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THE MANITOBA Teacher

JUNE 2014 VOLUME 92 NUMBER 7 NEWSMAGAZINE OF THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY

President's Column

P. 4

Inside MTS

P. 5

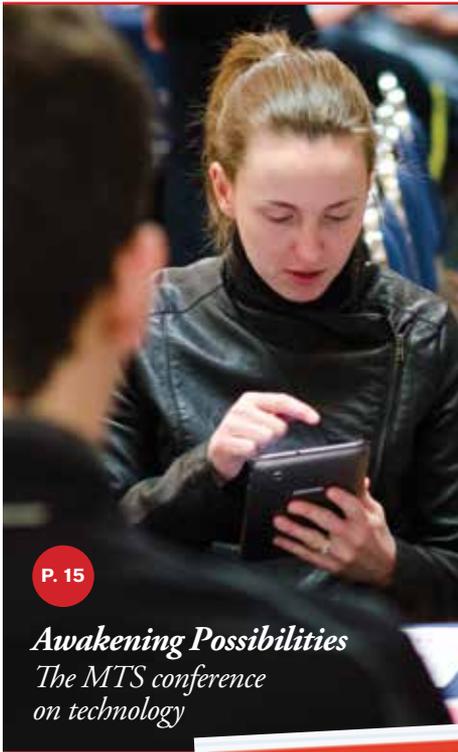
Annual General Meeting

P. 5-7

GAME OVER?

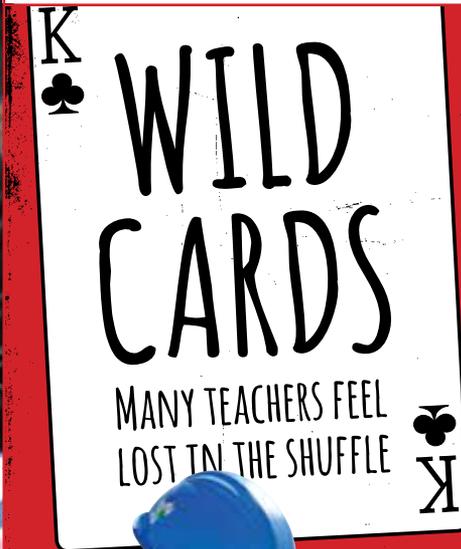
P. 8

Future unclear as pilot ends for controversial classroom game



P. 15

Awakening Possibilities
The MTS conference on technology



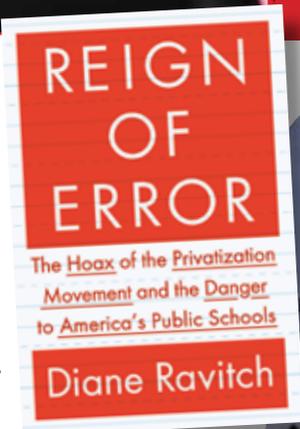
P. 12



Heritage Fair

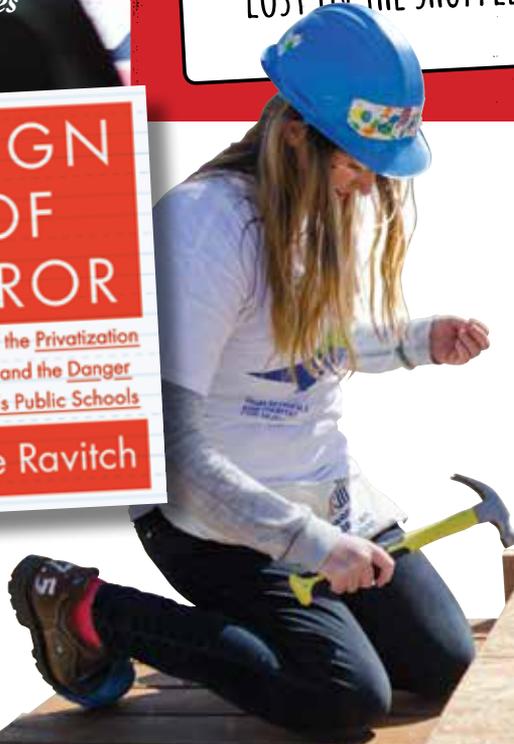
Young Canadians celebrate their place in history

P. 16



P. 18

Reign of Error
The Hoax of the Privatization Movement and the Danger to America's Public Schools



P. 11

Hammering for Habitat
Students team up to build homes for families in need





PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

PAUL OLSON

So, it's Sunday night as I write this, and this weekend has been all about hitting "Reset". Yes, my phone crashed, but that was the least of it.

We completed the 95th Annual General Meeting of The Manitoba Teachers' Society on Saturday. Its main feature was the conclusion of two years' work on a complete review and reset of our policy framework.

Of course, cleaned up bylaws and policies are still just...well...bylaws and policies. You need policy to help steer the ship, but it's not to be confused with the day-to-day work of serving members and dealing with other aspects of our core mandate. The policy reset was a big clean-up activity for what we already had. Next year will be more about what we want to change.

As you wind down (sprint through?) the last few weeks of the school year, a few highlights of where we are, and where we're headed:

We pulled together a lot of information this winter and spring about the implementation of the new Provincial Report Card. Members from throughout Manitoba have voiced their concerns with various aspects of that implementation, and we've written a Highlights Report to share with the provincial Oversight Committee and the Minister in order to address what problems we can.

Every teacher collective agreement in Manitoba expires this month. Your association bargaining team has been working to put together opening packages. Make sure you stay attuned to communications with them this fall.

The "main" reset I'd like to mention, though, is the end of the school year. I've always found one of the great things about our work to be the annual cycle of starting fresh with new faces, challenges, and opportunities. Right now, though, I'm betting you're a wee bit tired.

While many of you are already thinking about summer PD, time with family, and getting out the golf clubs, I'm going to ask you to do twenty minutes of homework that should save you many hours of grief.

Make a two-column table. Hint: you can leave way more space for the right hand column.

Entitle your document something like, "School Life". Label the left hand column, "Things I Must Do Or They'll Fire Me". Label the right hand column, "Everything Else".

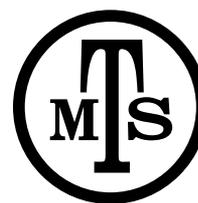
In point form, fill in both columns with everything you've done this year that draws from your finite reserves of time and energy. Number the items in the right hand column from most to least important to you. High-value activities for your students and you are closer to "1". Energy vampire/wheel spinning activities will have the highest number/lowest ranking.

Then...take your list with you when it comes time to plan your program, or the school calendar, teams, working groups, and committees for next year.

Renewal is change, and change is about both letting go and adding on.

Have a great summer!

Paul Olson



The
Manitoba
Teachers'
Society

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INSIDE MTS

KEN PEARCE, GENERAL SECRETARY

It is a fitting topic to discuss the timetable and work undertaken by Society staff for our Provincial Council (AGM) meetings, the latest of which concluded May 24.

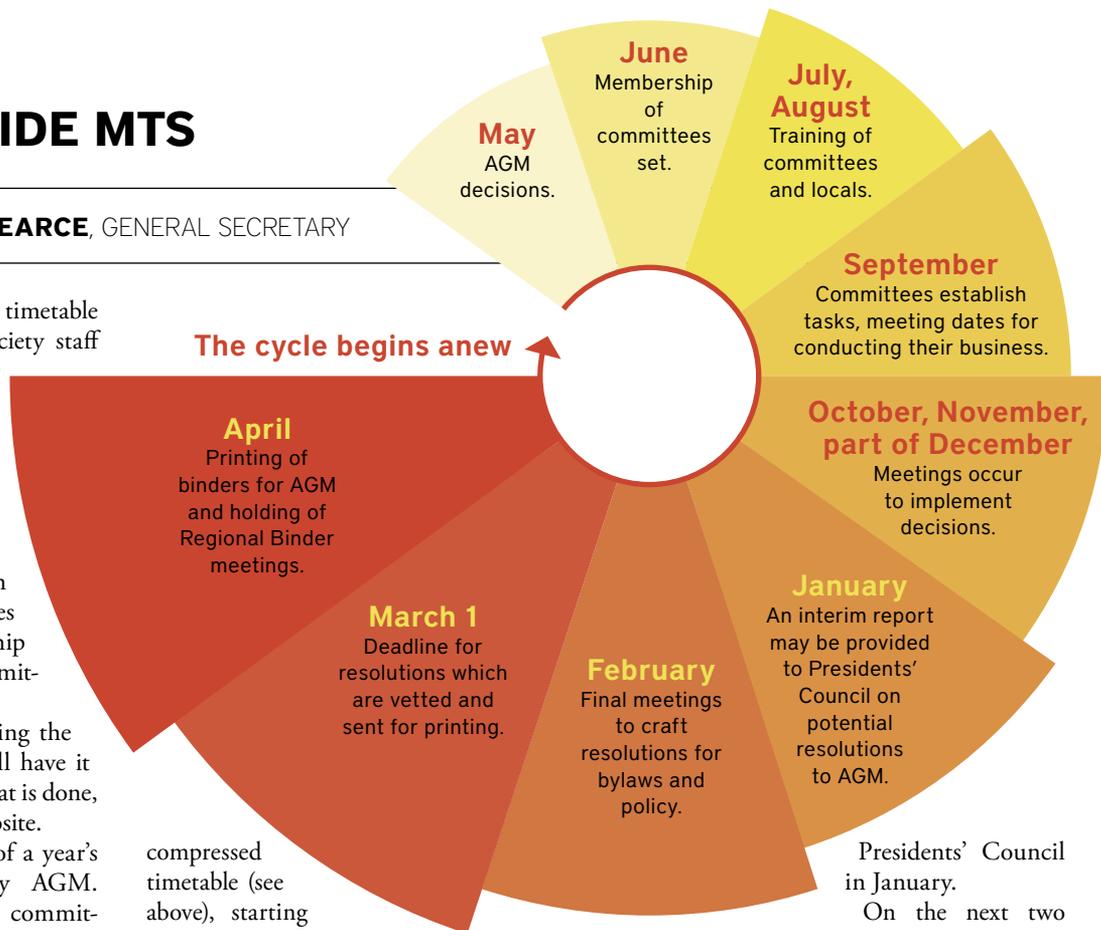
This year, for the first time in many decades—indeed perhaps the first time ever—delegates adopted a completely reorganized bylaws and policy document, with clarification on a number of issues including categories of membership and the work of the various committees and bodies of the Society.

Your staff will now be processing the format of the document and will have it ready by the end of July. When that is done, it will be posted on the MTS website.

That will be the culmination of a year's work that begins with every AGM. Throughout the year staff and committees are working on MTS business that has come from the past AGM or on its way to the next one (or both).

Those committees and staff work on a

compressed timetable (see above), starting with appointment of members to committees and then the processing of directives from delegates at the AGM, often with an interim report due for



Presidents' Council in January.

On the next two pages, with some additional detail on the MTS website, are some of the decisions and business of the latest AGM.

Regular fee up, DBP premiums down

Delegates to the 2014 MTS annual general meeting approved a fee increase of 6.46 per cent.

The membership fee will go to \$939 from \$882 or \$57 a year.

The increase is higher than that seen last year when the final budget included a fee hike of 5.6 per cent. That would have been greater, but delegates last year transferred \$892,300 from reserves to keep the fee lower.

This year it recommended that the transfer from reserves be kept at \$250,000.

At the same time, delegates approved a reduction in the premiums teachers pay to the MTS Disability Benefits Plan.

Currently premiums for teachers are 1.33 per cent of salary. The new premiums will be 1.21 per cent of salary or a decrease of \$96 a year on a salary of \$80,000.

Premiums are driven by past and projected future claims, the liabilities for the plan, and the investment results of the plan.

Positive investment returns and a drop in claims over the past few years allowed premiums to be reduced in the DBP budget for the second year in a row. The premiums are now the lowest they've been since 1994.

Much of the business at this year's AGM centred on updating bylaws and policies under which the Society operates. Other than that, one of the more contentious resolutions was the proposal to change the annual general meeting to a biennial format, meeting once every two years.

Despite the backing of the provincial executive and a committee that studied the issue for the past year, the idea was defeated, with a number of delegates saying that the work of the AGM was too important to be done only every two years.

The executive had proposed that a membership engagement forum replace the AGM every second year.

The AGM costs members just over \$300,000 a year.

There will only be one new face on the 2014–2015 provincial executive. Frank Reeves, president of the River East Transcona Teachers' Association, was elected along with four incumbents. Reeves replaced Jason Oliver, who did not run again.

President: Paul Olson
Vice-President: Norm Gould
Members at large:

- James Bedford (re-elected)
- Mary Chalmers
- Ray Desautels (re-elected)
- Arlyn Filewich (re-elected)
- Darren Hardy
- Suzanne Jolicoeur
- Sean Kemball (re-elected)
- Bob Kriski
- Michael Mann
- Frank Reeves
- Bea Walker



AGM speakers issue warning

BY GEORGE STEPHENSON

Three speakers at the MTS annual general meeting, May 21–24, issued warnings that Manitoba teachers shouldn't get complacent about anti-union initiatives in other parts of Canada.

Kevin Rebeck, president of the Manitoba Federation of Labour, said Manitoba has been somewhat insulated from the anti-labour measures being taken elsewhere, but it hasn't, and won't, be untouched.

Working Manitobans have already been part of the anti-union initiatives of the federal government, he said, citing its frequent use of back-to-work legislation and the proposed law that would have forced unions to make disclosures that don't have to be made

by any other organization or business.

He said these, and some efforts in other provinces, are aimed at dismantling unions, to keep them out of the broader debates on social policy.

Unions, including MTS, will have to counter these movements, he said.

"Together we can fight back and restore the principles you teach: sharing, fairness."

He echoed comments by MTS President Paul Olson who urged delegates to become more involved in politics even if only getting to know their MLAs and MPs and making their positions heard.

"Teaching is very much about planning, preparation, anticipation and proactivity," Olson said. "If we are to truly serve our members—and by extension our students—then we need to apply those skills."

Along with approaching MPs and MLAs, "electing the local candidate or even the government we each think is good for schools and teachers might honestly be as simple as getting our own members to show up on election day."

He suggested they look for opportunities to write columns for community newspapers, to run for office and "learn to speak business."



2014 Young Humanitarian Awards

Exclusive—a group of high-energy, hip-hop dancers from St. Johns High School (left)—kicked off the Society's 2014 Young Humanitarian Awards, May 21, filling the ballroom at the Fairmont Winnipeg with a buzz that lasted all night.

Eight deserving public school students were recognized for their kindness, compassion and creativity. They are (L-R below):

Avery Skog of Morris School ran a successful campaign to sell 500 paper bricks at \$20 each to build a school in Africa.

Clare Dodds from École River Heights School demonstrated compassion in so many ways, whether it was serving meals at Siloam Mission or packing school kits for war-affected kids in Syria.

Loizza Aquino at Henry G. Izatt Middle School spearheaded a \$4,000 fundraising campaign for a school in Kenya—and worked to raise funds for victims of typhoons in the Philippines.

Raelee Fehr of Roseau Valley School passionately led a campaign on mental health awareness and did amazing humanitarian work in Ecuador.

Team Paige and Friends ran a creative Movember campaign at Beaumont School raising \$1,757 for cancer research. (L-R) Juliana Marucci, Hope Croatto, Kyle Mingotti and Paige Andrusko with nominator Nina Logan.



“If we’re trying to influence people who might not otherwise agree with you on a point of law or policy, it helps to be able to put together a coherent argument that outlines the economic benefits of unions, professional organizations and public services.”

Education Minister James Allum told delegates that the calm that has existed in education here is a result of the working relationship between teachers and the government.

Allum said the province and MTS “have accomplished many things together...and that’s what’s best for students.”

Acknowledging that the two don’t always agree, he said the province always looks for ways to work with teachers, not against them.

He contrasted that with other provinces such as British Columbia or with other political parties such as the Conservatives in Ontario.

In B.C. the teachers’ union has said it will begin job action and the employers’ association countered with a threat to partially lock-out teachers. In Ontario, the leader of the Conservative party says that if elected, his government would cut 100,000 public service jobs.

“That means teachers, folks,” Allum said. “This province will never, ever accept those politics.”

He said that in Manitoba there are two clear choices: the continued investment in education or cuts to education.

See more AGM coverage on the MTS website at www.mbteach.org.



Retirement now longer than work

The average Manitoba teacher will now collect a pension for more years than they were teaching.

That was one of the facts that came out during a presentation by the Teachers’ Retirement Allowances Fund (pension plan) at the MTS annual general meeting, May 21–24.

According to TRAF figures, the average projected years teachers will be on pension (excluding survivors) is now 32 years for women and 30 years for men. At the same time, the average service is 25 years for women and 28.6 years for men.

The figures continue to show how the numbers of retirees continue to grow and are expected to equal the number of active teachers within three to five years. Currently there are 15,679 active teachers, compared with 13,504 teachers drawing a pension. As lifespans increase, added pressure is put on all pension plans.

Brenda Venuto, vice-president of TRAF member services, said there are now 1,000 retirees over the age of 85, with the oldest 107 years old, who retired in 1971.

Denise Kehler, the newly appointed CEO of TRAF, pointed out the stability of the plan is about the same as it has been over the past few years during which there have been incremental rate increases.

A two per cent increase is being phased in at 0.5 per cent a year until 2015. The next 0.5 per cent increase will take effect September 1.

While the number of retirees continues to grow, it appears the growth has slowed over the past several years.

The number of teachers opting for retirement is projected to be slightly less than 500 in 2014, well below the record number of almost 700 in 2005. It will also be well below the number of active teachers who will be eligible to draw a pension next year. More than 2,500 members will be at least 55 in 2014.

The average age of retirement has increased over the past few years to 59 from 57.



*A day of rain couldn’t keep away thousands of painted faces and soggy teddy bears from visiting the MTS Teach Your Bear tent at the 28th Annual Teddy Bears’ Picnic. Kids were treated to a reading of *Going on a Bear Hunt* and teacher volunteers handed out stickers and books.*



GAME OVER?

Future unclear as pilot ends for controversial classroom game

BY MATEA TUHTAR

The future appears hazy for a controversial game that got a test run in some Manitoba schools over the past two years.

While education department officials say they are happy with the results, there has been no commitment to continue or expand use of the PAX Good Behaviour Game, which the province spent \$1.3 million introducing to Grade 1 classrooms.

Since that introduction it has been generating as much controversy as playtime, with a number of educators saying the game itself can lead to a number of unintended consequences, from bullying to harming child development.

The province and game-maker claim PAX doesn't just improve classroom behaviour, but leads to more graduates and law-abiding citizens and fewer students with mental health or addiction problems. Critics see the claims as hyperbole for a game that simply combines odd rewards with proper behaviour.

The game is played with help from the teacher, where the students create a visual word-map of what they would like to see, hear, and feel more or less of in their classroom.

The responses can range from things like "We want to see more smiling faces" to "We want to raise our hands instead of shouting out." The things that the students would like to see more of are called PAX (Peace, Productivity, Health and Happiness).

The things that students would like to see less of are called SPLEEMS. Children work in teams during classroom activities to practice making more PAX and fewer SPLEEMS to "make their world a better place."

The teacher records the behavior and awards prizes to the best behaved team. Prizes are play-based activities such as being able to do a 30-second dancing jig or make fake burps and arm farts, or spend a minute to talk with their friends.

The PAX game promises that as the

teacher and students become more adept at PAX, the students develop an ability to turn on their attention voluntarily and become more mindful of themselves, each other and the adults around them.

The promised outcomes raised the interest of the Manitoba education department, which became the first to introduce it in Canada.

"At first we thought 'This is too good to be true,'" says Rob Santos, associate secretary to the Healthy Child Committee of cabinet. "But once we looked at how strong the science is, the evidence was so striking that it made sense that we should try this in Manitoba."

Melanie Janzen, director of School Experiences at the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba, doesn't see much sense in the game or foisting it on teachers and students.

"There are many children that would find the expectations of PAX beyond their ability, whether due to cognitive, social-emotional, linguistic or physical differences," she says. "Environments where competition, winning and homogeneity are valued are settings where children become anxious and fearful, which can lead to peer pressure and segregation."

"Good teaching requires environments where co-operation and collaboration are central, where children's voices and opinions are honoured, and where differences are considered valuable resources."

PAX was developed using material from PeaceBuilders, the Good Behaviour Game from the 1960's and other studies to teach self-regulation in a peer-context that improves attention and reduces impulsivity in children.

Hailing from the PAXIS Institute in Tucson, Arizona, PAX includes elements

such as children working collaboratively to generate their collective vision of what they would like their schools and classrooms to be, and how to create it together.

The Manitoba pilot project involved 200 schools and 5,000 students and their teachers.

"Our whole thrust is around prevention—let's do the best we can for kids when they're quite young so that we set a foundation and they don't find themselves struggling later. That's where PAX comes in," says Jan Sanderson, deputy minister of Children and Youth Opportunities and CEO of Healthy Child Manitoba.

"Manitoba is different from other jurisdictions with our diversity, our indigenous community and our newcomers, so when there's a new promising approach or intervention out there we want to try it out systematically."

Half of the 200 Manitoba schools that participated in the pilot received training the first year and the other half were guaranteed training the following year provided they would act as the comparison group.

The data from the pilot is still being analyzed but according to the Government, initial short-term findings have been positive.

"We're hearing back from teachers that they're enjoying their classrooms more, and enjoying their teaching experience more."

Janzen says she has heard from many who aren't so impressed.

"One of my roles is sitting on the executive committee for CAYC Manitoba (Canadian Association for Young Children), and we've heard from some members who were saying 'Hey, I got sent to this PAX training thing, and I've got some concerns about it,'" says Janzen.

Teachers have not only been concerned about the aspects of the game play itself, but what it says about the teachers themselves.

"If a teacher's job was as simple as implementing a one-size-fits-all game and doling out rewards, then schools wouldn't actually need to hire teachers; they could hire facilitators or technicians."

Janzen says that while parts of the game may seem to simply provide additional tools in the teacher's toolbox, there are aspects of the game that are worrisome if there are students that can't conform to the rules of the game.

For example, other classroom strategies that PAX employs are "Beat the Timer"



Melanie Janzen, director of School Experiences at the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba

where students have to complete tasks within a certain period of time; “PAX on a Stick” which aims to keep students’ attention, and “Tootle Notes”, used to provide praise to individuals—the opposite of ‘tattle’ notes. Teachers also use a harmonica to get students’ attention and redirect focus.

“Our classrooms are filled with children who have emotional problems, behaviour problems, and attention problems. So for them to be able to comply with being a certain way for a certain time may not be emotionally or physically possible for them.”

Janzen says that they are hearing from teachers about kids being ostracized because they ‘ruined’ the game for others.

“I don’t think that’s how we want our schools to be. We’re excluding those children before they’ve even had a chance.”

Santos says that at the request of the Student Association of Manitoba tailored training was provided for teachers of students with additional or different needs.

“Self-regulation is such a core-capacity of human beings and has such far reaching connections to how we live our life. There is huge literature developing on self-regulation that ties in with groups of kids with disabilities, ASD etc. We’re starting to understand some of the common underlying mechanics under what looks like very different disorders.”

Janzen says that the training for PAX is based on conformity and the appeal of the game is that it’s presented as making teachers’ lives easier, but that there’s a difference between successful teaching and good teaching.

“Successful teaching is getting kids to do things regardless of what it is, or how to do it. And by good teaching I mean teaching that has moral integrity.”

Hitting a child with a stick might teach them to do something a certain way, but it is hardly morally defensible, she says.

She says we need to think beyond individual children—there’s both a personal and contextual and interpersonal reason why we do what we do as people. We have limited money; we have to maximize every dollar and look at the evidence and cost-effectiveness.”

PAX advertises the return on investment being \$84.51 in benefits for every \$1 invested in PAX.

Janzen says there are more beneficial ways to spend education dollars.

“We have to think about whether the way we’re spending our money in education is reflective of the values that we have of education and our society. I think about the way

money is spent on teachers and teacher development and how far reaching that could be. How powerful that could be if teachers had more time to think about positive approaches to discipline and how that might influence our classroom practice.”

Whether the government will be spending more on PAX is unknown.

“We are now looking at results and setting the stage for looking at the next set of outcomes,” says Santos. “We want to make it available to researchers like the University of Manitoba, and want to continue the conversation with teachers about their own experiences in the classroom. The real answer from the results of the pilot will be what is the value added to all the excellent things already happening in our schools.”

One teacher who will continue using the game is Josh Diduke, at École Ile des Chênes School. He attended a professional development day on PAX during the pilot.

“It was a divisional push in Seine River—we got to meet Dennis Embry, the creator of PAX.”

Diduke says he did have some initial qualms about the PAX program.

“I didn’t feel so much pressured to use PAX, but I did have hesitations like blowing on a harmonica is going to make things better?” Diduke also worried about how the PAX game will fit in with special needs kids but says it hasn’t been overly problematic.

“Sometimes a little bit more of a reminder is needed—if the child isn’t compliant, sometimes that proximity is needed—a gentle touch on the shoulder or getting

down to their level if needed. I’ll put a little bit more pressure on those students to practice on the pieces they struggle with. The PAX game doesn’t last long because you want them to feel successful.”

Diduke says the game hasn’t taken time from his teaching and won’t if it’s taught properly at the beginning of the year. He devotes the first 2–3 weeks of the year on building a routine for his class and introduces PAX to the kids then, along with other classroom management techniques.

“I don’t think this is a whole new ball-game—I think it’s just good teaching practice. It’s about coming to an understanding with the kids that I respect you, you respect me, this isn’t my classroom or yours, it’s ours.”

Janzen says there are too many unanswered questions about the game and its usage.

“When PAX and other similar programs are initiated, as teachers we need to ask why programs such as these are being implemented in the first place, by whom, and in response to what?”

“We need to contemplate these programs in regards to what is valued, how children are conceptualized, and what these programs attempt to do to and for children in the long run.

“Do these programs’ attributes reflect what we consider good teaching to be? Does PAX reflect good teaching—teaching that is morally defensible? Or is PAX simply a training approach; a road paved with good intentions?”

To find out more about PAX in Manitoba visit www.gov.mb.ca/healthychild/pax.



Dennis Embry, creator of PAX

See	Hear	Feel	Do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • funny things • playtime • happiness • homework done • good reactions • work-games • math-challenging • kindness • smiles • appropriate clothes • coloring math sheets • fun work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • laughter • nice and kind words • good comments to teams • people asking to be friends • teachers giving compliments • kids cheering • friend making • happy teachers • a happy principal • kids saying "and many" to others • happy sounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • excitement • happiness • surprised • hopeful • safe • loved • proud of our school • proud of ourselves • happier when you wake up before school • people being nice • proud of each other • proud of our teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • play outside more in nice weather • kind actions like helping others in need • friendliness • raising hands instead of calling out • not asking for things over and over • more PE • more exercise • being on time • following directions • computer time



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Jim Martland is the co-author of several
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Hammering for Habitat

BY MATEA TUHTAR

The sound of hammering filled the cold spring air as high school students from across Manitoba teamed up with Habitat for Humanity to help build houses for families in need.

Groups of five students from over 10 school divisions donned hard hats and steel boots and helped to haul and frame interior and exterior walls that will be later be used in Habitat houses in Winnipeg.

“This is a new initiative for us,” says Al Altomare, Habitat High Schools Liaison. “We really want to reach out to students and show them what we do because many might not know. There are many volunteering opportunities out there but this kind of a project lets them see a tangible result of their hard work.”

Altomare has presented at the SAGE conference to spread the word about High Schools for Habitat for Humanity (3H)

and says students and teachers who want to participate do not have to have previous building experience. The students complete an online safety course prior to the build and each team is supervised by a Habitat construction worker who makes sure the job is being done right. Altomare says the minimum age for volunteers is usually 16, but because the work was done at their facility, they were able to drop it down to 15.

“We want to target younger students, and if they and their teachers like it, hopefully they’ll want to come back year after year.”

The cost for the event was \$50 per head, which most students paid for by fundraising.

“We volunteered because it sounded fun and it’s for a good cause,” say Krista Dupras and Steph Corbin, Grade 10 students at Stonewall Collegiate. The girls quickly learned the best way to swing a hammer and drive the nails in at a right angle, describing the work as “not too hard”.

“It makes us feel good to be able to help out and see what we’re doing for the community.”

In the past women were reluctant to get involved with builds, but Altomare says that’s slowly changing.

“Today we have a Women Build where everybody on the team is female. At this point there are women on every single build we do,” says Altomare. “That’s what we want to tell students as well—if you’re willing to come out, we can teach you what you need to know—anybody can get involved with this.”

Steve Koester is a teacher from Oak Park who thought it would be beneficial to have his students attend a build, even though some had no previous experience in carpentry.

Some of his students are thinking about going into the trades after high school and the Habitat build is a great experience for them.

“It’s a good eye opener. One of my students has a cabin and he’ll be helping his dad build this summer. There are no desks here but there’s lots of learning. They’re really learning lifelong skills. I would definitely recommend this to other teachers.”

During the lunch hour, students were treated to a presentation by 18-year-old Sapphyre whose family has lived in a Habitat house for the last five years. She talked about how grateful her family is to have a home where they can have roots and establish core values that they couldn’t before because they were living in unsafe conditions or moving from place to place.

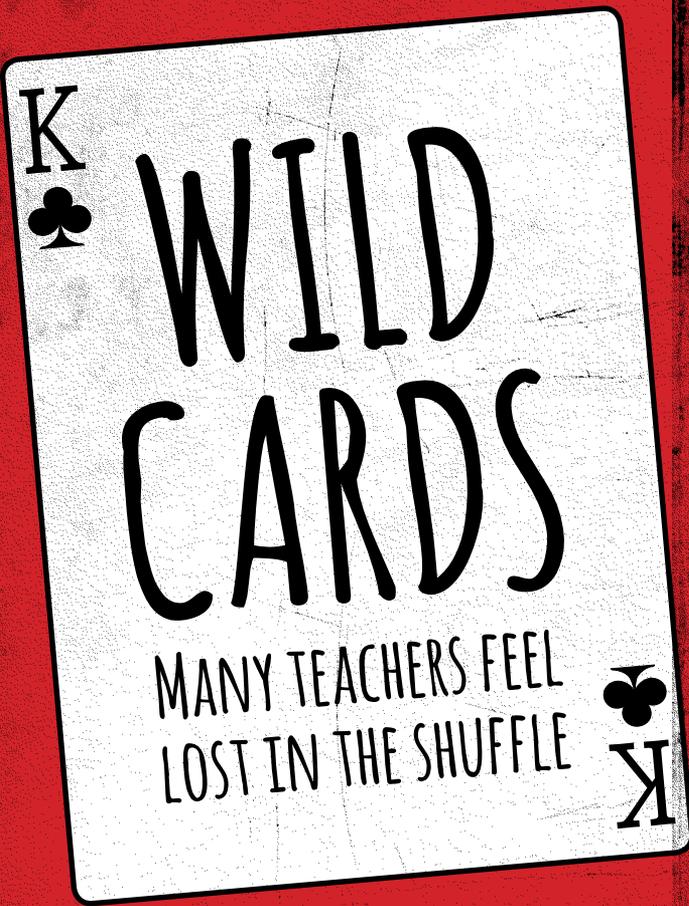
Habitat for Humanity builds approximately 10–12 homes in Winnipeg each year, though there’s a demand for many more.

“Once we finish building these homes, students will be able to drive past and say ‘Hey I helped build that’” says Altomare. “For some of these families that get a home, the change is massive from what their life was like and what the future is going to be like. It’s a wonderful thing.”

For more information on Habitat for Humanity Manitoba visit www.habitat.mb.ca.



*There are no desks here
but there’s lots of learning.*



When the government announced in September 2010 that a provincial report card would be developed, MTS was hopeful that it would ease the workload for teachers.

Unfortunately, the new provincial report card (PRC) piloted in 2012–13 and implemented this school year, has caused additional stress for many teachers and principals.

MTS first got a sense that teachers were uneasy with the PRC during focus groups held in October of 2013 in Winnipeg and Dauphin. The groups were organized by the Society to discuss teachers' concerns, their expectations for MTS and how services could be improved.

Surprisingly, without raising the subject, we received an earful about the new provincial report card.

"Most teachers have negative opinions regarding the new standardized report card, concluding reports require far too much detailed reporting, take a great deal of time to complete, are thought to be impersonal by parents and require teachers to provide more information than they've been able to learn about individual students early in the school year," said the focus group report by Viewpoints Research.

As well, since the pilot of the PRC began in 2012, there have been indications that there were many bumps and potholes on the road to assessment.

Both the MTS Educator Assistance Program and Disability Benefits Plan heard from clients that the new report cards were topping their list of stressors. And MTS staff officers who take calls from teachers on personnel issues say the PRC is frequently cited by teachers as all or part of their stress.

This tip-off that there were problems with the PRC led MTS President Paul Olson to meet with teachers from several local teachers' associations and solicit email feedback from members. The home page of the MTS website asked teachers to email comments and the Council of School Leaders asked their members to share their experiences with MTS.

In addition, MTS sponsored a random telephone survey of 800 teachers in April 2014 to gather further information about the new report cards. A summary of this data and the feedback from teachers, including recommendations, were released by Paul Olson at the MTS AGM in May.

The report on the MTS findings highlighted a few main areas of concern.

Training and technology

Out of the gate, teachers felt unprepared for the PRC and were left to fend for themselves. In the April survey, 16 per cent of teachers said they received no training on the new report card. Of those that received training 39 per cent were from a school division in-service, 22 per cent were through the train-the-trainer model, 21 per cent was from their principal, and six per cent were from reading the provincial or school division manual.

"I find that the in-servicing I have been provided with is not from people who are slugging through the trenches of the provincial report card every day in their real life classrooms. Rather it is from people who are talking the talk but not walking the walk," said one MTS member. "I frankly feel that I am being asked and expected to do a truly impossible job given the realistic nature of today's classroom."

Teachers received different answers to their questions depending on who they asked.

"The training was a little funny at times. We received, at one staff meeting, two documents. One was from a curriculum specialist

stating that we should avoid using superlatives for report card comments. The other document was a list of approved comments, containing superlatives. We have received no clear indication of what separates a good comment from a bad one," a teacher told MTS.

Compounding the stress of the new reporting document, teachers encountered difficulties with technology. Manitoba school divisions do not use a common platform for gathering student information. Some use purchased student information systems, some created their own systems. The PRC was meshed with the existing information systems with varying success. Brandon used a word processing program for the report card.

Teachers experienced numerous data entry issues. Programs froze. There were computer compatibility and server issues. In some school divisions there was no training on the software or little tech support.

"I have had the program freeze mid-reporting. Crash and delete all my records and then have to re-write all my reports (I've since been writing them in Word and saving the file—just in case). The program has applied different weights to my courses—changing grades," said a teacher.

Time and timing

Teachers told MTS that the PRC takes more time than their previous report cards.

"They (the new report cards) are a nightmare...they require days to complete... they are five pages long and you are simply answering pre-set questions...they aren't individualized so I don't think they help parents understand how their kids are doing at all," one teacher told MTS.

When asked in the April 2014 survey, 64.5 per cent of Manitoba teachers said the PRC took more time than it did with the report card their school or school division used previously. For classroom teachers, 18 per cent said it took them more than 30 hours to complete their report cards. Forty-two per cent of subject teachers said they prepare report cards for more than 100 students.

Principals told MTS that they review every report card, read every comment and edit errors. Reviewing and editing comments, assisting teachers, managing the printing and distribution of the PRC is an immense amount of work that is usually done in evenings and on weekends.

MTS found that the timing of the PRC is an issue, as well. In the April 2014

survey, 54 per cent of classroom teachers said they were concerned that reporting comes too early, before they have actually done anything in the subject (versus 15 per cent of subject teachers).

"The marks due date has been moved unreasonably closer to exams to accommodate reading by administration. The amount of time to mark each student's exam becomes ridiculously low," commented one teacher.

Writing comments

Comments are a critical issue. The April 2014 survey found that 80 per cent of teachers were concerned with the amount of time it takes to write comments containing strengths, challenges and next steps (45 per cent very concerned and 35 per cent somewhat concerned). In rural Manitoba 85 per cent are concerned about writing these comments.

The 'rules' for writing comments exasperated many teachers. Teachers were required to write strengths, challenges and next steps for multiple subject categories without talking about behaviour, without using superlatives and without repeating themselves. They struggled with next steps for high achieving students, in the June report card and for students graduating Grade 12.

Grades

"Art has four indicators which is ridiculous for elementary teachers. How do you grade art anyway? Art has more indicators than math!! 'Understands art in society and culture' for elementary kids? Crazy! Art is only allocated 60 minutes per cycle and is taught by generalists in most schools," commented a teacher.

The provincial guidelines state that a grade will be provided in all subjects and for all subject categories for Grades 1 to 8. Teachers are being told that every box needs a mark even though a student may have missed most of a unit.

"I am a homeroom Grade 6 teacher teaching science, math, English language arts, social studies, health and art to my students. I also teach one class of Grade 7 social studies. With this teaching load I have to calculate and communicate just over 600 grades every reporting period and then do this three times each year," emailed a teacher.

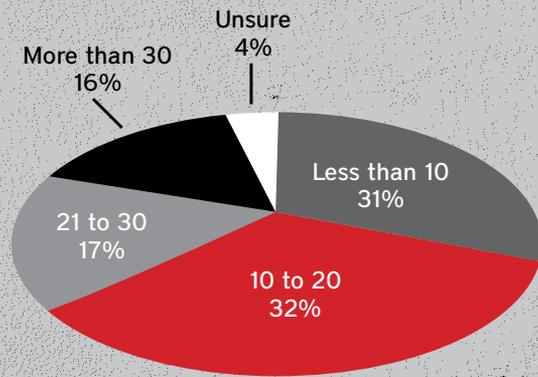
The Grade 7/8 requirement to represent learning in both the 1–4 scale and a percentage caused numerous issues. Teachers said the 1–4 scale is too broad, especially for subjects such as math where so much

"I FRANKLY FEEL THAT I AM BEING ASKED AND EXPECTED TO DO A TRULY IMPOSSIBLE JOB GIVEN THE REALISTIC NATURE OF TODAY'S CLASSROOM."

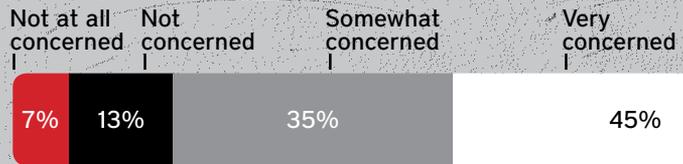
"I HAVE HAD THE PROGRAM FREEZE MID-REPORTING. CRASH AND DELETE ALL MY RECORDS AND THEN HAVE TO RE-WRITE ALL MY REPORTS (I'VE SINCE BEEN WRITING THEM IN WORD AND SAVING THE FILE — JUST IN CASE). THE PROGRAM HAS APPLIED DIFFERENT WEIGHTS TO MY COURSES — CHANGING GRADES."

"ART HAS FOUR INDICATORS WHICH IS RIDICULOUS FOR ELEMENTARY TEACHERS. HOW DO YOU GRADE ART ANYWAY? ART HAS MORE INDICATORS THAN MATH!! 'UNDERSTANDS ART IN SOCIETY AND CULTURE' FOR ELEMENTARY KIDS? CRAZY! ART IS ONLY ALLOCATED 60 MINUTES PER CYCLE AND IS TAUGHT BY GENERALISTS IN MOST SCHOOLS."

HOURS SPENT COMPLETING REPORT CARDS



AMOUNT OF TIME TO WRITE COMMENTS



The amount of time it takes to write comments containing strengths, challenges and next steps for many different objectives

is covered. They criticized school division software that converts percentages to the 1–4 scale in a way that doesn't match up.

The April survey found that for Grade 5–8 teachers, 68 per cent were concerned about the 1–4 scale not meshing with percentages (35 per cent very concerned).

Teachers told MTS that the reporting scale CUSR (Consistently, Usually, Sometimes, Rarely) does not provide parents with an accurate description of how their child is doing. Some teachers were told the Grade Codes NA (Not Applicable) could not be used even though they hadn't covered the material yet or the student had missed too many classes.

Reaction of parents

Some parents told teachers the PRC was impersonal, confusing and too wordy, especially for new Canadians. Parents misunderstood the number system and didn't like multiple grade keys and codes.

According to the April 2014 survey of teachers, 32 per cent of parents gave positive comments about the new report card, 38 per cent didn't get a reaction from parents and 19 per cent received negative comments about the report card. In Metro Winnipeg, 36 per cent of teachers said they received positive comments from parents versus 28 per cent outside of Winnipeg.

Summary of recommendations

Teachers and principals offered MTS their recommendations to improve the PRC and the report card writing process.

The Society will be sharing its findings with the government Oversight Committee.

At this point, the concerns and problems identified have led MTS to make the following recommendations:

- That at least two administration days be provided to each teacher in each school year to assist in the preparation of report cards.
- That the minister send a written reminder to school division leadership and individual teachers regarding what the department requires and recommends on all aspects of the report card implementation. This might be achieved through distribution of the guidelines document to all members, or at least an abridged version that focuses on the concerns expressed. And, further, that these reminders specifically provide that any teacher with an above average number of students will not be required to complete teacher comments for every student, in every report, over the duration of a course.
- That the minister require all Divisions to provide a list of the other reports that teachers are required to complete to the Oversight Committee, along with anonymized samples of each.
- That the minister require and support the provision of reliable, easily accessible, and well-designed technical tools (internet access, software, hardware).
- That the other specific concerns expressed in the full report (pending) be discussed at the Oversight Committee, and that any further recommendations be taken to Government in all haste.

"THEY (THE NEW REPORT CARDS) ARE A NIGHTMARE ... THEY REQUIRE DAYS TO COMPLETE ... THEY ARE FIVE PAGES LONG AND YOU ARE SIMPLY ANSWERING PRE-SET QUESTIONS ... THEY AREN'T INDIVIDUALIZED SO I DON'T THINK THEY HELP PARENTS UNDERSTAND HOW THEIR KIDS ARE DOING AT ALL."

"I FIND THAT THE IN-SERVICING I HAVE BEEN PROVIDED WITH IS NOT FROM PEOPLE WHO ARE SLUGGING THROUGH THE TRENCHES OF THE PROVINCIAL REPORT CARD EVERY DAY IN THEIR REAL LIFE CLASSROOMS. RATHER IT IS FROM PEOPLE WHO ARE TALKING THE TALK BUT NOT WALKING THE WALK."

MTS tech conference success

BY MATEA TUHTAR

It was an event where it would have been rude to be seen *not* playing on your phone or tablet during a presentation.

Almost 600 teachers from across Manitoba gathered at Awakening Possibilities, the MTS conference on technology, to learn what's new and trending in the role of technology in today's public schools. The two-day event covered sessions on everything from blogging, to legal aspects of social media, to how teachers are integrating iPads and other technology into their classrooms.

"The conference was a resounding success," says MTS vice-president Norm Gould. "The conference provided such a smorgasbord of options and choices for participants, taking into consideration different aptitudes, skill sets and interests. It was a stellar cast of guest speakers from across the province, balanced with significant local content."

Ed tech speaker Steve Dembo, Discovery Education's director of social media strategy and online community, kicked off the

conference with a passionate presentation on embracing the power of digital creation and the evolution of communication. Chris Lehmann, an award-winning Philadelphia principal, closed the sessions by motivating educators about building a School 2.0 and creating the schools that we need.

Wednesday night featured IGNITE sessions where students and teachers delivered 11 rapid-fire presentations on how technology has helped their own learning. The presentations were both informative and fun as presenters had exactly five minutes to present 20 slides, at 15 seconds per slide.

The *MTSawake2014* hashtag was trending on Twitter as inspired teachers broadcast their thoughts throughout the conference with messages such as: "Love the confirmation this a.m. that we are all doing something right, even if it doesn't always feel that way. #nerdsunite" and "When you blaze a trail in the classroom, your co-workers might think you're a little nuts... and that's OK."

The conference had a designated French stream with Jacque Cool from New Brunswick presenting on a variety of topics in French. Each of the two day workshops also offered 10 contact hours towards



an Administration, Special Education or School Counsellors' Certificate. Check out a video of conference highlights at www.mbteach.org.

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Hundreds explore history at annual

BY MATEA TUHTAR

What do Cirque du Soleil, Robertson screwdrivers, the Grey Nuns, and the Underground Railway have in common?

They are all uniquely Canadian, and represent some of the many topics presented by Manitoba students at the Red River Heritage Fair, held May 1 at the University of Winnipeg. Over 600 students from across Manitoba joined their peers in exploring and celebrating Canadian history and heritage.

“It’s really about giving kids the opportunity to pick a topic and run with it and to bring their passion out and get excited in a way that a textbook can’t do,” says James Dykstra, a teacher and long-time fair volunteer.

That excitement was easy to spot as students from Grades 4–11 showed off their poster boards, dioramas, costumes, technology-based projects, and hands-on displays on themes as diverse as Canada itself. Topics ranged from Joe Shuster who co-created Superman, Canola Oil production, Casa Loma, Tim Horton, beaver pelts, WW1, to Shania Twain and the roles of aboriginal women.

“The great thing about the heritage fair is that it really touches on all parts of curriculum,” says Marie Zorniak, a teacher at St. John’s High School. “So we’re looking at research, infusing language arts, literacy on ICT, social studies—it’s really as wide as your imagination wants to go. It’s teaching at its ultimate.”

Zorniak says that the students’ projects often bring families closer.

“If they’re doing a project with a historical component their parents can help them with some of those questions about their history and heritage.”

The judging is split into different grade categories and medals and prizes are awarded to top projects. In previous years the winners attended a dinner at the Lieutenant Governor’s house in Winnipeg.

“The one comment that keeps coming up on the judging forms year after year, judge after judge, is ‘enthusiastic,’” says Dykstra. “And it’s hard to get kids enthusiastic sometimes, but because they’re here on their own passion, we get it in a way that you just don’t see sometimes.”

Dykstra and Zorniak have many memories of students over the last decade and what stands out in their minds is the initiative that some students have.

“We have one student here whose school does not participate yet he comes year after year as an independent. He’s a future Canadian historian—he lives and breathes for this stuff.”

“We really embrace student enthusiasm and initiative. We

Students from Flin Flon and Winnipeg show off projects about Joe Shuster (co-creator of Superman), George Simpson (Canadian Governor of the Hudson’s Bay Company) and the role that Aboriginal women played in everyday life.





student fair

have kids who are really bright ones and we have kids who do poorly in schools, but do brilliantly here, because they are doing something they're passionate about. This is the event where they can really shine.

"They at least for a moment can find a niche."

The volunteer-run fair relies on partnerships from Canadian-based museums which provide prizes and set up information booths for students. Winners of the fair get to participate in Canada's History Society's Young Citizens program and make a video about their heritage project to share with the world. Finalists win a trip to Ottawa to attend the Canada's History Forum.

Cindy Johnson-Gallego is a Grade 6 teacher at River Elm School who brought along 16 students.

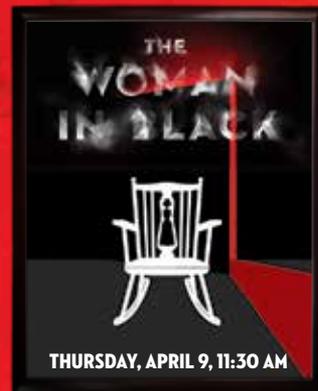
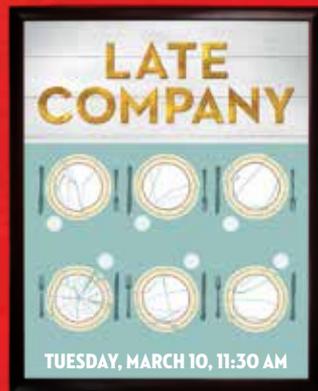
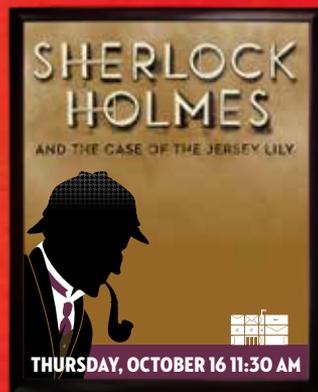
"In my opinion, this is better than a science fair because there are organized workshops between judging. So the kids are learning things for the whole time, and they have a lot of fun. I highly recommend it to other teachers—this is huge, more people should know about it."

Teachers who wish to attend can integrate the fair into their classroom calendar, do it as a class or enrichment project, or as part of a school club. There is a nominal registration fee for participants. For more information visit www.canadashistory.ca/Kids/Heritage and www.redriverheritage.ca. Find out about the Young Citizens program and watch the videos at www.canadashistory.ca/Kids/YoungCitizens.

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Book on education 'reform' a great read for educators

BY MIKE BELL

A must-read book for anyone concerned about the future of education is Diane Ravitch's book, *Reign Of Error*. It is already considered a classic on education policy, of interest to anyone wondering what all the fuss is about south of our border regarding the state of education in the U.S.

An education academic, Ravitch was once the assistant secretary of federal education in G.W. Bush's administration where she advocated for school-based reform.

After watching the reform movement up close, she changed her mind. She is now considered the foremost opponent of education privatization and student testing. The core elements of U.S. style education reform have been comprised of schools of choice vouchers (i.e., schools of choice); high stakes standardized testing for students and merit pay for teachers based on student test scores; and charter schools, most of which are privately run and for profit. There is no person better than Diane Ravitch to 'speak truth to power' to the likes of powerful forces ranging from Obama and Bill Gates and the like and deconstruct the errors of the ways of the education reform movement.

Ravitch sees this movement as one dominated by both ideological (i.e., right wing think tanks, foundations belonging to the wealthy elite and big corporate media) and private business interests (i.e., corporations, IT companies, charter chains and hedge funds) vested with the intent of privatizing the public education system not for the betterment of students and society but for the sole intent of the pursuit of profits and new markets.

The umbrella brand names by which we would recognize these reform efforts were the Republicans' No Child Left Behind and the Obama Democrats' Race For The Top initiatives which tied legislation to goals to funding.

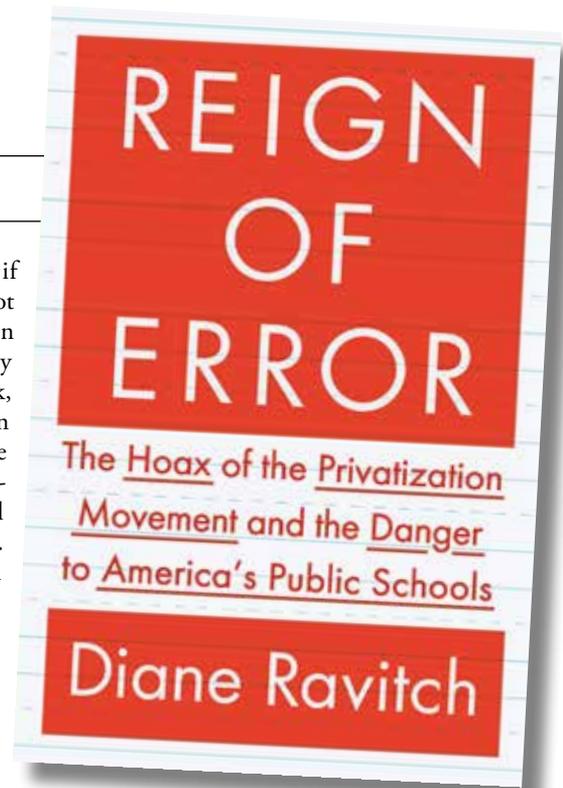
Imagine being told that if all of your students are not 100 per cent proficient in math and reading skills by next year, an impossible task, you will be judged to be an underperformer and face sanctions including the possibility of having your school closed and teachers fired. Many American teachers and schools and their primary constituents, students and families, have been deemed failures and losers in this so-called competition in this dubious quest for excellence.

The hoax in the subtitle is that the agenda for radical education reform is perpetuated on three myths or lies.

Ravitch's first myth is based on the assertion that student test scores and graduation rates are falling. She uses department of education data to show test scores and graduation rates are not falling and in fact are at their highest levels ever recorded and compare favorably with the other top ranked countries in the world.

The second myth is that so-called great teachers, as determined by test scores, can make all the difference for students; teacher qualifications and experience are not important. She destroys that argument, piling on research and evidence on student performance and teacher quality to illustrate that the methods of ranking teachers are not valid and that non-classroom factors, the most important being a student's socio-economic status, are still the most important determinants affecting an education system's performance.

The third myth is that students' lives can be turned around with a strong focus on testing, delivered by privately-managed or owned chartered schools. Ravitch documents the many objective studies that show that private charter



schools, in aggregate, are not raising student test scores above the average of the public schools system. The narrowing of the focus of education to testing and privatization, based on business principles, perverts the overall mission of education. It doesn't strengthen education quality, it weakens it.

Overall, *Reign of Error* looks at the hoax through real data which lead to the conclusion that there is no education crisis.

For teachers, one of the lessons learned from this book is that the education reform movement is not focused on school improvement or education quality. Instead, an agenda has been designed to erode the teaching profession's credentials and get rid of education unions—which Ravitch says are the strongest advocates of better public education.

The book is a cautionary tale that warns of dangers in directly importing ideas south of our borders to our schools here in Canada. All change is not necessarily for the better. After all, if the schools aren't broken, why does the system need fixing?

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PORTFOLIO

Horse-and-buggy airlines

Air Canada and WestJet have announced they will be installing wireless Internet and streaming entertainment on their aircrafts.

Yet, no announcement on installing devices that would allow the aircraft to be monitored and tracked by satellite, foregoing the need for the archaic “black box” that contains flight information and goes down with the plane.

But, then, one brings in money for the company and the other just costs the countries that end up searching for downed aircraft.

IT'S

Understatement of the year

She made a very poor decision that day.

So said a spokesperson for a Florida school district that fired a teacher after she ordered a group of older boys to beat up a student with whom she had an earlier argument.

George W. Bush: exception to the rule

Researchers at two universities in Britain say the use of a person's middle initial creates the perception the person has a high intellect.

The two reported in the *European Journal of Social Psychology* that “the display of middle initials increases positive evaluations of people's intellectual capacities and achievements.”

Through tests with more than 500 participants the writings of David F. Clark were superior to the writings of David Clark and both those were topped by David F.P.R. Clark. All texts were the same.

Best conspiracy channel ever

Egyptian TV told viewers it had discovered evidence that Arab Spring revolutions, specifically the uprising in Syria, were orchestrated by the United States.

See the video at www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vyofadz81J0.

The evidence shown was a decade-old episode of *The Simpsons*.

It showed jets, one flown by Bart Simpson, dropping bombs. And it showed a jeep with a symbol on the side that the TV newscaster said was the flag of the Syrian opposition.

“(The flag) raises many question marks about what happened in the Arab Spring revolutions and about when this global conspiracy began.”

Among past investigative discoveries, Egyptian TV reported Israel was selling jeans to Arabs that contained magnets that caused infertility.

As we roll toward municipal elections and the next provincial election, we will hear the ever-growing refrain that governments must be run more like businesses.

Actually, we don't have to wait that long. We already hear it.

Winnipeg mayoral candidate Brian Bowman has cited his experience with the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce as a major asset in running the city.

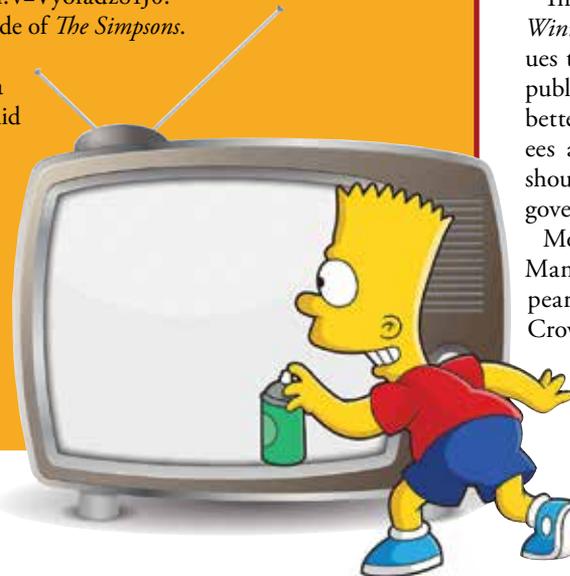
And, lest we forget, the current mayor, Sam Katz, touted his business credentials back in 2004 when he was first elected. Now that's all water under the bridge: brown water, frozen water pipes, water-filled pot holes and a ridiculous water park plan.

Add in fire halls, police headquarters and bizarro land swaps and it doesn't appear Cirque du Sam has been a particularly worthy poster child for running a government like a business. Unless it is a bad business.

But that won't dissuade pro-business and more conservative candidates from trying to sell this old potato once again.

That champion of the overdog, *The Winnipeg Free Press* editorial page, continues to play that tired tune that public servants are so much better off than private employees and that the supposed gap should be lessened by pulling down government workers.

Most recently, the *Free Press* and Manitoba Tories were clutching their pearls over the fact that the heads of two Crown corporations received retirement packages when they retired in the past couple of years.



From my cold, dead hands

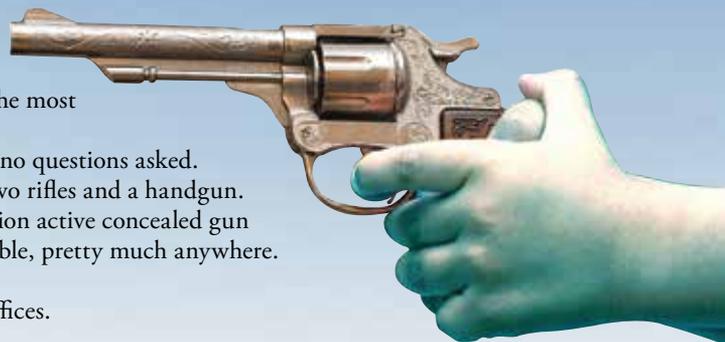
The Miami Police Department and Miami mayor held a gun buy-back program in an effort to reduce gun violence in Florida, which has some of the most permissive gun laws in the U.S.

Those turning in weapons received a gift card provided by local sponsors, no questions asked.

The program rounded up a grand total of six firearms—three shotguns, two rifles and a handgun.

The state, with a population of 19 million, currently has more than 1 million active concealed gun permits alone. These allow holders to carry guns, as long as they are not visible, pretty much anywhere. Except, perhaps, to buy-back programs.

Oh, Florida also has more than three times as many gun dealers as post offices.



MIDNIGHT MADNESS: EVERYTHING MUST GO!

BY GEORGE STEPHENSON

The head of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation received \$400,000 in retirement allowance after 35 years with the organization. The head of Hydro received just over \$600,000 in retirement allowance after 47 years.

Without any evidence, the *Free Press* suggests that “few within the private sector enjoy such benefits.” It said that’s because in the public sector “there are no shareholders to hold vice-presidents and CEOs to account for the salaries and benefits.”

And the Tories thunder that the payments were “generous” and were particularly faux-outraged that the former head of MPI would also be getting a temporary consulting contract for \$15,000 or \$180 an hour. Tory Leader Brian Pallister called this “an enormous amount of money.”

Oh, please.

There’s something just a tad disingenuous listening to a leader of a political party, who lives in a \$2 million mansion, complaining about the expenditure of \$15,000. Pallister obviously made out very well in private business, which pretty much lays

waste to the myth that the heads of Crown corporations are the ones making merry atop the cash in Scrooge McDuck’s vault.

Conservatives love to talk about bringing business principles to government, but they don’t really mean it. It is unlikely the former heads of the Manitoba corporations will be headed for retirement in a house with a seven-car, heated garage.

But, that’s not beyond the dreams of many CEOs in the private sector, as Pallister can attest. In fact, CEO pay for Canadian public companies listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange went up by 73 per cent between 1998 and 2012. Of course that’s only 67 percentage points more than the increase in the average Canadian’s full-time wage.

But then, as the *Free Press* says, private industry has all those shareholders keeping an eye on executive salaries, unlike people in the public sector who, the newspaper conveniently ignores, must only answer to

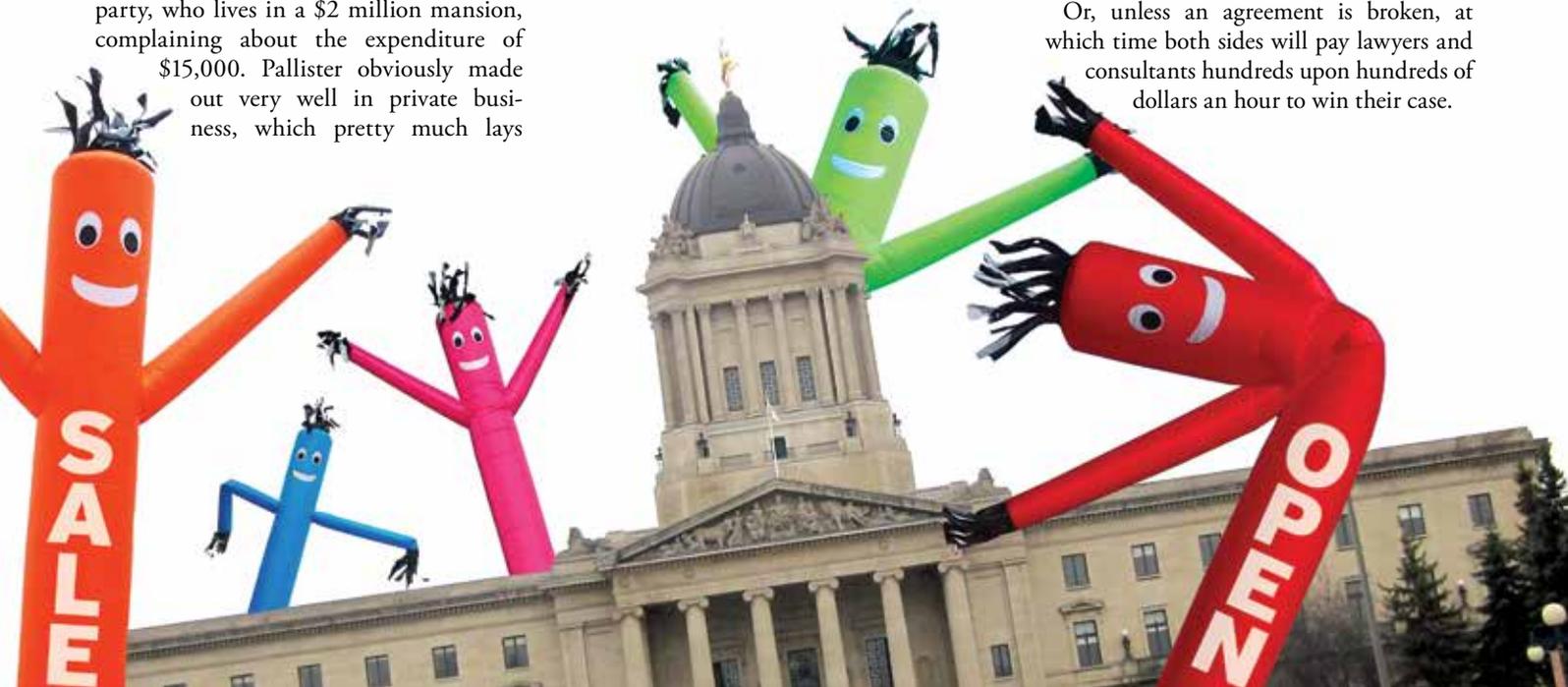
voters every four or five years.

If politicians or pundits really do believe that government should be run like a business and that public servants are pulling up to work in limousines, fine. But, they should at least be consistent. Brian Pallister knows full well that a consulting contract worth \$180 an hour is small cheese. And if the *Free Press* knows how to use Google, its writers would know that many CEOs in the private sector take home millions of dollars in compensation when they retire, or, indeed, even when they are fired.

Mostly it’s the result of negotiated agreements, whether with the big bosses themselves or the workers who make them look good.

And, big surprise, that’s the same in the private sector, where an agreement is an agreement until the two sides agree on something else, whether it’s with unions or clients or consultants.

Or, unless an agreement is broken, at which time both sides will pay lawyers and consultants hundreds upon hundreds of dollars an hour to win their case.





REFRESH

RAMON JOB,
PUBLIC RELATIONS FACILITATOR

Sweet PD with no agenda?

Sure, it's possible—at least for the first hour. Just ask the organizers of EdCampWinnipeg 2014. This brilliant unconference breaks from mundane models of professional development by delivering a full-day, casual, vote-with-your-feet event. The first order of business is creating an agenda that works for every participant. You grab the mic and tell others what you want to learn—and what you'd be willing to share. Breakfast and lunch are provided, and the entire day doesn't cost you a dime. The bad news? This May 31 geek fest is now history. Follow @EdCampWPG and watch for deets on the 2015 event.

Why put a period at the front of your tweet?

Seems odd, right? But there's a good reason to start a tweet with a period in certain cases. Let's say you want to compliment your friend and you want everyone who follows you on Twitter to see it. You begin your tweet with your friend's user name—something like “@yourfriend You deserve...” Because that tweet begins with a user name, only you the sender, your friend the recipient, and anyone who follows both of you will see it in their own timelines. Anyone else can see it too, but only if they make the effort to scroll through your profile or your friend's. Your goal, though, was to give props to your friend that would appear in all your followers' timelines, right? Well, pop in a period before the username and begin your tweet with “.@yourfriend” and that will do it. Another way to get this tweet directly into your followers' timelines is to move “@yourfriend” to any part of the tweet except the very beginning.

You're making a big mobile photo mistake!

Ever wonder why people sometimes turn out very dark in your iPhone pics? You pose your friends against the drapes in your living room. Plenty of sunlight is flooding in. They're both holding trophies. Good times, smiles, a perfect smartphone moment. But the results are awful—perfectly exposed drapes and perfect silhouettes of your friends. To make your phone's camera expose

for your friends and not the drapes, shoot the picture again. This time, touch the image of your friends on your screen before you click. Immediately, you'll see your camera's exposure adjust for them. Shoot now and you'll get better results.

Hip not to be square on IG

Ever feel like posting non-square pics to Instagram? Squareready is what you want for posting rectangular images. Turn off the silly sound effects and enjoy this simple single-function app. But what about posting rectangular video? Search for SquarereadyV—works like a dream. Speaking of dreaming, what if you wanted to do something truly radical like repost a pic or video from another IG user and give them proper credit? Look for Repost in the app store. Try it with friends and they'll likely be flattered. Just remember you do not technically have authority to repost someone else's work without permission.

iRig Mic fixes awful iPhone audio

Tired of poor-quality sound on iPhone video or audio recordings? My handheld, corded, iRig Mic solves this much of the time. It plugs directly into my iPhone, has a built-in wind screen, and gives me superb audio at three settings. It's perfect for street interviews, recording music, and at \$60 it's a steal. At the Brandon Career Symposium earlier this year, I spotted two reporters from CKLF each with an iRig Mic. I introduced myself. We waxed eloquent about our iRigs. A beautiful moment.

Your friend's flaming pantaloons

You're scratching your head over the Facebook post your friend just sent you. Will cell phone providers soon be releasing your phone number to telemarketers? Can Crest 3D White toothpaste actually embed plastic balls in your gums? If you're forced to withdraw cash from an ATM, will entering your passcode in reverse really summon the police? You can find out by hitting www.snopes.com—buster of myths, flayer of urban legends, and ultimate arbiter of Internet silliness. Once you do find your answers, message your friend the Snopes link.

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The
Manitoba
Teachers'
Society

2014–2015 Workshops

The MTS Professional Issues department is revamping its approach and lineup of workshops for the coming year to better reflect the wishes of members. Here is a preliminary look at the lineup for 2014–2015. See the September issue of *The Teacher* for more details on the program and each workshop.

Enhancing Pedagogy

FAB 5 + 2 EdChats*

Dates: October 22, 23, 2014

Presenter: various
Followup EdChats on
January 14, 2015, April 8, 2015

Aiming for Student Engagement

Date: November 24, 2014

Presenter: Field practitioners

Aiming for Classroom Management

Date: March 9, 2015

Presenter: Blake Stephens (C)

Universal Design for Learning: Literacy and Numeracy in the UDL Classroom

Dates: December 1, 2, 2014

Presenter: Dr. Jennifer Katz (C)

Teaching to Diversity: Universal Design for Learning and Implementation for Aboriginal Education

Date: December, 2015

Presenter: Dr. Jennifer Katz

Building Leadership Capacity

Supervision & Evaluation

Dates: October 16, 17, 2014

Presenter: various staff and
field practitioners

So You Think You Can Lead? Lessons for Aspiring and Beginning Leaders

Dates: December 4, 5, 2014

Presenter: Field practitioners

Learning-Focussed Conversations

Dates: April 13, 14, 2015

Presenter: Dr. Laura Lipton (C)

Learning and Growing as a Teacher Leader

Dates: October 3, 2014 &
January 16, 2015

Presenter: Cathy Smith (C)

Leadership for Teacher Well-Being

Date: October, 2015

Presenter: TBA

Creating Inclusive Classrooms and Schools

Total Participation Techniques with English Language Learners

Dates: November 3, 4, 2014

Presenter: Dr. Persida Himmele
(C)

3R's of Successful School Counselling

Dates: January 26, 27, 2015

Presenter: Carolynne Piturra
(C)

Support and Intervention for Behaviour Challenges

Dates: February 9, 10, 2015

Presenter: TBA

Cultural Proficiency

Dates: April 16, 17, 2015

Presenter: Sarah Gazan (C)

(C): confirmed speaker
There is a \$135 fee + GST for each workshop, with a minimum of 15 confirmed registrants required three weeks prior to the scheduled date of the workshop.