



THE MANITOBA **Teacher**

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2013 VOLUME 92 NUMBER 2 NEWSMAGAZINE OF THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY

**DARKNESS FALLS**  
**HUMAN TRAFFICKING;**  
What teachers should know



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# Teacher

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2013 VOLUME 92 NUMBER 2 NEWSMAGAZINE OF THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY

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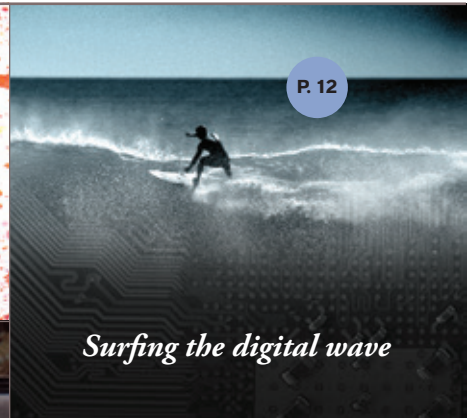
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## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

PAUL OLSON

**B**ill 18 has passed, and received Royal Assent. It's taken an exhausting road that began, by some metrics, on December 4, 2012, with the introduction of the Bill in the Legislature by Education Minister Nancy Allan. In reality, it's a road that stretches back to times out of mind, when the strong abused the weak, and fear ruled over reason. A cynic—or maybe just a realist—would be quick to point out that times really haven't changed that much.

Something like 250 presenters spoke passionately for and against the Bill at the legislative committee hearings, and all affirmed their belief that bullying was wrong, that children needed protection, and that schools had a vital role to play in this. Not everyone agreed on the best way to do that, of course.

Much scripture was quoted. Heartfelt renditions of O Canada were heard. Numerous iterations of "love the sinner, hate the sin" were proffered. Surreal followed close on the heels of bizarre.

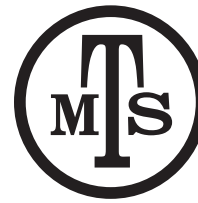
Legislative committee hearings are usually 10 different kinds of tedium. These hearings were as well, but interspersed with white knuckles gripping podiums, with bodies wracked with tension and tears, with vivid memories of friends lost to beatings and suicide, with the contributions of scholars, and with the sheer grit of those who refused to give up. Now, funnily enough, those survivors set their hearts and their jaw in defense of those still too young, or too weak, to defend themselves.

Social justice advocates are sometimes derided as pie-in-the-sky people—all about the rainbows, but too dumb to open an umbrella when it rains. To be fair, I've met a few of those: self-important do-gooders, country club lunch folk. They typically mean well, sometimes do good, and just as often do harm.

And then... there are those who stood in the fire, and somehow got out alive. The counsellor who kept the suicide note he never needed because a teacher stood up for him and became his last hope. The research assistant on bullying issues who ultimately left high school for over a year before being able to return, fighting anxiety attacks at every turn. The high school student who was told no to a GSA... and went over their heads. (Yeah, Evan, I mean you.) Activists are often born in the crucible.

Bill 18 isn't perfect—but it's a damn good place to start. School divisions and government will now need to create diversity policies and regulations to back up that law with good support and guidance in order to make its stated goals a lived reality. The work, in most respects, is just beginning.

No one in the public school system has any business retreating into the cowardly folds of "that's just the way it is." It's long past time to work toward, "that's just the way it was."



# The Manitoba Teachers' Society

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## INSIDE MTS

**KEN PEARCE**, GENERAL SECRETARY

### Important information

A few months ago I told you about the implementation of our new software applications and the pursuit of more online services to members. I am pleased to tell you that, after many months, the members' area of the website has been revamped with software that makes it easier for us to connect with you.

This process will continue over the next few weeks and will evolve with some material moving from the main Society website to the members' area. You should sign in and view your profile as a starting point and make any necessary changes.

Why are such changes important to you and to the Society?

Here is some background:

The MyProfile site, accessed from the home page of [www.mbteach.org](http://www.mbteach.org), has been totally reworked and all members must now register in the new system.

A number of new features as well as the ones that were available in the past are included on the site:

New features include:

- Event registration; a list of MTS events, online payment and other elements.
- Member log-in using membership card numbers rather than email.
- Instant updates in the MTS system when changes are made to contact information.
- The posting of information for members from MTS staff.

Continuing features include:

- Signing up for an electronic version of *The Manitoba Teacher*.

- The ability for MTS and ÉFM representatives to update school information.
- The ability for association executives to update association information.

To register, members need only:

- Enter the site from the MTS home page.
- Enter first and last name.
- Create a password.
- And, either:
  - Enter membership number (preferable), or
  - Enter a complete mailing address and the system will attempt to match with MTS records.

Once you have registered your membership number, this will be your username to enter the system.

If you have any questions call Jennifer Nasse at Information Management at 204-837-4666 ext. 273.

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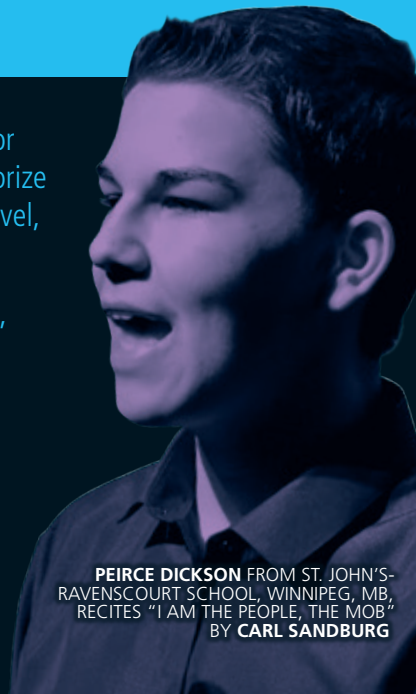
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# DARKNESS FALLS

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING HAPPENS HERE

*Photos by Karen Allen*

### STORIES BY PAT ST. GERMAIN

**A** Winnipeg mother didn't think she had much to worry about when her 12-year-old daughter went to free evening youth swims at the Cindy Klassen Recreation Complex pool.

When a 14-year-old homeless boy who'd befriended her daughter at the pool started hanging around her house, she was OK with that, too. She felt sorry for the kid.

"I'm a soft-hearted person. I know what it's like to be on the street and to not have a home or anyone there to go home to, so I turned around and I let this boy sleep in my house," the woman says.

"I gave him my couch and I fed him and took care of him for a few days."

The woman had no inkling the boy—actually a 19 year old who wasn't homeless at all—was under a court order not to have contact with children under 18. She found that out after police arrested him in a hotel room with her daughter several days after the girl went missing this summer.

The agony of worrying her child's name would be added to the list of missing and murdered women in Manitoba was replaced by another torment; wondering if the girl is among hundreds of kids lured into the sex trade each year.

"All I can do is just hope and pray that she wasn't a victim of that."

Typically, victims don't disclose sexual exploitation. Sometimes they fear reprisals, but often they don't even think they are victims. They've been groomed to believe their exploiters are their friends, and that their parents and police can't be trusted.

It's what makes the crime so insidious, and difficult to prosecute when arrests are made.

"People who are in this sort of realm of our society seek out kids who are most vulnerable," Winnipeg Police Sgt. Gene Bowers says. "And they're good at it. They even groom parents at times. Sometimes in these types of situations they'll groom

# EMPTY DESKS SPARKED ALERT

**A**s a school principal, Nancy Dyck did everything in her power to keep kids safe, but she really had only one weapon in her arsenal—monitoring attendance.

Dyck, principal at Norquay School until June 2013, became hyper-vigilant after she checked on missing kids and uncovered a drug and prostitution ring at a junior high school where she was vice-principal about eight years ago.

She says the province would look on a 90 per cent attendance rate at Norquay School as a fine thing. But in a school of 200 students, that means 20 kids are missing, and that's the number to focus on.

"I can tell you for almost certain 10 of those 20 are the same 10 kids who are not at school consistently every day. And that establishes a pattern in elementary school, and it's true across most of the city," she says.

"It's the kids who aren't there consistently. They don't attach to school, they fall by the wayside."

Winnipeg Police Service missing persons unit Det.-Sgt. Shauna Neufeld and counter-exploitation unit Sgt. Gene Bowers say there are red flags that should prompt educators to ask questions:

- Kids who've never had a cellphone suddenly have a new one.
- They have new clothes and other material goods their parents didn't provide.
- Increased drug use.
- Talk of taking a trip for which someone else is paying.
- Someone new is picking them up after school.
- Changes in behaviour and speaking patterns.
- Hanging out with new friends.
- Skipping school.

"Ultimately they're not going to be at school," Bowers says. "They're going to be so controlled they won't be coming to school."

He says educators should talk to parents or guardians to find out why kids aren't in school, and send a truant officer to check on kids before they call police or other agencies.

When Dyck had three kids missing from school for weeks at a time, she called their parents, wrote letters, sent a truant officer and finally called Child and Family Services.

"CFS basically said, 'Well we really don't do anything for absenteeism,' " she says. "The government has legislated this and I've done everything in my power to draw attention to the fact that these three very young children are not consistently and regularly attending school, which they're legally required to do."

As a last resort, Dyck had her vice-principal call Social Assistance.

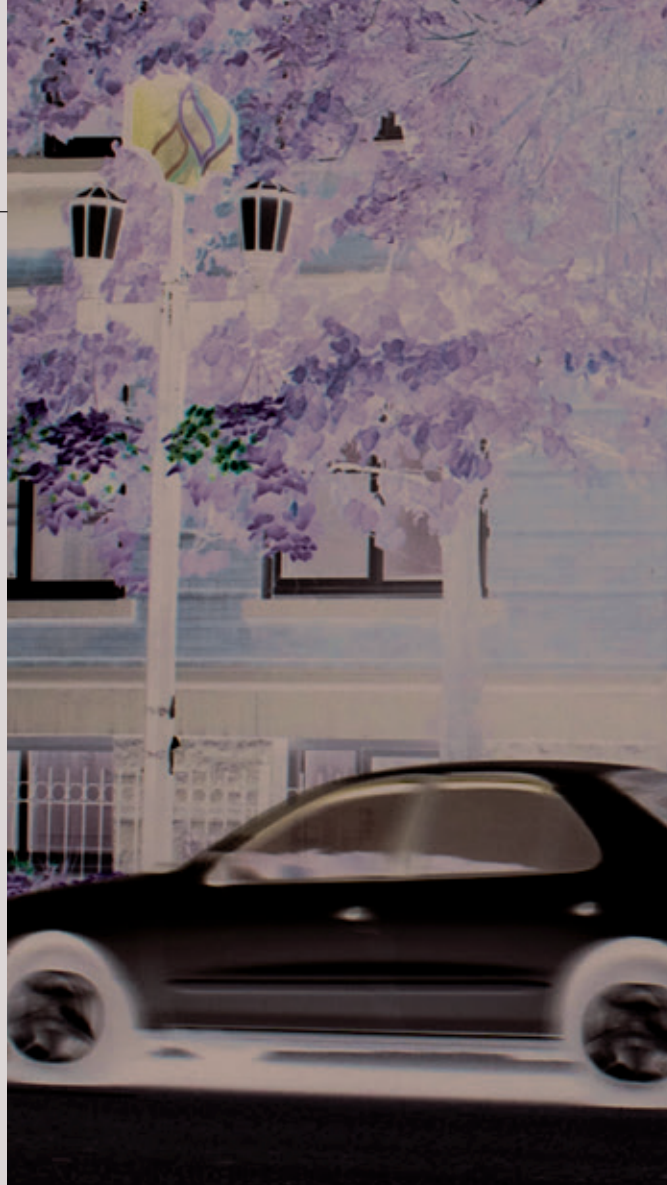
"And the welfare person I guess cut them off," she says. "Well guess what? The very next day the kids ended up at school. They're disheveled; they're not well cared for, they're very vague about what they've been doing and where they're going and all the rest of it. And it's just bizarre."

Dyck says lowering mandatory entry to age 5 would go a long way to helping kids—and their parents—attach to school. And she believes parents who aren't happy with a school should have the option of transferring their child.

The bottom line is, the province has to do more to make sure kids are safe, and that means making sure they're at school.

"I don't care what way you put it, unless there's an extreme medical condition or a kid is legitimately being home schooled, if a child isn't in school regularly and consistently there's a problem.

"They're being exploited in some way. They're going to fall into some trouble—it's a guaranteed thing. I've seen it happen over and over and over."



the parents before they groom the child. So people should have their radar on."

Bowers says some predators offer to pay for a free trip to another city and then put kids and women to work in the escort business. It's an old problem with a new name: Human trafficking.

"It is here. It's happening all across our country, and in fact there are different groups that actually move these people across to different cities, kind of a little route they do."

Kids who have a history with Child and Family Services, Aboriginal girls and women, homeless youth and runaways are high-risk groups, but Bowers says predators don't discriminate.

"Different kids from everywhere are vulnerable to people exploiting them, and there have been cases here in Winnipeg from all sectors of society."

A new boyfriend might woo a girl on social media, at a shopping mall or other teen hangout and convince her she's loved and needed before he puts her on the street. But the groomer is often an older female who appears safe.





That was the case when Nancy Dyck discovered a “massive” drug and prostitution network as vice-principal at a West End Winnipeg junior high school about eight years ago.

“It was a woman who had six kids of her own. She... got the kids to babysit and do things, and then she would do their hair and befriend them and act like the cool older sister,” Dyck says.

“She was sort of the front for the pimp and the drug dealers.”

One girl told Dyck she’d started smoking pot and then tried crack cocaine. The first few times it was free, but then she had to pay for it. The dealers threatened to beat her up if she didn’t earn the money, so another girl took her out and showed her the ropes.

“It started with \$40 blowjobs... and finally she basically sold herself for \$150,” Dyck says.

“She quickly found herself pregnant. Then she had an abortion, then she got an

infection, then she got really sick and it was just downhill from there.”

The case might never have come to light if Dyck hadn’t been tracking attendance and noticed that a group of girls who should have started Grade 8 in September didn’t show up for school. She sent a truant officer to one girl’s home and got word that the child’s mother wanted to see her.

“The mom just said, ‘I can’t get her to come home, she’s on the streets.’ And I thought she meant she was horsing around with friends and staying out late and not wanting to get up in the morning and come to school. And then the mom said, ‘No, she’s hooking, she’s a prostitute.’ And I couldn’t believe it.”

The 14-year-old girl was high when her mother brought her to school to talk to Dyck, but she gave her the names of other kids, and Dyck started connecting the dots in her attendance books.

“Before you knew it I think I had eight or 10 kids who admitted that’s what was going on. It was awful—I didn’t know what to do. I told the parents or guardians, and I kept thinking, ‘Somebody’s got to stop this somehow, how do we do this?’ So I ended up phoning the police non-emergency line.”

One of the girls had been with Tracia Owen the night she hanged herself in a derelict West End garage in August 2005. Owen, 14, had been in and out of CFS care her entire life. The day before she died, she and her friend engaged in prostitution and spent their earnings on crack cocaine.

In 2008, after an inquest heard some 400 kids ages 11–17 are exploited in Winnipeg’s sex trade each year, the province launched Tracia’s Trust, a sexual exploitation strategy involving more than a dozen organizations whose services cut a wide swath, from education and prevention programs to supports that help victims reclaim their lives.

CFS, Winnipeg Police Service, RCMP and other agencies coordinate StreetReach programs in Winnipeg and Thompson to track at-risk kids, return runaways to their homes and target adults who take them to drug and prostitution houses.

And Crown attorneys in the child exploitation unit coordinate their efforts with Tracia's Trust partners and share information with other jurisdictions across the country.

Jennifer Mann, a unit supervisor and one of two Crown attorneys designated to prosecute human trafficking cases, says only one charge has been laid in Manitoba since Canada's Criminal Code was amended in 2010 to make trafficking in children a new offence. And that charge was stayed.

"Those kinds of cases are very difficult to even get to the charges stage because they're reliant heavily on evidence from the victims, who often are not really in a position to be able to assist," Mann says.

"Given their personal circumstances, given fear of reprisal... it's very difficult for them to even come forward to the police."

Christy Dzikowicz, director of MissingKids.ca at the Canadian Centre for Child Protection, says the courts may rely too heavily on victims to bring offenders to justice.

"The reality is we have rules about how adults interact with kids and so we need to stand behind those rules and not expect the kids to be the ones championing it."

There have been many successful prosecutions for charges such as living off the avails of prostitution and sexual interference with children under 16, who can't legally consent to having sex with an adult.

Manitoba's Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking Act, in effect since April 2012, allows a parent or guardian to get a protection order forbidding predators to have any contact with a child, and Mann says it's been quite effective.

"Once you get a protection order, we don't need the victim to be saying, 'I was with him.' As long as someone witnesses them together, then we can lay the breach of protection order charge," she says.

"It's actually quite an interesting new development in the law and something that we're already using. I know we've had a few cases... I don't think any of them have gone to trial but we've had some guilty pleas, so I call those successful prosecutions."

The Internet has made it easier for predators—pimps and pedophiles—to target kids of both genders on social media. Young girls are often advertised on websites like Backpage.com and Craigslist as being under 18—or barely 18—and Bowers says there are websites where johns share tips on how and where to find specific services.

But electronic evidence trails can also help make Internet pornography and sexual exploitation cases easier to prosecute.

Abusers are so subtle that kids don't realize they're being groomed and manipulated, but when police perform a computer forensic analysis, they may find proof of luring in chat histories and text or email messages.

"Determining who it is on the other side of the computer can be a challenge, but once we can identify the person, then the case is usually pretty strong," Mann says.

That's small comfort to the West End mom. Her 12-year-old daughter was non-communicative in the weeks after police brought her home, and she can only wait to find out what the investigation turns up.

In the case Nancy Dyck exposed, the woman who groomed the girls was arrested and lost custody of her own children. But Dyck says that woman was a victim too, and she probably lived in fear of the men who put her up to it.

"No men ever went to jail," she says. "Not perpetrators, not pimps, not drug dealers, not any of them."

## BE ALERT, MAKE A CALL SAVE A KID

Johns, pedophiles, perverts—call them what you will, men who have sex with kids drive demand for victims. And you know at least one of those men, says Christy Dzikowicz, director of MissingKids.ca at the Canadian Centre for Child Protection.

"We would argue that on the offender side—guaranteed—it crosses our path whether we know it or not," Dzikowicz says. Adults need to be aware that kids in the sex trade are no different from any other victim of sexual abuse. They have to speak up to let johns know their behaviour won't be tolerated. And they have to get involved when they see something suspicious.

Last spring, a passerby called police when he saw a man putting up posters near Grant Park High School to recruit models and actors. But not all cases are so obvious. Adults have to butt in whether it's a shady character hanging around a playground, or a child in the company of an adult who doesn't seem quite right.

"We really have shied away from getting involved in anything. I feel bad for people who've witnessed something and then they kind of feel sick about it," Dzikowicz says.

"Why not make the call and just say, 'Can you check on this kid's well-being? I don't know if she should be there.' You don't have to make a judgment call because the police and the child protection workers and those types of people, that's what they're there to do."

The centre has a program called Kids in the Know, which is available in all school divisions to give kids tools to protect themselves. It's aimed at teaching kids the difference between friendship and control, and lets them know what behaviour is acceptable in adults.

"That type of primary prevention is something that needs to be woven into their education right from the time they're little all the way up," she says.

Winnipeg Police Sgt. Gene Bowers says Sweden invested \$10 million on teaching kids in elementary school to respect women and not view them as sex objects, and he agrees that type of education needs to start early.

"This whole exploitation thing is about changing attitudes. I liken it to domestic violence (and) drinking and driving," he says. "We view them in a far different light today, and more seriously than we did in the past."

In some cases, groups of men talk about hiring a prostitute as if it's a lark. They may think women enjoy the sex trade, but often they're being exploited by a drug dealer. Bowers says men have to tell other men it's wrong, and we all have to understand that prostitution is not a victimless crime.

"It's not OK to exploit kids and women and males. It's just not OK. And I think once we get that shift, and if there was education at a young age, that message would transfer into how we think as a society."

# PC Caucus Supports MANITOBA TEACHERS



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# SURFING THE DIGITAL WAVE

BY GEORGE STEPHENSON

**A**s a wave of technology begins washing over schools in Manitoba, early comments have focused on some successes.

But, it is early and those who have become the early adopters have some advice for colleagues to avoid drowning in the digital tide.

In Winnipeg, the St. James Assiniboia School Division has just begun a program to equip students in Grades 6 to 8 with iPads.

In Louis Riel, a project called the one-to-one device initiative—in which students at Dakota Collegiate were expected to have laptops—has been underway for a couple of years.

In the September issue of *The Manitoba Teacher*, school authorities expressed satisfaction with how the introduction of the technologies has worked so far.

But, Frank Restall, president of the Louis Riel Teachers' Association (LRTA), says there are many aspects involving the introduction of technology that teachers and principals facing new technology should be aware of to help in the utilization of any program.

As with most initiatives, implementation is not quite as smooth as silk on glass.

"Teachers involved in the Dakota project have been working very, very hard to implement this," he says. "The demonstrable successes of this program are directly related to teachers investing a great deal of time and effort.

"The association is hopeful that, just like a lesson in a classroom, there is reflection, evaluation and a review, including teacher input, of the process to ensure elimination of problems in the future and recognition of the enormous investment of time, and associated stress, by teachers."

Stress, created by the additional workload that comes with a new initiative, is one of the top concerns teachers should keep in mind when they're being asked to implement a technology project, says Restall, whose comments are supported by numerous studies.

There can be a cascading effect if projects are not introduced properly in the first place. For example, a lack of training leads to an increased workload; more work leads to more stress for teachers. And all that could be avoided by involvement of teachers in the early stages.

"Our association believes this was answered very clearly in our wellness study where one of the recommendations was that all new initiatives should arise as a result of a comprehensive strategic planning process involving all stakeholders," Restall says.

As with most endeavours, the advice of the people who will be most directly involved can be crucial.

In the U.S., the SouthEast Initiatives Regional Technology in Education Consortium (SEIR\*TEC), a group of organizations dedicated to bringing technology into schools also promotes early involvement.

"As we have been helping schools implement their plans, we have noticed that there tend to be three areas of weakness. The first is a tendency for one individual or a few people to write the plan, a practice that flies in the face of the notion of stakeholder buy-in and community involvement."

Kelly Walsh, chief information officer and an adjunct faculty member at the College of Westchester in White Plains, New York, has written that one of the key factors in successful technology programs in schools is to involve faculty from the outset.

"This sort of thing is too often overlooked, especially if there is a rush, or if implement-

ers are too busy with conflicting priorities it can be pretty easy to assume that faculty's perspective is already understood based on current use of existing tools. But that can be a mistake."

Walsh, also the founder of EmergingEdTech.com, says involvement of staff can then make training easier.

And that, too, is another notation on Restall's list.

"For implementation of technological initiatives, there must be appropriate professional development—dedicated and suitable amounts of time for training," he says. "There have to be generous opportunities to collaborate without increasing the demands on teachers."

Proper training for teachers involved is a universally-recognized necessity if not a practice in some schools.

A study at Tarbiat Moallem University in Iran found that "one problem that has come to light as a result of this increased technology in schools is the lack of preparation teachers have in terms of computer knowledge, literacy and expertise."

A study in New Zealand found that three years after implementation of technology, teachers felt they should have received more training beforehand and more training afterwards.

SEIR\*TEC goes further in analyzing teacher training for technology, criticizing some train-the-trainer models and emphasizing that teachers need time to train properly.

"The training-of-trainers model for professional development might just be the most misunderstood or misrepresented model in education," it said in a report on lessons learned in schools. "Quite often it is interpreted as one or two people delivering a workshop in which the participants are

## A **DIGITAL** DOZEN

### 12 common **education technology implementation** problems

- 1 Insufficient budget
- 2 Failure to secure senior administrator or executive-level buy-in
- 3 Not having a sponsor
- 4 Inadequate training
- 5 Insufficient technical testing and validation
- 6 Failing to involve faculty from the outset
- 7 Forgetting to consider the student's perspective
- 8 Relevancy (will the intended audience want to use it?)
- 9 Not planning for adequate support
- 10 Failure to incorporate training into on-boarding for new staff and students
- 11 Forgetting risk assessment
- 12 Limited or no long-term planning

— By Kelly Walsh,  
EmergingEdTech.com

*“There has to be a genuine, open-ended, non-threatening method for feedback.”*

supposed to acquire the content knowledge and training skills needed for conducting turn-around training.

“Unfortunately, this seldom works because:

- the content is too complex to be mastered in a one-shot workshop and there is no follow-up accommodation for the would-be trainers to become proficient,
- there is no support for turn-around training, or
- the would-be trainers are inexperienced trainers. For the model to work, all three barriers must be overcome.”

The SEIR\*TEC report also points out that training must be more than learning what buttons do what on an iPad or how a piece of software works.

“In short, teachers have a difficult time applying technology skills in the classroom unless there is a direct linkage with the curriculum, teaching strategies, or improvements in achievement.”

All the studies say that there must be adequate resources for implementation to be accomplished successfully.

Restall agrees.

“LRTA members identified the number one cause of stress was too much work and not enough time.”

SEIR\*TEC says many problems can be overcome early if there is proper leadership at both the regional and school level.

“Leadership is the single most important factor affecting the successful integration of technology,” it says. “In addition to modeling the use of technology, supportive school principals highlight the efforts of teachers who attempt to use technology to improve teaching and learning. Effective leaders also attend professional development sessions with their teaching staff.”

It also says that it should be recognized that programs may develop quite slowly and that new initiatives should wait.

“Faculty who are bombarded with new initiatives to be implemented each month quickly become overwhelmed and resentful.”

Restall says that can be extended beyond just technological initiatives.

“The introduction and implementation of programs has to take into account other initiatives that are being introduced or that arise,” he says, pointing out that at Dakota during implementation of the technology program teachers were also dealing with the new provincial report cards, new record-keeping for student attendance and local changes to grading and report card procedures.

“LRTA members have identified too many new initiatives as a substantial stress factor,” he says.

Another commitment that would ease pressure on teachers, Restall says, is the ability to speak freely about the project.

“There has to be a genuine, open-ended, non-threatening method for feedback,” he says. “Teachers must have the opportunity to speak freely about the details of implementing a program and implementation must be flexible to take into account unforeseen problems.”

Kelly Walsh outlines that as a key ingredient to success, as well.

He says a common problem in implementation is the discovery that there have been, for example, miscalculations about the ability of some hardware—from networks to Wi-Fi routers—to handle the demands of the tasks.

It happens in almost every project. When Los Angeles school teachers gathered last month for training in advance of all that

city’s students getting iPads, the training was delayed three hours because trainers couldn’t get the wireless Internet working.

The SEIR\*TEC report says that all schools should have easy access to professionals with expertise in both technology and pedagogy to help teachers overcome problems that arise.

“Our experiences in the field confirm the notion that teachers need on-site and on-demand technical assistance with both the technology and the integration of technology into teaching and learning.

“Finding professionals who have expertise in both areas is difficult, and few schools have professionals with both. Many districts hire curriculum specialists and technology specialists and hope they work together. Sometimes they do; sometimes they don’t.”

Restall says all the ideas learned from those who have gone through the process of integrating technology should be acknowledged and heard.

Teachers are not opposed to technology and are more than willing to use any tools that help kids learn in the classroom.

“Teachers always have and always will do amazing, innovative activities and initiatives in their classrooms,” he says. “They are not opposed to technology as a goal or a destination. What is of concern is the journey, the manner in which we implement technology.

“We have to support teachers with appropriate training and professional development and ensure that implementation does not increase workplace stress and, conversely, impact on our regular classroom teaching.”



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The topic in teacher Mike Mann's Grade 1 class at Elwick Community School was "families." They were talking about the different types of families and what they looked like, including single parent families, blended families and the like. The students had been asked to bring in photos or draw pictures of their own families.

When Mann showed a photo of himself and his male partner hugging, the kids gasped. He asked them what it was about the photo that surprised them.

"Mr. Mann! You had blond hair!" they exclaimed.

It's this kind of reaction—or lack thereof—that the Seven Oaks School Division has been working to encourage in its students and staff regarding people who identify as LGBTTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Two-spirit, Queer, and Questioning). Three years ago, staff in the division began putting together its Safer



Manny Calisto

# MAKES SCHOOLS SAFER FOR **LGBTTQ** YOUTH

BY SHERRY KANIUGA

Schools Network and developing a divisional policy to protect students and staff.

It all started when superintendent Brian O’Leary issued a challenge to all staff at a Seven Oaks divisional days event: to think about which students needed their help most, and what could be done to support them.

“That was right around the time we were hearing a lot of news about a rash of suicides of young gay youth in the U.S., and Dan Savage (an American journalist and author) had started the It Gets Better Project,” says Kirsten Dozenko, an English and Humanities teacher at Garden City Collegiate. The movement featured YouTube videos from thousands of celebrities and regular people, sending a message to LGBTTQ youth that “it gets better” after high school or later in life.

“It was a positive message, but I thought, we can’t send young people the message that they just need to wait until school’s over for their lives to get better. It needs to be better now,” Dozenko says. “We see more and

more kids who are out, and they’re coming out at younger and younger ages. We just want to make sure they all feel perfectly safe and comfortable being themselves.”

She contacted Mann, her former colleague, who as an openly gay teacher had also thought about LGBTTQ students and those with LGBTTQ family members as needing more support from their schools. They met with O’Leary and assistant superintendent Lydia Hedrich that same week.

“We got the feeling that the division was ready to move on something like this; they were just waiting for someone to do it,” says Mann, now the president of the Seven Oaks Teachers’ Association and also a member of The Manitoba Teachers’ Society provincial executive. “When it happens naturally from the bottom up, it has greater resonance with all the staff; it’s not something we’re being told we have to do; it’s something we’re saying we need.”

Mann and Dozenko invited all staff

members to an after-school meeting to talk about what was already being done in some schools, and what else needed to happen.

“We received a tremendous outpouring of support and interest in talking about this issue. Just opening up the conversation has been a huge change,” says Dozenko.

## Survey says

One impetus for action was the results from a recent national study called Every Class in Every School, led by researchers from the University of Winnipeg and University of Manitoba and sponsored by Egale Canada Human Rights Trust. The study surveyed more than 3,700 students across Canada, both LGBTTQ and non-LGBTTQ. The results showed that almost two-thirds of LGBTTQ students felt unsafe at school, and half said they had been verbally or physically harassed. An even higher number of all students said they heard homophobic phrases, such as “that’s so gay,” every single day at school.

“One of the key statements that came out of the study was that all students at school felt safer if there was an official policy in place. So we knew that was important,” says Mann.

O’Leary understood that it wasn’t enough just to encourage equal treatment for all.

“Peer relations can be really cruel. You have to be direct about it—you can’t just say ‘Let’s respect everyone,’ you kind of have to name it. It doesn’t take a whole lot to raise the level of kindness and civility,” he says.

Mann and Dozenko helped write the policy, along with Manny Calisto, vice-principal at École Belmont School. Calisto was teaching at the time at West St. Paul School, where he had also been working to encourage a respectful environment for all students. The trio joined forces to set up the Safer Schools Network and to get the divisional leaders and trustees on board with developing a policy. They invited a Grade 11 student who was identifying as transgender to share her story with the administrative team and later to the board.

“She talked about being in Grade 5 and already feeling different, and alienated, and not supported. I don’t think there could have been anything more impactful than that young woman’s story,” says Calisto. “From that point on, things just moved very quickly. It helped that at Seven Oaks we already had a culture of willingness to learn how to support LGBTTTQ kids.”

The Safe Learning Environment for LGBTTTQ Students policy commits the division to providing a safe, positive and respectful environment to students and staff who identify as LGBTTTQ or come from LGBTTTQ families, providing counselling and support, educating staff including counsellors, designating individual staff members as advocates and safe contacts, and offering supportive curricular resources.

“It’s very clear from the policy that we as a division are committed to creating a safe environment for LGBTTTQ students, regardless of what grade they’re in, that we’re committed to having GSAs (Gay-Straight Alliances) in our high schools, and that we’re committed to educating and training all our staff to help them get to a place where they can be supportive,” says Calisto.

While some teachers were already working towards change, the policy makes it easier to move forward. Teachers now have the tools to address the language they hear in the hallways, says Mann.

“Having the policy is almost like a protection for teachers—before, they wanted to address it but didn’t know if they could; now, they know they need to.”

Mann, Dozenko and Calisto all agree that the support from division administration, especially O’Leary, has been encouraging.

“There has been and continues to be amazing leadership from our superintendents, certainly from our board and from all the teachers who are doing things in little and big ways in our schools,” says Calisto. “Brian is a great champion, not just of LGBTTTQ youth in our schools, but he’s a great champion of kids.”

### Fabric of the school

All three of Seven Oaks’ high schools—Garden City Collegiate, Maples Collegiate and West Kildonan Collegiate—now have fully established GSAs, made up of LGBTTTQ students, straight student “allies,” and staff. Many staff in each of the division’s 23 schools have taken ally training given by the Rainbow Resource Centre, all on school time. This included every single school counsellor and physical education teacher.

“All of the research shows that where kids feel the most vulnerable, and are often victimized, is in phys ed changerooms and in washrooms. A knock on the door from the teacher even just to say ‘how’s it going in there?’ is often all it takes to temper the conduct,” says O’Leary.

At Garden City, Dozenko says the GSA has become part of the fabric of the school. While not all LGBTTTQ students have joined the GSA, the number of straight ally students and teachers like herself is encouraging, Dozenko says.

“When we’ve celebrated Pride Week, we have lots of visible support. We make rainbow ribbons and see tons of kids wearing them all week, sometimes all year on their backpacks,” she says. “We’ve noticed a marked difference in the kind of casual homophobic language in the halls. It does still happen, and it’s addressed, but there’s more of an understanding.”

The support from allies is great, Dozenko says, but the demographic that still needs to step up is straight males.

“There are a lot of straight women who are open allies, but we need more straight male teachers and youth to come out as open allies and be visible and vocal supporters of gay rights. I think that’s really key to sending a powerful message of support.”

While both Mann and Calisto say the school division, its staff and students have been nothing but supportive to them as openly gay teachers, it was a different story back when they were in school, both at Maples Collegiate but at separate times.

“Even if they didn’t know I was gay, people thought I was, and every word you can imagine was part of my life. You spend years inside your head just processing who you are, and you can’t talk to anybody about it,” Calisto says. “If there was a GSA when I was in school, or some group, or a teacher reading a book with a positive portrayal of a gay person, it would have made a huge difference. I would have been a happier person.”

It’s encouraging to Calisto to see how much has changed in the division since then—and back at his own former high school.

“The kids at Maples Collegiate were all asked to wear a colour of the rainbow, and they went into the same gymnasium that was a terrifying place to me when I was a student there. They arranged themselves into a huge rainbow flag in the gym, hundreds of teachers and students, and took a photo from the gallery above,” he explains. “When I saw that photo, it showed me that we’re a long way from where I was in the early 80s.”

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*It’s not a question of whether you’ll have children in your classroom that have same-sex parents; you WILL have children in your classroom with same-sex parents.*

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### All in the family

Today, there are not only more students and staff who openly identify as LGBTTTQ; students with same-sex parents are also more common.

“It’s not a question of whether you’ll have children in your classroom that have same-sex parents; you WILL have children in your classroom with same-sex parents. Trust me, there are more and more of them every year,” says Calisto. These students need just as much to feel safe from harassment.

The leaders of the Safer Schools Network all feel while they’ve made great progress, there is still a way to go in making all students feel safe and accepted at school. The next step is to advocate for integration into Manitoba’s school curriculum, something The Manitoba Teachers’ Society is also pushing for.





*GSA group from Seven Oaks at Pride event*

“We need the curriculum of our schools to reflect more of the realities of our families: that there are gay students, gay parents, gay aunts and uncles, gay sisters and brothers,” says Dozenko. “Education about sexual diversity and gender diversity needs to start at a young age, just dealing with gender roles and stereotypes, and different types of families.”

It’s the example that can be used to start teaching younger students—like the Grade 1 kids shocked only by Mr. Mann’s formerly blond hair—about families and people who are different. One of the directives that came from the Safer Schools Network was to provide resources to schools that reflected all kids. Each school received a copy of children’s book *King and King*, which tells the story of a prince whose mother insists he must choose a princess to marry. The prince turns up his nose at every princess until one visits with her brother. The prince is smitten with the brother, and marries him.

“Books like that show same-gender attraction and love in a very natural way,” says Mann, who had already shared the book with his students in the past. The value of another book showing diversity, *The Great Big Book of Families*, was proven last year when a kindergarten teacher at École Belmont School read it to her class.

“The teacher read the book not because of our policy, but because she thought all the kids in her class could benefit from it. She also knew there was a little girl in her class who had two moms,” says Calisto, who sat in on the story time.

“When the teacher got to the part about some children having two mommies or two daddies, the little girl said ‘That’s like me! I have two mommies!’ And sitting there watching, seeing the sheer joy on her face, I was thinking that’s exactly why I’ve spent more of my career doing what I do. Because not only did that little girl appear in that

book, but her classmates looked at her and smiled, and it was perfectly comfortable. That child felt as included as any other child in that classroom.”

The simple act of making children feel included at a young age can make a huge difference not just at that moment, but for their future, Calisto says.

“I want that little girl to feel as comfortable talking and writing about her family when she’s in Grade 5 as she did in that kindergarten class, and I certainly want her to feel that way in Grade 8, and in Grade 12. I want her to feel that way all the years that she’s a part of the Seven Oaks community, and to know that there are people who will always support her—and it will happen, because teachers like that one will make a conscious decision to make it happen.”

It’s not just teachers who are thinking of the future, says Calisto—the students are too. He says many young people join a GSA not just as a place of safety, but also because they’re also thinking about the kids who will come after them.

“They remember how difficult it was when they were 12 or 13, coming to terms with who they were, and feeling like they were the only person in the world feeling that way. For a student in Grade 6, even if they can’t tell anybody they’re gay, they’ll know that when they get to high school, there will be a place there for them.”



*“One of the key statements that came out of the study was that all students at school felt safer if there was an official policy in place. So we knew that was important,” says Mike Mann.*

Another way Seven Oaks is showing support for the Safer Schools Network is by embracing further educational opportunities for staff, beyond local training. Last May it sent a group of staff and student GSA members to OUTShine, the first-ever national GSA summit, in Toronto. The next OUTShine conference will be in Winnipeg in 2015, hosted in part by Seven Oaks School Division.

“The summit was incredibly inspiring. I’ve never experienced anything like it,” says Dozenko, who attended with LGBTTTQ and ally students from her school. “All of the students felt really safe there and felt like they could be themselves. It was a very empowering event for them.”

Staff and students also get involved in local Pride events outside the school, something that makes Mann feel, well, proud.

“At the Manitoba Gay Pride march last year, I marched with MTS, but I saw several students from Seven Oaks wearing t-shirts they had made with their school name on it, and they were marching with their teachers. I walked over and there was our superintendent with them. It’s so empowering and encouraging, knowing we have permission to support all students,” says Mann.

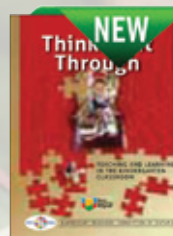
“When I was a student, I don’t know if I would have attended a GSA meeting, but knowing that there were people who were working on this issue would have meant a lot.”

# Classroom-ready ETFO Curriculum Resources



## Social Justice Begins With Me

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# CHALLENGE CLICKS WITH KIDS

BY RAY JOB



Teachers Erin Clarke and Jeff Hooppner say it's more than just Halloween that has nearly 30 classes of early years students pumped for October. It's the fall launch of #eduphotoaday.

If you're hearing crickets right now, that's understandable.

But #eduphotoaday is a familiar hashtag to hundreds of kids who participate with their peers from every corner of Manitoba in an Instagram (IG) photo challenge developed by Clarke (@erinbrie); and Hooppner (@bluebomber6).

The activity was originally a home-grown exercise to help provide writing prompts to very young writers.

"Some of our early years students desperately want to write, but struggle to find topics," says Clarke, a Grade 1 and 2 teacher at Dr. FWL Hamilton School in Winnipeg. "This helps get them jump into writing more quickly."

At the beginning of the month, classrooms check the eduphotoaday blog to get a list of topics for each day. Last June's list included 1) mine and yours, 3) funny, 15) messy, 19) happiness, 22) dream and 28) recycle.

In Clarke's classroom, she assigns two students from her class to discuss and shoot a picture with one of the classroom's iPod Touches, decide on which filter to apply, and write a specific caption.

The pictures are then tagged with both #eduphotoadayjune and the day's theme—for example, #happiness—and posted to Instagram.

Every day, photos from classrooms all over the province flood into the same tag page.

"Teachers can show the pictures other classrooms have posted," says Clarke, "or use those as inspiration or prompts for their assignments—and many times get feedback on their own students' contributions that day. It's quite exhilarating."

"My kids absolutely look forward to the new set of hashtags," says Hooppner, who teaches Grade 3/4 combined class at Radisson School, "so I post them up in a corner of my board. When we start discussion around the day's challenge, hands immediately shoot into the air—and the ideas just keep coming."

The daily photo-sharing exercise is quickly turning into a useful online network of classrooms—you can see some of them on the blog.

"When we started, it was just Jeff and I, but other classrooms started to join one by one and we find we learn so much from each other," says Clarke.

Hooppner can't say enough about the students' creativity.

"At first, their thinking was very simple. For the 'funny' hashtag for example, they'd say 'let's write the hashtag on a piece of paper and draw funny things around it'. But they've progressed so far beyond that. Now I often say to myself, 'that's perfect, I would have never thought of that!'"

As always, safety is a priority when students of any age interact online. Participating teachers have that covered, too.

"In my classroom, you can take pictures of people, as long as you don't show their faces," she says. "We also only use the first names of our students, if at all—and students participating in the challenge must have media releases signed by their parents."

The biggest rewards for the students and teachers who participate in the eduphotoaday challenge? "That's easy," says Clarke. "It's the connections. The students see how easy it is to connect with other kids in different parts of the world."

"Think of it. A simple set of student pictures can become an international gathering place for conversations about ideas and creativity. That's pretty mind-blowing."

# PORTFOLIO

## Buy ink, get a printer free!

The website DataGenetics took a look at those ink cartridges for printers and discovered what's inside is among the most expensive liquids on earth. On a per-gallon basis, customers pay about \$3,384 a gallon. It was more than \$1,000 a gallon more expensive than blood, but still \$30,000 cheaper per gallon than Chanel No. 5.

## Speaking of robots

Two professors of organization at Lund University in Sweden say organizations that hire too many smart people may not be very smart.

They say in the *Journal of Management Studies* that having a lot of smart people might disrupt workflow because those employees tend to overanalyze and make repeated suggestions for alternatives.

They concluded that the best team players are those who carry out their work without constantly questioning the processes or their bosses. They labeled this trait "functional stupidity."

No doubt the professors too like students who make them feel like the smartest guys in the room.

## Visit the fictional home of . . .

Parks Canada has reversed a decision to cut the hours of the Green Gables Heritage Site in Prince Edward Island this fall.

The site is the fictional residence of Anne of Green Gables, once the home of the aunt and uncle of author Lucy Maude Montgomery.

No word on what's to happen to the island's other fictional residence: Senator Mike Duffy's cottage.

BY GEORGE STEPHENSON

It's amazing sometimes that while words are the media's business, so many of those supposedly committing journalism have little affection for language.

Or, at least, they don't seem to actually ponder the precise meaning of some words.

That could easily be the conclusion in the wake of incidents at St. Mary's University in Halifax and the University of British Columbia where students chants advocated what most in the media called "underage, non-consensual sex."

- *The Globe and Mail*: "endorsing non-consensual sex", "celebrating non-consensual sex with underage girls".
- CBC: "sex chant", "chant about underage non-consensual sex", "underage, non-consensual sex".
- CTV: "non-consensual sex with underage girls".
- *Toronto Sun*: "chant about underage sex".
- *Halifax Chronicle Herald*: "condoning non-consensual sex with underage girls", "sexist chant".
- *Toronto Star*: "frosh week sexist chants".

Even after Rehtaeh Parsons, high-profile attacks in India, Steubenville Ohio and Vanderbilt University, the media still tiptoes around, seemingly doing all they

can to avoid saying what these morons were actually chanting.

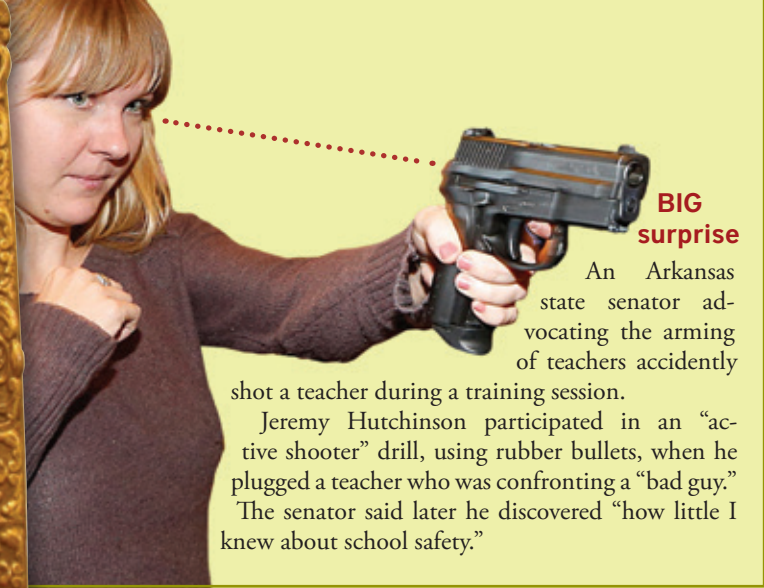
They were advocating the rape of teenage girls.

It didn't matter what words the students used. Of course they used other terms because they sound so much more gentle. Had they chanted about raping young girls, even some of these clowns might have found that a little too disturbing.

But whatever words they used is no excuse for the media to copy them, basically downplaying the implications by describing the chorus as a "sexist chant" or "sex chant" or even advocating "non-consensual sex."

This wasn't about sex. It was about sexual violence. It was about rape, with all the ugliness that word contains. Non-consensual sex is rape. Sex with a minor is rape. How do the people writing the stories and headlines (and always looking for the shortest way to say something) miss those basic facts?

In Canada, we generally avoid using the word rape in the context of criminal cases since laws were changed to include the act of rape in with all forms of sexual assault. That doesn't mean, however, that the word doesn't still have meaning outside the court docket.



**BIG surprise**

An Arkansas state senator advocating the arming of teachers accidentally shot a teacher during a training session.

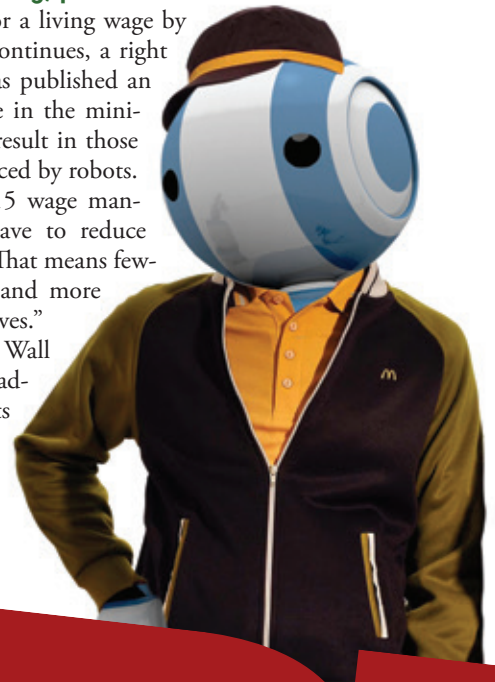
Jeremy Hutchinson participated in an “active shooter” drill, using rubber bullets, when he plugged a teacher who was confronting a “bad guy.” The senator said later he discovered “how little I knew about school safety.”

**RoboCook: Hamburger loading, please wait**

As the struggle for a living wage by fast food workers continues, a right wing think tank has published an ad suggesting a rise in the minimum wage would result in those workers being replaced by robots.

“Faced with a \$15 wage mandate, restaurants have to reduce the cost of service. That means fewer entry-level jobs and more automated alternatives.”

The ad, run in the Wall Street Journal, is headlined: “Why robots could soon replace fast food workers demanding a higher minimum wage.”



# “non-consensual sex” RAPE

Some in the media seemed to grasp that about a week later as the words rape and sexual assault started to be used in stories about the chants.

But not all.

A week after the St. Mary’s University story broke and a day after the disclosure of the same chant at the University of British Columbia, the Manitoba afternoon CBC radio program did a complete interview on the issue without ever venturing beyond the words the students themselves used. This is the same CBC that introduced one newscast on the chants with the words “shocking” and “unbelievable.”

Even the UBC student newspaper, the Ubysey, while using the term rape cheer in a headline, actually put it in quotes as if it were somehow conditional.

It may seem like a small thing, but, as all teachers know, the words we use have im-

pact. Obviously not all of those students chanting support the rape of young girls, but that is what they were saying whether they stopped to think about it or not. It is yet another way that the unacceptable, becomes acceptable. It’s all just good fun... until someone loses a daughter.

Perhaps none of these students are potential rapists, but these incidents add to the evidence that we do not take sexual assault, rape or otherwise, or the treatment of women seriously. And when we don’t, the problem only gets bigger.

Statistics Canada has reported that four out of five female undergraduates on Canadian campuses are victims of violence in dating relationships.

One study found 20 per cent of male students agreed that forced sex is acceptable if someone spends money on a date,

is stoned or drunk, or has been dating someone for a long time.

According to the University of Alberta report more than 80 per cent of rapes that occur on university and college campuses are committed by someone the victim knows. Many of them happen in the first eight weeks of classes.

A StatsCan survey in 2009 found 70 per cent of the self-reported sexual assaults were against women and nearly half of all self-reported sexual assaults were against young people between the ages of 15 to 24.

It also found only six per cent of sexual assaults are reported to police.

Maybe the media should find some words to chant about that.



## From the **front line** to the **blue line**

BY ADAM WAZNY

**D**wayne Green has spent countless hours in a classroom and on a hockey rink, so it only makes sense the two would blend together in his current occupation.

“A school is like a big team, and if you can create that team atmosphere in a school, for your kids in a classroom, I think that—beyond the academics—is where kids are really going to learn some valuable life skills. That’s in my role now; different, but very similar.”

Building a team culture in all areas of life, whether it’s in school or in the corporate philanthropy world, is familiar practice for Green—the former teacher turned executive director of the Winnipeg Jets True North Foundation, the charitable arm of the NHL enterprise.

He’s been on this path for 20 years now.

From St. James Collegiate to the University of Manitoba, where he played five seasons on the Bisons blue-line, the 39-year-old spent 12 years in the St. James School Division, teaching for nine years at George Waters Middle School before moving on to vice-principal at Hedges Middle School for three more.

During his time at George Waters, Green continued to instruct outside the classroom. In partnership with Hockey Canada, he started a hockey school, the St. James Academy, and through that met a fellow rink rat named Mark

Chipman at the MTS IcePlex one day. The two got to talking about a Manitoba Moose hockey academy (the ‘Lil Moose Hockey Program), the logistics involved with working together with schools and possible directions to take the initiative.

From there, the connection was forged.

Green loved working with children in the “underserved population”—those families who maybe couldn’t afford to put their boys in hockey or maybe struggled to find the time because the parents were working two jobs. Chipman had the same intentions, too, and when the Atlanta Thrashers became the Winnipeg Jets in May 2011, Green received a job offer from the newest NHL team owner.

“I was able to build something that could serve that purpose, and that was very important to me,” he said. “To do that on a bigger stage and have ownership of it, it was appealing.”

Bigger stage and bigger learning curve for Green.

He had to immerse himself in the world of charitable purpose. He had to figure out how the relationships worked and how to communicate the foundation’s mission to the corporate community.

“I was no different than a young teacher trying to figure out how to get through to a difficult student or trying to think of ways to get that one family to come into their child’s education,” he said.

The WJHA, one of several positive projects at the foundation, started with 150 children in 2011. This season, the academy will register approximately 540 students (Grade 2–10), each on the ice for an hour a week for 30 weeks. The students get everything they need to learn and enjoy the game (equipment, instruction, a meal). On top of that, 300 of those children will continue the relationship through a foundation-sponsored after-school program.

In three years, the hope is to register 1,200 students for the academy.

The goal is to not develop the next Andrew Ladd or Zach Bogosian, Green points out, but rather to keep children engaged in sport and the world around them, with the hope of increasing the high school graduation rate and sending more students into post-secondary education paths.

The one drawback in all this for Green is admittedly a selfish one: as an administrator, he’s not on the ice with the children as much as he would like to be. His teaching roots run quite deep.

“I miss the interaction with the kids. That was my motivation to start camps, was to get that opportunity to give back to them. I was given so much from my teachers in the past—to have the opportunity to throw it back to students was a blessing.

“I guess in a way, it still is a blessing.”

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