should lead. Perhaps we aren't ready to open ourselves to the idea that normal may be possible again one day, just different? We own our normal; we don't fit someone else's.

I recently was able to spend time coaching basketball once again, and it was of course, infinitely different than pre-Covid. Masks & sanitizer replaced team water bottles and towels in the equipment bag. Chairs spaced apart instead of cozy benches, no hand-shakes or tournaments, a revolving door of players able to attend practices and games, teams reporting cases hours after playing them, and every snow storm seeming to hit on our game nights made for anything but a normal season.

But somehow through all of that, it felt amazing to be able to participate in life again, albeit it with caution and intention. It was worrisome yet calming, concerning yet healing, and once into the swing of it... dare I say normal.

My hope for all of you as we transition from restrictions to recommendations, is that you let the normal creep in. It is out there, different now for all of us, and that is perfectly ok.

Keep yourself and your loved ones safe, find your new comfort to normal ratio, and be kind to others as they seek their own.

Reach out as you need to [itapres@mbteach.org](mailto:itapres@mbteach.org).

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## News & Current Issues

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### **Benefits: MTS Member and Family Assistance Program (MFAP) is active.**

Services include individual therapy, counselling for family and couples, legal and financial needs, grief and bereavement, substance abuse, home renovations, moving, buying, selling, lifestyle, diet and nutrition. Members are encouraged to log in now to receive emails & info. **Access Code is: MTSMFAP.**



The banner features the HumanaCare Access Code logo on the left, the HumanaCare logo with 'Powered by snapclarity' in the middle, and the MTS logo with 'THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY' on the right. Below the logos, it states '24 HOURS A DAY ANYWHERE IN NORTH AMERICA' and '1-800-661-8193'. The website 'www.humanacare.com/mts' and 'Access Code: MTSMFAP' are listed. A QR code is on the right side.

- Members can also access up to \$850 per calendar year for other extended health services.
- You can receive 80% reimbursement if eligible, on many things from orthotics, hearing aids, medical appliances, prescription drugs (90% at Costco), and eye exams.
- For the complete list of all your extended health benefits (Blue Cross), go [HERE](#).

### **MTS Creates Mental Health Resource Guide for Teachers:**

For most of us, seeking professional help to maintain our physical health is second nature. But we don't always give our mental health the same consideration. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

### **Collective Bargaining:**

**We have our first Provincial Opening Package in 103 years of MTS history!!!** The MTS Provincial Bargaining Committee (PBC) has finalized the opening package. It contains the “best of the best” clauses from across the province, and thank you to ITA’s own Maria Nickel for her involvement in that process. The contents of the package are not shared with membership, as it could jeopardize the negotiation process. MTS will now look to engage the committee from MSBA (Manitoba School Boards Association), who is the bargaining body for ISD and the other school divisions.

### **COLA & Retro Pay:**

**COLA was 3.3%** for the final year (Sept 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022) of our Collective Agreement (CA). Members received retro pay back to September 1, 2021. See the current collective agreement and grids [here](#). We remain under the current agreement until a new one is negotiated & ratified.

### **Funding Announcement & MTS Recommendations:**

Education Funding Falls Short:

- [LINK](#) to Provincial Funding Announcement
- [LINK](#) to MTS Funding Recommendations to the Province.
- NEW EDUCATION FUNDING MODEL coming for 2023-2024. MTS and ITA are excited to announce that Joseph Warbanski of MTS staff will be on the Ed Funding Model Review Team. See the complete list [HERE](#).
- ISD Final Budget-at-a-Glance – [LINK](#)

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## Important Dates

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### **NOTICE OF CALL:**

**The Annual General Meeting of the Interlake Teachers' Association will take place on Tuesday, May 3, 2022 at 4:30 pm at the Quarry Park, Heritage Arts Centre.**

### **Agenda**

State of the Union – James Bedford – MTS President

ITA Year in Review

Election of 2022-2023 Officers

Approval of the 2022-2023 Budget & Fees

Pizza & Mature Refreshments will be served

### **Maternity & Parental Leave Virtual Seminar:**

Please join MTS for a virtual Maternity/Parental Leave Seminar, **Tuesday April 19, 4:30 – 5:30 pm.** Email [jalderson@mbteach.org](mailto:jalderson@mbteach.org) to register, or click [HERE](#) for more information.

### **Retirement/Resignation Dates:**

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

### **MTS Community Service Grants:**

Want to do more for the people in your community? Could you and your students create something unique that would make a real difference for those affected by poverty, racism or one of countless other social justice issues? You can make that difference with a \$1,000 Manitoba Teachers' Society Community Service Grant (CSG). It's our way to help you empower students to make change. [LINK](#)

### **Legacy of Hope:**

The ITA will be making a \$1000 donation to the Legacy of Hope Foundation in a spirit of reconciliation and promotion of indigenous education. Access the site [HERE](#) for lessons, podcasts & videos.



*Legacy of Hope Foundation*



### **BE SURE TO TAKE A BREAK!**

Reach out with any questions or concerns to the **new address:** [itapres@mbteach.org](mailto:itapres@mbteach.org)

**QUICK TRIVIA:** (Email answers to the ITA President. First fully correct answer gets a prize.)

1. How many school closure days has ISD had this school year? (Yes, it was a record.)
2. What year was the previous record, and how many days was it?