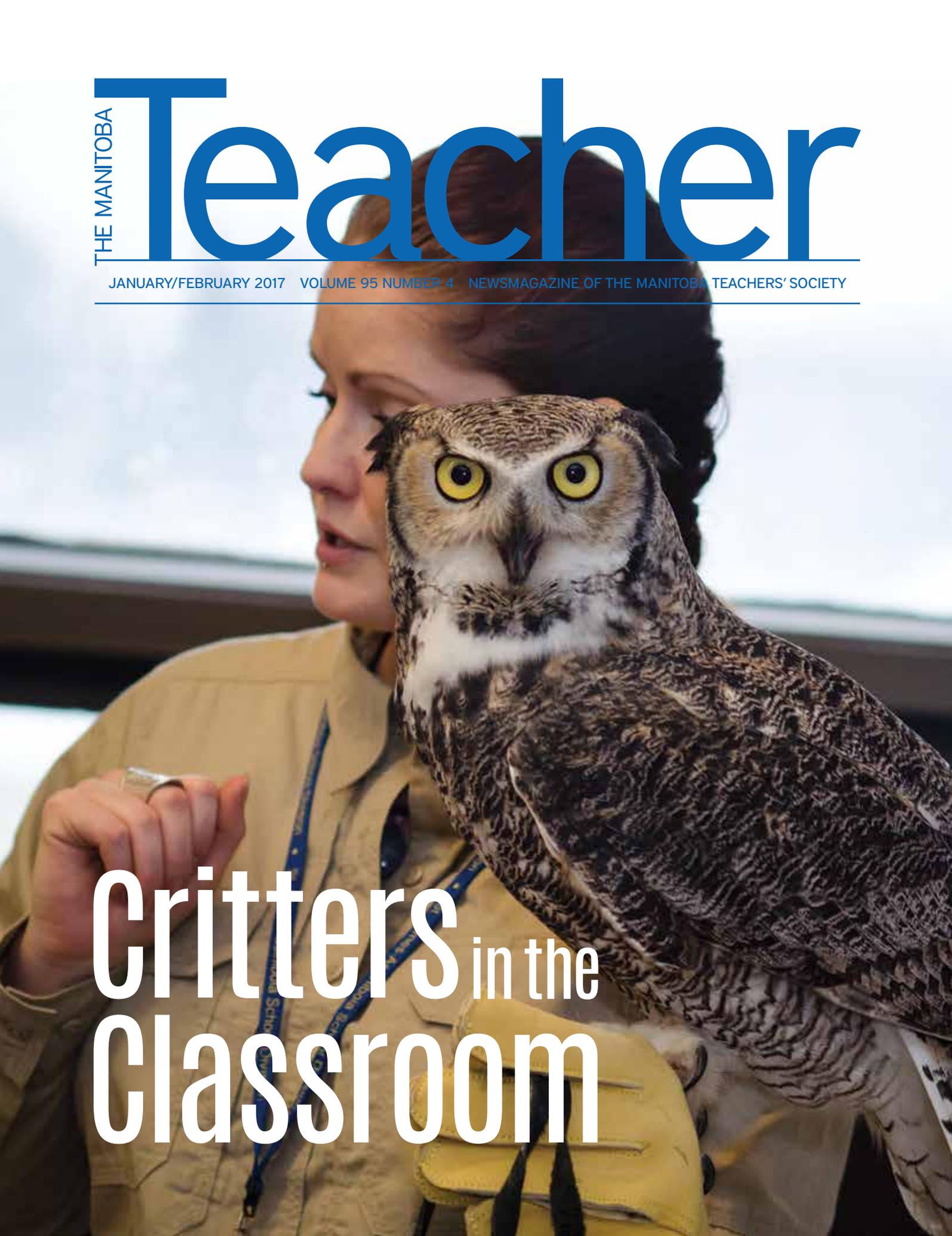


THE MANITOBA

Teacher

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2017 VOLUME 95 NUMBER 4 NEWSMAGAZINE OF THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY

A woman with dark hair, wearing a tan shirt and a blue lanyard, is holding a large owl on her gloved hand. The owl has large yellow eyes and is looking directly at the camera. The woman is looking down at the owl.

Critters in the
Classroom

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JUNE 1

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Competition Day 1

8:30am Official Launch
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8:30am – 4:00pm
Career Zone and Try-a-Trade® and Technology activities

8:30am – 4:00pm
Open to public and school tours

9:30am – 12:30pm
Essential Skills Forum

9:30am – 3:00pm
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JUNE 2

8:00am – 4:00pm
Competition Day 2

8:30am – 4:00pm
Career Zone and Try-a-Trade® and Technology activities

8:30am – 4:00pm
Open to public and school tours

9:30am – 3:00pm
Essential Skills stage interactive demonstrations

Pre-register your school online at the Skills/Compétences Canada website.

Travel subsidies are available on first come first serve basis!

THE MANITOBA Teacher

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2017 VOLUME 95 NUMBER 4 NEWSMAGAZINE OF THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY

P.4 *From the President*

P.5 *Inside MTS*

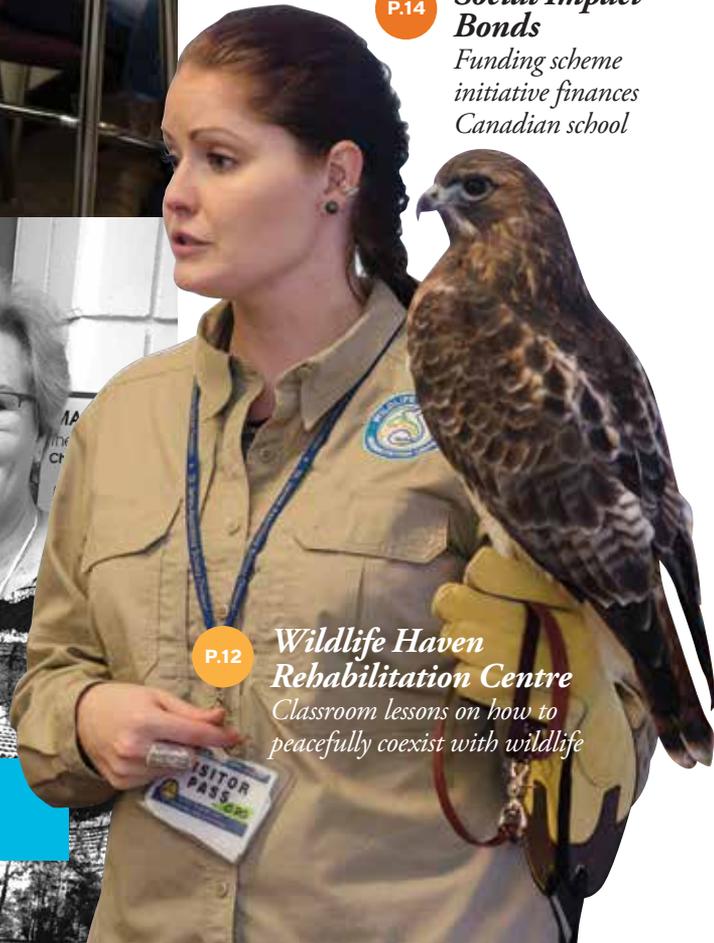
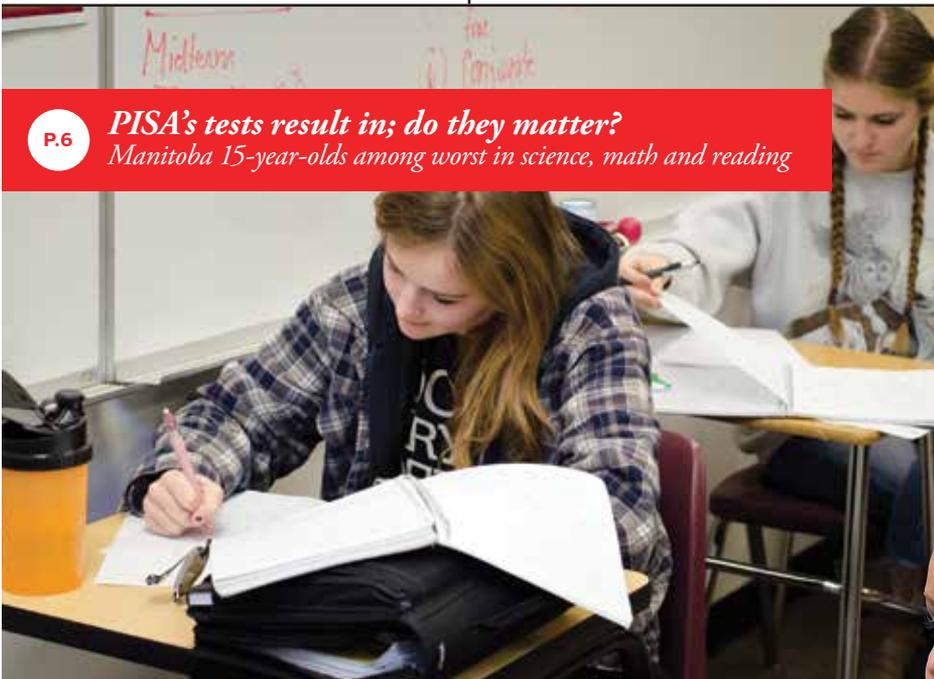
P.6 *PISA's tests result in; do they matter?*
Manitoba 15-year-olds among worst in science, math and reading



P.14 *Social Impact Bonds*
Funding scheme initiative finances Canadian school

P.12 *Wildlife Haven Rehabilitation Centre*
Classroom lessons on how to peacefully coexist with wildlife

P.10 *Dyslexia is a difference, not a disability*
Understanding dyslexia through focused teacher training





FROM THE PRESIDENT

NORM GOULD

It's rarely a surprise when MTS does a poll of the public's view of education in general and teachers specifically.

The surveys, conducted by a professional polling firm, confirm what we know through our interactions with parents and colleagues – that a vast majority of people hold teachers in high esteem.

In the latest poll, conducted last November, 90 per cent of respondents have either a very favourable or somewhat favourable view of teachers. Only eight per cent said they had an unfavourable view.

While we would like everyone to view teachers positively, these results are pretty stunning. There are not many questions in any poll that would garner a 90 per cent favourability rating.

Tied to that is the result that showed Manitobans are satisfied with the education students are receiving. Only seven per cent of those polled said they viewed education as a top concern. That's a clear and strong endorsement of what teachers are accomplishing.

There are more results from the survey on page 8. They too illustrate that we, as teachers, have the confidence of the public and they understand the challenges we face in the classroom every day and respect our experience and education.

I think, though, that the results also show a disconnect between what the public feels and what we hear through the media and from certain "think tanks" about teachers and teaching.

Who hasn't heard the refrain that staff salaries are the greatest expense in education? Well, so what? That's both obvious and meaningless. The greatest cost of almost any enterprise is people, from hockey teams to schools. And if it's salaries, well, the poll also shows that a large majority of Manitobans do not feel teachers are overpaid.

On top of that, we get bombarded by articles about international rankings like PISA (see pages 6-7) that purport to accurately compare students in Singapore, the third richest country in the world, with students in Manitoba. That's not even comparing apples and oranges, that's comparing bagels and bananas.

Yet, the media love rankings, as if ranking student achievement is no more important or fraught as listing the top 10 TV shows of the year. And even if they actually think the results are valid, the emphasis is always on who we are behind, not who is behind us.

Despite all that, teachers should be heartened at the beginning of this New Year. It is apparent from the recent poll, as it has been in the past, that the people we work for are not convinced by the negative views they hear about education. Views from people who look at nothing but numbers on pages.

The public's personal experiences in dealing with teachers and schools has obviously been positive. While it may not seem like it at times, the public does highly value the work of teachers and the results they see in real life.

Have a great New Year.



The Manitoba Teachers' Society

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Canadian
Educational
Press
Association





INSIDE MTS

MTS READY TO DEFEND MISSION

BOBBI TAILLEFER, GENERAL SECRETARY

There is no such thing as a daily routine at MTS – every day brings new and often unexpected challenges. In this context, one of the most important tasks of your MTS staff is to be ready for any eventuality and to be well equipped and prepared to defend the mission of The Manitoba Teachers’ Society. For those of you who have forgotten our mission it is: The Manitoba Teachers’ Society is dedicated to safeguarding the welfare of teachers, the status of the teaching profession and the cause of public education in Manitoba. So what does that mean in practical terms?

For example, when the Premier, or any other representative of government, openly talks about opening collective agreements to enable wage freezes or roll backs, it is the responsibility of staff to be ready to pursue every avenue, including legal, to ensure that collective agreements that were fairly negotiated, are respected to their conclusion. It is also the responsibility of staff to prepare

for the next round of bargaining which includes expert analysis done by our policy analysts regarding the economy and government spending. They also engage in a current analysis of your work in order to quantify teachers’ worth to society in the current market.

In this type of situation, communication with members becomes the top priority; therefore, we have many systems in place in order to reach out to local leadership and our teacher members. Should any changes be imposed on our members, the MTS will use mass communication tools, such as our very popular Virtual Town Halls, to update you on the situation. We also have a current database of all members, which allows us to communicate with them instantly in order to convey updated information regarding any changes to their working conditions. Whenever there are significant impacts which affect our members and/or public education, MTS ensures that they are informed in a timely fashion.

As we prepare to celebrate our 100th anniversary, it is evident that The Manitoba Teachers’ Society is an enduring cornerstone of public education. During this time, we have furnished exemplary service to the teachers of Manitoba. This has allowed teachers the opportunity to practice their craft in innovative and creative ways as they serve the province as well as the children who grow and prosper in our schools. We have thrived through a century of service to teachers and we will continue to serve and defend them and Manitoba’s excellent public school system for the next hundred years and more.

On behalf of your MTS staff, I wish you a very Happy New Year. “May you live in interesting times.” is a curse often attributed to Confucius. Should this come to pass in 2017, you can rest assured that the multi-talented MTS staff will be there to help you navigate these times as they work with and support our elected officials so that we can meet our mission.

MTS NEEDS YOU TO MAKE HISTORY

The following positions must to be filled for the Society’s Provincial Executive for 2017-2019:

- 1 position for President
- 1 position for Vice President
- 8 positions for Members-at-Large

For a list of Duties, Time Commitments and Responsibilities please view our *Provincial Executive Candidates Guide* on our website at www.mbteach.org.

Nominations for Provincial Executive are governed by Bylaw III, Elections of the Provincial Executive and are available on our website.

Nominations must be forwarded to Loretta Carroll, Senior Executive Assistant by email at lcarroll@mbteach.org, no later than 4:00 p.m. on March 1, 2017.



PISA's own grades

Falling

BY GEORGE STEPHENSON

According to the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), Manitoba 15-year-olds are supposedly among the worst in Canada in science, math and reading.

That was one of the most recent findings of the international tests conducted through the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, which also reported Manitoba students were generally above average internationally.

The test results, compiled every three years, always lead to a flurry of media reports, most of which treat them as the definitive word on how students are doing around the world in dozens of countries and economies.

Beyond the news coverage, however, there is a growing chorus of educators questioning whether the tests mean much at all and further that they could be damaging education in the countries involved.

The Alberta Teachers' Association has called on its province to end the "PISA obsession" even though results show students there at the top in reading and science.

"The tests only sample a tiny view of what matters in public education," says ATA President Mark Ramsankar, "and unfortunately too many countries are re-engineering their education system to chase after the narrow goals set by the OECD."

Dozens of academics from around the world signed a letter to the OECD that called for a halt to testing because of concern for the "negative consequences" of the ranking of educational achievement.

In advance of the most recent results, two academic papers said the program was fundamentally flawed, with one calling them "useless and meaningless."

And a move last year to extend the tests and rankings to include universities hit a wall when Britain announced it would not be involved.

PISA began in the 1990s with the idea of comparing student achievement across the globe in core subjects. Up until then comparisons were only made on how much money was being spent on education.

The person behind PISA is Andreas Schleicher, a physicist and statistician who *The Atlantic* magazine called "the most influential education expert you've never heard of."

In the 1980s, Schleicher began looking at educational achievement as something you could quantify through testing. Interestingly, his father, an education professor, did not approve. As the junior Schleicher told *The Atlantic*: "His feeling was that you can't measure what counts in education—the human qualities."

Those sentiments, while growing among many academics and education experts, didn't dissuade Schleicher who created the first international test for reading. He joined the OECD in 1996 and PISA was born. Unlike United Nations' organizations such as UNICEF or UNESCO, the OECD has no mandate to improve education and the lives of students around the world. It looks at the economic role of schools and education.

Schleicher has even said that the PISA testing is more important than national tests because it places students in a global context, focused on commerce and economics.

"It is very important to know how well our students are prepared for the global economy," he told the British Broadcasting Corporation in 2013.

Critics strongly disagree.

In their 2014 letter to Schleicher, the academics and activists from around the world had a list of objections about the tests, but were especially concerned that they were harming students and teachers.

"The new PISA regime, with its continuous cycle of global testing, harms our children, impoverishes our classrooms, as it inevitably involves more and long batteries of multiple-choice testing, more scripted 'vendor'-made lessons and less autonomy for teachers.

"In this way PISA has further increased the already high stress level in schools, which endangers the wellbeing of students and teachers."

While also offering suggestions for change, the academics said that PISA has taken attention away from the less-measurable aspects of education – physical, moral, civic and artistic development – by its narrow focus.

They also criticized the alliances being created with private corporations, which contract to prepare tests and offer their services to schools to improve standings.

"OECD has embraced public-private partnerships and entered into alliances with multi-national for-profit companies, which stand to gain from any deficits – real or perceived – unearthed by PISA."

Others add to the complaints.

MTS President Norm Gould says it shouldn't be overlooked that "PISA is a product of the OECD.

"The tests themselves are a business and economic think tank's concept of what's important in education. We should be asking ourselves why we are participating in international tests and what benefits we get from it."

Sven Kreiner, a statistician at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark, says there are few benefits, as PISA is fundamentally flawed.

His 2013 research showed that results and ranking could vary greatly depending on which test questions are used. He pointed out that questions used for PISA varied between countries and between students taking the same assessment.

As The Guardian newspaper reported: "In the 2006 tests half the students were not asked any reading questions but were allocated 'plausible' reading scores to calculate their countries' rankings. Responding to the news of the studies, one teacher said: 'The first year our kids did the PISA test, the science content was aligned to aspects that were never taught.'"

In his paper, Kreiner showed, depending on questions used in 2006, Canada could have been positioned anywhere between second and 25th, Japan between eighth and 40th and Britain between 14th and 30th.

And depending on where a country or province or, in OECD terms, an "economy" ranks on the PISA list, it could face massive pressures to revamp its education system. As viewed by one British critic, governments have become "increasingly mesmerized and bedazzled" by PISA tests.

Both the United States and Germany instituted major, controversial changes to their education systems in the wake of results that placed those countries down the PISA list.

Josh Cole, an academic in the history department at Queen's University in Ontario, says Canada is not immune to such overreaction.

"PISA is a product of the OECD. The tests themselves are a business and economic think tank's concept of what's important in education. We should be asking ourselves why we are participating."

- Norm Gould, MTS President

Writing in a 2014 publication for the Centre for Policy Alternatives, Cole points to John Manley, former Liberal deputy prime minister and then chief executive officer of the Canadian Council of Chief Executives.

"Upon hearing this year's PISA results, he descended into hysterics," Cole said of Manley. "According to Manley, the PISA scores were 'on the scale of a national emergency.'"

Cole points out that even if you accept the

test results, Canada was fine.

"We are still in the top 10 in math and science. We rank fourth in reading. Does this sound like a crisis? I don't think so."

What gets lost in the straight rankings are the socio-economic factors involved.

While governments can be quick to focus on education, often overlooked is the role poverty plays in educational outcomes.

A report last year from the Stanford Graduate School of Education and Economic Policy Institute found that socioeconomic inequality among U.S. students skews international comparisons of test scores.

"When differences in countries' social class compositions are adequately taken into account, the performance of U.S. students in relation to students in other countries improves markedly," the university said. "The report also details how errors in selecting sample populations of test-takers and arbitrary choices regarding test content contribute to results that appear to show U.S. students lagging."

The same can be said of Manitoba, says MTS's Gould. He points out that Manitoba has one of the highest, if not the highest, rates of child poverty in the country.

"If we want to improve student outcomes, start with the basic needs like food, clothing, shelter."



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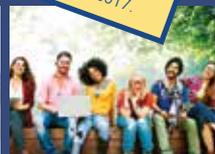
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WALKING THROUGH GRIEF—Helping Others Deal with Loss	March 14-15
VIOLENCE THREAT ASSESSMENT—Planning & Response	March 20
FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER—Strategies for Supporting	March 21-22
CRITICAL INCIDENT GROUP DEBRIEFING	April 19
CHALLENGING BEHAVIOURS IN YOUTH—Strategies for Intervention	April 27
TRAIN-THE-TRAINER—De-escalating Potentially Violent Situations™	May 9-11
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Please visit our website for information on more workshops coming in 2017.



High marks for teachers

BY GEORGE STEPHENSON

An overwhelming number of Manitobans feel that classrooms in the province are more complex than ever and students need more support, according to a recent public survey.

The poll found that 83 per cent of respondents either agreed (47.5 per cent) or strongly agreed (35.8 per cent) with the statement: “today’s classrooms are more complex than ever, with students with many diverse needs and behaviours. The government needs to provide our kids with more support, not less.”

Commissioned by The Manitoba Teachers’ Society and done by Viewpoints Research, the survey polled Manitobans across the province on a wide range of educational issues.

The respondents also said that the province should not cut spending on public schools. Less than five per cent said there should be cuts, while 56.5 per cent said funding should be increased. Another 34.5 per cent said funding should remain at the level it is now. Currently, funding is based on the rate of economic growth in the province.

The survey also showed Manitobans have a positive view of teachers.

Asked about their feelings toward public school teachers, 88 per cent said they had either a very favourable (42.2 per cent) view or a somewhat favourable (46.2 per cent) view of teachers. Less than eight per cent had an unfavourable view.

Respondents also felt that teachers are not overpaid.

Only 17 per cent felt teachers earned too much after being posed with the question: “Teachers in Manitoba with five years university and more than 10 years teaching experience earn a salary of approximately \$80,000 per year. Do you think this salary is too much, about the right amount or too little for teachers with these qualifications and experience?”

Just over 64 per cent said the salary was the right amount and 14.7 per cent said it was too little.

The survey showed Manitobans have a wide range of opinions on what are the most difficult aspects of a teacher’s job.

The two largest challenges noted were “dealing with students and their problems” (26.8 per cent) and discipline (15.8 per

cent). Other issues mentioned were class composition, dealing with parents, teaching and preparation and class size.

When asked to name who they felt most responsible for problems facing Manitoba public schools, most respondents cited school boards and trustees (33.4 per cent), the provincial government (26.8 per cent), parents (14 per cent) and teachers (6.3 per cent).

Asked where education fell among the various issues facing the province as a whole, most felt it was well down the list.

Only five per cent felt education was the most important issue facing Manitobans. That fell below health care, taxes, the economy, jobs and infrastructure.

MTS workload survey

Next month The Manitoba Teachers’ Society will be sending out surveys for members to get a picture of the workloads faced by public school teachers.

All MTS members, regardless of their position in schools, are encouraged to fill out the survey to help gather data to be used in collective bargaining and other Society initiatives.

The results of the voluntary and anonymous survey will be used by local associations to assist:

- Collective bargaining, by providing data in preparation of your association’s opening negotiations’ package
- In the event of a bargaining impasse to be used at interest arbitration.

The paper survey will take about 20 minutes to complete.

Reports are prepared for each association and provided to presidents. MTS only shares detailed results with association presidents and bargaining chairs. Questions on the survey relate to issues such as:

- Class size
- Class composition
- Time spent on tasks
- Impacts on health and work-life balance
- Your workload priorities

The Society hopes to get an 80 per cent response rate from all associations.



Why join RTAM?

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BY JENNIFER MCFEE

DECODING

dyslexia

Dyslexia is a difference, not a disability. In contrast to the misconception that dyslexic students might be unmotivated to learn, certified reading clinician Christine van de Vijzel paints a different picture.

“It’s not a lack of motivation. It’s not a lack of effort. It’s not a vision problem or a hearing problem. It’s not a medical problem. It’s an educational problem,” she says.

“Most of these children fall into the category of average or above-average intelligence. They’re very creative, very social and very motivated to learn. Yet they can’t read, so you have a glitch in a sea of strengths.”

Dyslexia is a neurobiological difference in processing language that exists on a spectrum from mild to profound — and is not uncommon.

“Dyslexia is like an educational swear word, and yet it affects more than 10 per cent of our students. Teachers all have students in their classroom that are on the spectrum of dyslexia, but they don’t realize why they’re struggling and what the problem is,” says van de Vijzel.

“It’s a problem that starts in teacher training. I’ve been through so many courses in my career and never once was dyslexia even mentioned. Even when I trained for being a reading clinician at the university, I never heard the word.”

Van de Vijzel worked as a classroom teacher in the Louis Riel School Division for 15 years followed by another 10 years working for the Child Guidance Clinic at the Winnipeg

School Division. For the past decade, she has delved deeply into an exploration of dyslexia through her own private practice.

“I work with these children every day, and I finally know what to do. It’s taken me this long to figure it out, so my goal is to help teachers to identify these children early so that we can intervene early and not wait for them to fail,” she says.

Dyslexia is also hereditary so if one parent has it, there’s a 50 per cent chance that the child will have it too, she adds.

“These children will always be dyslexic, but we can help circumvent a lot of the problems that come later if they have the foundation early on. It’s not a cure, but we can change the way the brain makes pathways and makes those connections,” van de Vijzel says.

“Dyslexics think in pictures. They don’t think in language, so you can see how that would translate into being very creative. A lot of artists, actors and musicians are dyslexic. Steve Jobs was dyslexic. They think Einstein and Edison were dyslexic. These are some really amazing people who think outside the box. That’s what drives me — these children have such amazing potential.”

In spite of their myriad abilities, many of these children end up feeling defeated and frustrated in the classroom.

“They go to school every day to fail, so of course they’re not going to want to do it because it shows their peers that they can’t. Of course they’re embarrassed. Of course they’re feeling sad,” van de Vijzel says.

“Many kids will act out. Many are

misdiagnosed with attention deficit, but the underlying reason for the attention problems is because they’re trying to avoid the tasks that they’re not good at.”

For reading clinician Valdine Bjornson, it’s important to advocate for education that is essential for some and beneficial for all.

“It’s universal design that gets kids to look at language in a way that’s not just trying to figure out the meaning but getting them to actually look at the words and understand the sound correspondence. This also helps kids who are really good at reading because they will get interested in the patterns of the English language,” Bjornson says.

“I also advocate for understanding the history and morphology of English because some of the bizarre spellings make sense if you look at how English has incorporated many different kinds of languages.”

Having spent most of her career as a classroom teacher, Bjornson encourages other teachers to view this type of instruction as an enhancement to what they already do.

“If the students become language conscious, then they can be more proficient and interested and love the idea of language. It’s a gift that you can give that is essential to some of the kids, especially for the kids that might have dyslexia,” she says.

“I like the word dyslexia because it pinpoints a specific profile of child. It’s specifically with reading, and it does overlap with writing and math, but not all of the time,” she says.

“It’s not a negative. These students have a high capacity to learn, and a lot of the time



Signs of dyslexia

It is a myth that individuals with dyslexia “read backwards,” although spelling can look quite jumbled at times because students have trouble remembering letter symbols for sounds and forming memories for words. Other problems experienced by people with dyslexia:

- Learning to speak
- Learning letters and their sounds
- Organizing written and spoken language
- Memorizing number facts
- Reading quickly enough to comprehend
- Spelling
- Learning a foreign language
- Correctly doing math operations

- International Dyslexia Association, Ontario Branch

these kids are very resilient. No matter how we teach them, they’re trying desperately to figure it out. Once they see themselves as a learner, then it’s like a light bulb switches on. They see that English is predictable because they are being taught the structure.”

Teachers in early grades should take notice of students who resist instruction that focuses on the ability to look at letters and match them with sounds that are predictable.

“You can do more intense work with kids who are resistant to that type of instruction,” she says. “Teachers can make a difference. Teachers can help kids see that they have great capacity.”

Jeanne Remillard, student services coordinator for the Division scolaire franco-manitobaine, says that teachers don’t need a formal diagnosis from a psychologist to begin intervention.

“The research demonstrates that the earlier you intervene, the better chance you have to reduce the risk that the students will have difficulties in reading later on. Early intervention can start in our kindergarten and Grade 1 classrooms by being able to identify the student who is struggling with phonological awareness and learning the letters of the alphabet and their sounds,” she said.

Teachers can start with a quick check of phonological awareness skills, she suggests.

“You can find a lot of resources online for that. It’s not formal standardized tests with percentile ranks. It’s just a quick screening to verify what they can and cannot do,” she says.

“You check if the child can produce a

rhyme, identify words that rhyme and break words down into syllables. In the areas where you see that the child cannot identify the first sound in a word, then you would start doing interventions and providing little lessons. You would also verify if they know all of the sounds of the alphabet because that might be the issue as well.”

When it comes to reading a word, teachers can go beyond examining if the child is relying on visual, semantic or syntactic cues.

“You can go beyond the words and look at what type of error they’re making. Are they substituting one sound for another? Are they omitting a sound? Are they omitting a syllable? Are they inserting a sound? Are they transposing the order of the sounds? Are they inverting letters?” Remillard says.

In the same way, teachers can also assess similar types of errors in students’ writing.

“It’s just like when we look at kids on the autism spectrum; dyslexia is on a spectrum as well. You can go from mild dyslexia to very severe. Every case is different, so a plan that you design for one student will not necessarily work for another,” she says.

Through her work in the Division scolaire franco-manitobaine, Remillard developed an evaluation tool to examine how students decode when they’re reading and writing texts.

“Once we’ve administered the evaluation tool, then resource teachers will be able to identify exactly which sounds the child is able to read and write, as well as which sounds the child is not able to read and write,” she says.

From there, they can identify what types of

errors they’re making when reading and figure out if they’re making the same types of errors when writing.

“Then we’re going to look at patterns to be able to plan an intervention,” Remillard says, adding that dyslexia is similar in English and French.

Remillard encourages resource teachers to become more vocal advocates for students with dyslexia.

“What’s happening now is there’s a lot of frustration. There are a lot of resource teachers who realize that what they’re doing isn’t working, but they’re not saying anything about it,” she says. “We’ve got kids that have had reading recovery and the intervention program that we’ve put in place, and we’re seeing kids in the older grades that are either not reading at all or not having success in reading.”

The onus often falls on the teachers to voice concerns, since some parents might not know that there is a problem — especially if they struggled with reading and writing themselves.

“As a teacher, it really is our responsibility to ensure that we’re using the best practices possible to make sure that kids are progressing in reading and writing. If we’re seeing that our kids are not, then we really need to question our approach and start looking at doing differently,” Remillard says.

For additional support, teachers can turn to the Dyslexia Champions of Manitoba, an advocacy group of parents and professionals that offers courses and other resources. More information is available online at www.dyslexiachampions.org.



PHOTOS & STORY
BY MATEA TUHTAR

Animal

A Grade 1-2 class at Crestview School had a hoot when two special guests in the form of a red-tailed hawk and great horned owl stopped by their classroom.

R2 and Max visited the school as Ambassadors from Wildlife Haven Rehabilitation Centre, sharing their stories about why they are not able to return to the wild and a lesson about how we can peacefully coexist with wildlife.

“The students have been talking about which birds fly south for the winter and which ones stay, and what happens if a bird is injured,” says teacher Erin Wilson. “That’s how Wildlife Haven came to be, because it’s a great opportunity for us to get some of those questions answered.”

The organization’s wildlife is ready to answer.

“We’ve always used ambassadors as the central focus of our education programs because the story that they tell really bring home the messages that we’re trying to offer people,” says Shauna Hewson, Education Program Coordinator at Wildlife Haven.

When students ask if they can pet Max the owl, Hewson talks about the biology of the bird and shows off its sharp talons and how powerful their beaks are. “Owls don’t want to be touched at all – they’re very sensitive and primate creatures so by us forcing touching on them, we’re actually causing them a lot of undue stress. So just little comments like ‘Can we pet the owl?’ can open up a very important discussion about why we shouldn’t be touching wildlife and feeding it or petting it.”

Wildlife Haven started in 1984 by a group of concerned citizens who wanted to have a wildlife rehabilitation service in Manitoba. Located in Île-des-Chênes, the non-profit organization relies strictly on donations to keep its doors open. The three staff are aided by around 80 volunteers who help with all aspects of animal care.

Seventy per cent of the rescued animals are birds, including song birds, and the other 30 per cent are mammals and a few reptiles.

“Most of the mammals come into the

facility as orphaned babies and include rabbits, squirrels, chipmunks, raccoons, foxes and coyotes,” says Hewson. And once in a while, a surprise animal shows up. In the fall of 2014 they received a phone call from someone in Middlebro, Manitoba claiming they had an orphaned bobcat.

“Normally when people call about this it turns out to be a very large house cat. But after a few days the man showed up to our facility carrying a real baby bobcat which had been orphaned on his property. That was our first bobcat and even as a baby it was aggressive to people.”

With an animal like the bobcat, Wildlife Haven worked with Manitoba Conservation to find an ideal place to release it into the wild, but with smaller animals the staff pick a place where they deem the animal has the best chances of survival. They just try not to release them close to people if they can help it.

And those who cannot return to the wild can gain a new purpose – all of the Wildlife Haven education ambassadors have a disability that makes it unsuitable

WILDLIFE HAVEN visits over 100 schools a year. The education program offers four different presentations as well as a build-your-own workshop where teachers can request customized material on themes such as wildlife ecology, wildlife rehabilitation, conservation, biodiversity, seasonal adaptations, habitat preservation.



EDUCATORS

for them to live in the wild.

“We refer to that disability as a story. And every story has a message about how people should treat wildlife or how human activity is affecting wildlife,” says Hewson.

Wildlife Haven visits over 100 schools a year, and a lot of teachers invite them back year after year. “There’s a lot of different topics we can talk about like conservation efforts, the urban environment and how it affects wildlife and even talking about wildlife as our neighbour is really effective,” says Hewson.

The education program offers four different presentations as well as a build-your-own workshop where teachers can request customized material on themes such as wildlife ecology, wildlife rehabilitation, conservation, biodiversity, seasonal adaptations, and habitat preservation.

“One of my favorites is a program called Frogs, Scales N’ RepTales that deal mostly with what I call the ‘under-appreciated wildlife’ - the cold and slippery things that not everyone likes to

touch but that are actually very beautiful and very interesting and kids love to learn about them. In that one we talk about aquatic habitats, how different species survive a Manitoba winter, what kind of adaptations they have for survival,” says Hewson.

And sometimes the lessons extend beyond biology and ecology.

One of Hewson’s favorite memories was a presentation she did to a class where she talked about the ambassador animals’ disabilities in a way that increased their understanding of fellow classmates with disabilities.

“So it showed the students that while disabilities are often hard for people to deal with, it doesn’t mean that we should treat disabled people any differently.”

The presentations can be catered for any age of students, and there’s a new program that’s specifically targeted at teachers.

“Our new program is called Bringing Wildlife into your classroom and it focuses on partnering with teachers to develop nature-based learning content that can be

customized to fit any school subject and classroom. Our aim is to offer a full-day workshop strictly for teachers where we help them develop classroom activities and projects that complement a wildlife visit, or complement what they are teaching in their curriculum.

“With our workshop we hope to give teachers fresh ideas on how to structure nature-based learning in their classroom through the whole school year. This workshop would ideally work for in-service days.”

Wilson, who attended a presentation by Wildlife Haven during MTS PD Day, says the class presentation was “a neat opportunity for students to see some local animals up close. We’ve been studying for a few weeks already so they were very excited for them to come. Their education programming tied in so well with what we’ve already been doing. The kids were engaged the whole time – they just loved it.”

To learn more about Wildlife Haven or book a presentation visit wildlifehaven.ca.

BY GEORGE STEPHENSON



It was announced in September that a single school in Saskatchewan will get \$1 million over the next five years from a private investor to improve graduation rates among 88 specific students.

If 73 of those middle school students eventually graduate, the Saskatchewan government will pay back the \$1 million, plus interest, to the investor. If only 66 students graduate, no repayment will be made.

It is the first time such a funding scheme – called Social Impact Bonds – has been used to finance an initiative in a Canadian school.

But it is a program that will soon find its way into a Manitoba school or prison or other social service agency.

Manitoba Premier Brian Pallister has made no secret of his intention to embrace Social Impact Bonds as a way to fund social service agencies or specific projects.

Shortly after the election last April, Pallister told his new Minister of Families to “foster new business, social and community partnerships” through Social Impact Bonds. That call was repeated in the Speech from the Throne in November, saying SIBs “will explore new and innovative solutions to our province’s social challenges.”

While Social Impact Bonds would be new here, they have been used in a variety of countries to fund projects to reduce crime and poverty or to increase student graduation rates.

Their impact and success, however, is the subject of great dispute; one that has grown as more governments look to private funding for public services.

The idea was pioneered several years ago in Britain by Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron. This was followed by a number of American states.

John Loxley, of the department of economics at the University of Manitoba, has followed the development and written about SIBs since their initial use in public services.

In a recent paper for the Centre of Policy Alternatives, Loxley said that legislation to permit SIB projects has been passed recently in Hawaii, New Jersey and Minnesota with research and consideration being done in a handful of other states.

While the mechanism to allow the use of SIBs can be complex, the idea behind them is fairly simple.

A social agency or government proposes a project in which successful results can be measured. Private investors put up the funds to finance the project. If the project reaches its goals, the private investors are repaid with interest. If the project falls short, no funds are repaid.

For example, Saskatchewan’s first SIB

involved a \$1 million project to provide assisted living for single mothers at risk, to keep kids out of government care. The project is being funded by a credit union and two individual investors. The five-year project will return the funding plus five per cent interest if all 22 children remain with their mothers for six months after leaving the assisted living home. The amount of return diminishes depending on the number of children who are not taken into care. If fewer than 17 remain with their mothers there is no payback.

The return on the investments often depends on how close the projects come to reaching the pre-determined goals.

In the case of the Saskatchewan school, investors – the foundation created by the mining company Mosaic – will get their investment back, plus 1.3 per cent per year if 82 per cent of the students graduate. If there is a 75 per cent graduation rate, three-quarters of the investment is repaid without interest. Below that, no repayment is made.

The Saskatchewan government claims that “only about 48 per cent of students with similar demographics to Mother Teresa Middle School graduate on time.”

It estimates the project could save taxpayers \$1.7 million, based on projections of reduced costs of economic, health and social services over the five years.

While the school has naturally welcomed the project, both the Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation and the Saskatchewan School Boards Association have questioned the initiative.

“The entire education community should be alarmed by this announcement,” the teachers’ federation said in an article on its website. “Using private funding to pick winners and losers runs against the principle of equity.

“Saskatchewan public schools educate over 175,000 students – are those who are not supported by the Social Impact Bond any less deserving than the 88 who will be helped? Is their education less important?

“If schools in Saskatchewan are at a loss for funding, we have a duty to look harder for solutions than the latest fad in privatization.”

MTS President Norm Gould agrees.

“Social Impact Bonds are an attempt by government to off-load their responsibility, plain and simple. Social Impact Bonds are the thin edge of the wedge to privatization.

“SIBs accelerate the expansion of the inequity gap between those that have and the rest of us. What has happened to the notion of the common good and the role government plays?”

Gould isn’t the only one with a skeptical view of the growing usage of SIBs.

David MacDonald, a senior economist with the Centre for Policy Alternatives, points out that organizations such as the Alberta College of Social Workers oppose SIBs because they “allow financial institutions to turn human suffering and conditions into commodities.”

As well, he says the idea that SIBs are risk-free and that private investors are taking all the risks is false.

“The assumption is that investors shoulder the risk for funding programs — which might not meet the stated goals, in which case the government pays nothing and the investors take a bath.

“But in the real world it wouldn’t actually happen that way. In practice, there will likely be very little experimentation in social impact bonds. No investor in their right mind is going to put up \$5 million with a 50/50 chance of losing it all. It’s far more likely that investors will back projects that have a proven track record. True experimentation is almost always going to be on a smaller scale and funded by government money because of the high risk of failure.”

MacDonald says it is also doubtful that investors will lose money even when projects come up short of their goals. It wouldn’t be in a government’s interest.

“There is no free lunch with the Social

Impact Bond model. Make no mistake: The government always pays. Even if the project misses its targets, investors will be paid off so that they’ll pony up for next year’s bond. Otherwise, the house of cards collapses. To keep this complex model going, governments would have to ante up, no matter the outcome.”

“THE ENTIRE EDUCATION COMMUNITY SHOULD BE ALARMED BY THIS ANNOUNCEMENT, USING PRIVATE FUNDING TO PICK WINNERS AND LOSERS RUNS AGAINST THE PRINCIPLE OF EQUITY.”

— SASKATCHEWAN TEACHERS’ FEDERATION

Other critics have even darker concerns.

Mai Tran, a program associate with the Council of State Governments, has written that some “worry that because of the high risk associated with these bonds, stakeholders and advocates may be tempted to distort

evidence of their positive outcomes.”

This is a major concern of some critics because investors have a more direct role in the functioning of the project they have funded. Governments have much less oversight than they would with publicly-funded initiatives. In many, investors meet regularly with the social service organization to see if the project is working and if changes are needed in the way it is being done.

MacDonald says there is more pressure on social service agencies because investors have no tolerance for failure and would have questions if the goals aren’t met.

“It’s not hard to see that question being resolved in the courts, again with the beneficiaries being lawyers and accountants instead of a young person trying to get a job and stay out of prison.”

Whether the projects in the Manitoba premier’s mind will address such concerns is yet to be seen. But his enthusiasm for private funding of public services is apparent.

“We will engage in consultations with interested partners from business and the community with the goal of increasing social supports through innovative Social Impact Bonds,” he said. “These discussions will begin the process of fostering new business, social and community partnerships.”



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The delicate balance

Last spring, my daughter asked me, "Mommy, why do you go to so many meetings? You are not at home with us!" It was a very difficult question to answer, and after a moment of consideration, I told them that being their mom is the best and most important thing that I have ever done. I also shared with them that the meetings that I go to are for the work I do as a teacher for my Association and my Society, and that it is important too.

I just returned from the MTS Summer Bargaining School. Our first seminar was given by the commissioners of the recently formed Women in Education Leadership Commission (WELCOM). Here the commissioners discussed the disparity between the population of female teachers as compared to the number of women in leadership roles in education. Commissioners shared stories of how they became involved in leadership work and asked us to consider those responses for ourselves. They asked participants to identify barriers that exist that may keep women from becoming involved in leadership activities. Judging by my experiences and my daughter's question and observation, family obligations stand out as a barrier.

The work that we do for members does not come without a personal cost. A human cost. Time away from our families, energy, stressors, but it is important work. The work we do for teachers in Winnipeg and in Manitoba comes with sacrifices of time and energy, but we must do the work. Why do I do this work? I do it for myself and my colleagues so that we can do the job we have chosen and for which we have trained. I do it so that my own children, their classmates, and children around Manitoba have teachers that are healthy, supported, defended, and able to do the best job they can.

So to my children, I'm sorry that I am away. I do this for myself as a teacher, but also for your teachers so that they can do the best work possible for you. I do this for myself because I believe that the work is important for me and the teachers I work with, as well as all the teachers that will come after me. I hope that some day you will understand why I do it and will be proud of me.

I am grateful to my family and all the families that give up time with their loved ones so that we can be involved in this important job in any way we can. Teachers, committee members, council reps, local and provincial executive members. Thank you.

BY MICHELLE WOLFE, WTA SECRETARY

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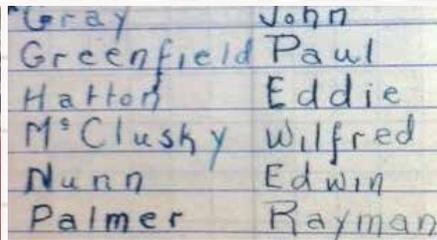
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One teacher, DECADES OF INFLUENCE

BY KEN REIMER
WINNIPEG SCHOOL DIVISION



Jill Jordanov and Ken McCluskey
Photo credit: Amber McCluskey



Wilfred McCluskey's Attendance Registry
Photo credit: Luxton School archives



Wilfred McCluskey and wife Yearly
Photo credit: McCluskey family



Reunited in Luxton School
Photo credit: Amber McCluskey

Back in October, the descendants of a student and teacher met in Winnipeg's Luxton School.

They were there to celebrate the impact teacher Agnes Leggat had on student Wilfred McCluskey more than 80 years before.

It was the culmination of a chance remark, followed by months of online and offline hunting and research. And it gave life to the observation by historian Henry Adams that teachers affect eternity and never know where their influence stops.

In the spring of 2016, University of Winnipeg Dean of Education, Ken McCluskey, happened to mention – during a visit to Luxton School – that his father had actually attended junior high there.

Ken went on to share several stories about how much his dad had appreciated one

remarkable teacher named Mrs. Leggat, whose advice and influence transformed him from a shy, unconfident adolescent to the person he eventually became. Ken also indicated in passing that he and his sister often thought about trying to make contact with Mrs. Leggat's family to express their gratitude for everything she had done for their father and, indirectly, for the generations of McCluskeys that followed.

So began our search.

It was not a simple task. After several months of social network and Google searches, Agnes Leggat's great-grandson, Kurtis Bond, was finally located in Alberta.

A phone message was left for him and the next day his sister and Winnipeg resident, Leeona Bond – agog with curiosity – telephoned me as principal of Luxton.

After hearing the story, Leeona spoke with her mother, Dayve Bond (Agnes Leggat's granddaughter), and both expressed a real interest in visiting the school and getting together with the McCluskey family.

On the evening of Oct. 18, members of the Leggat and McCluskey clans finally had the chance to meet at Luxton. For two hours, family members toured the school and shared fond memories of how Agnes and Wilf, despite starting out in very different places, eventually connected as teacher and student in Room 26 at Luxton School during the 30s.

Agnes (Davidson) Leggat was born in Scotland in 1883 and came to Canada in July 1909. After her husband's death, she raised her three children in their home on Luxton Avenue, while working across the

street at the school. She taught in Room 26 from 1921 until her death in 1940.

Born in 1923, Wilfred McCluskey grew up one street over from Agnes Leggat on Polson Avenue. According to his son Ken, Wilf saw himself as “a shy North-End boy, hesitant and lacking in confidence.”

Thinking back on his junior high days at Luxton, Wilf told his children how he struggled academically and how he had very little interest in school – until one autumn in the mid-1930s, when he was placed in Agnes Leggat’s homeroom. Wilf described her as “an old Scottish lady, with a reputation for being very strict and tough. But, under the surface, she had a heart of gold ...”

“Mrs. Leggat changed my Dad’s life,” Ken says. “She was extremely good to him; she made him feel valued and capable; she encouraged him to pursue his passions.”

Ken’s sister, Jill (McCluskey) Jordanov, echoed those sentiments: “As my brother and I were growing up, Dad told us countless stories about Mrs. Leggat; about how she supported and motivated him. Every time we drove by Luxton School -- which was often -- we heard another story about her. She really did have a major impact in terms of inspiring Dad to turn his life around.”

Sitting in Room 26, the McCluskey family recalled many stories about Agnes Leggat’s influence on Wilfred.

“Dad liked to write, and Mrs. Leggat gave him a lot of individual attention to develop his skills in this domain,” Ken said. “She encouraged him to read, and he did -- all 20 volumes of the old Book of Knowledge.”

Jill recalled that, “Mrs. Leggat even encouraged and taught Dad how to write poetry. Later in life, he demonstrated his skill by penning incredibly witty, hilarious poems about people and things, and he was very much in demand as a speaker at weddings, socials, and retirements. The highlight of many a social gathering was Wilf McCluskey reading one of his personalized poems.”

Mrs. Leggat’s influence extended beyond the classroom and academics. Ken mentioned that Wilfred became known as a talented hockey goalie: “Dad was wildly enthusiastic about hockey, and Mrs. Leggat helped build her relationship with him by taking the time to talk about sports. Dad told Jill and me that he loved those conversations.” Wilf ended up playing junior and intermediate hockey in Winnipeg; semi-pro in the States, and a year in Wembley England – when the sport was really big there.” Ken added, “Hockey was a lifelong pleasure for Dad, and he got great

joy playing with some top old timers’ teams and coaching at various hockey schools. Mrs. Leggat didn’t teach him to play, but – according to Dad – her encouragement and interest meant a lot to him.”

Jill said Mrs. Leggat’s unwavering belief in Wilfred inspired him to pursue his love of music.

“Dad did have a beautiful, crooner-type voice and style, but in junior high he was too self-conscious to sing in public. However, he said that Mrs. Leggat encouraged him in this realm as well, and he finally got up the courage to perform at school and other events.”

During the Room 26 visit, Ken McCluskey related one particularly remarkable story for Dayve and Leona

“Mrs. Leggat changed my Dad’s life. She was extremely good to him; she made him feel valued and capable; she encouraged him to pursue his passions.”

- Ken McCluskey

about how their grandmother/great-grandmother inspired his father to always be true to his beliefs, even if it resulted in uncomfortable consequences.

“Dad frequently spoke of how Mrs. Leggat told him to stand up for what he believed in. “A case in point: Back when Dad and Mom were dating, they were caught holding hands in the hallway of their High School – a clear violation of the rules of the day.

“Remembering Mrs. Leggat’s words, Dad refused to let go of Mom’s hand, and they were both suspended. They never let go; and that handholding set the stage for marriage [in 1944], and 66 anniversaries thereafter.”

As members of each family shared stories, it became apparent that Agnes Leggat’s impact on the McCluskeys extended beyond the lifetime of her student. Indeed, based on their

words and career paths, it appears that she influenced at least three generations of the McCluskey family to choose callings focused on education and service to others. Ken McCluskey (a past Coordinator of Special Services in Lord Selkirk School Division and current Dean of Education at the University of Winnipeg) observed, “Mrs. Leggat left an indelible impression on Dad and, in effect, changed and enriched his life. I heard a lot about Mrs. Leggat over the years, and I joined Dad and my wife, Andrea [Manager of Micro-Communities – Aboriginal Student Services Centre and International Student Services – at the University of Winnipeg], in sharing some of those stories with our children. I think, in part, they inspired our son Chris [former Teacher of Alternative Programs for unengaged children and youth and current Counsellor at Stonewall Collegiate] and daughter Amber [Learning Assistance Centre Teacher at William Whyte School] to become educators. And now our six grandchildren are hearing about the Leggat legacy.”

Jill Jordanov [Vocational Counsellor] added, “I too heard many, many Leggat stories from Dad, and he and I shared them with my husband Mark and the kids, Kyle [Teacher at Maples Collegiate] and Kelly [Kinesiology graduate of the University of Winnipeg].”

As Ken said to Dayve and Leona Bond, “Although ... none of us ever met Mrs. Leggat, we sure remember her. And now you know the impact she had. This gathering at Luxton School has allowed us to tell you about how Agnes Leggat did in fact affect eternity.”

While Agnes Leggat had a profound impact on the McCluskey family, the gathering in October seemed to have a significant impact on Agnes Leggat’s granddaughter and great-granddaughter as well.

After meeting with Wilfred’s children and grandchildren in Room 26, Leona Bond said, “It was really a wonderful experience to know I was standing in the exact same classroom where my great-grandmother taught so long ago. I really didn’t know much about her at all prior to this, so it was especially touching to hear the stories and know how much she was appreciated.”

Leona plans to meet again with the descendants of Wilfred McCluskey to share more stories, and learn more about her own heritage. As Jill noted at the conclusion of the Room 26 visit, “Dad would have loved this!” There is little doubt that Mrs. Leggat would have loved it too.

PORTFOLIO



*Well, maybe
Michael Moore
wasn't the only one*

Five days before the election, the Chinese primate, Geda, aka the "king of prophets," chose Trump as the winner of Tuesday's election by rejecting the banana nearest Hillary Clinton and instead choosing the one on Trump's podium, sealing the deal by giving the Donald's life-sized cutout a big smooch on the lips, according to the AFP news agency. In July, he picked Portugal to win the 2016 European football championships in the very same way.

Canada needs Trump protection

BY GEORGE STEPHENSON



YOU'RE HIRED!

THE PRESIDENTIAL APPRENTICE



As we drift toward the beginning of the Age of Trump – opening soon in a country near you -- Canadians should ponder what our neighbours to the south have done. And how they did it.

The immediate reaction has been that Canadians would never elect such a vulgar, misogynistic, bigoted know-nothing to lead the country.

We're far more progressive.

We have universal health care and marriage equality. Women make legal choices about their own bodies. We've welcomed refugees. We have no wall.

True enough, but the consensus in the U.S. back in August seemed to be that it would never crown this clown, either. Flash forward to this January when we'll see Agent Orange begin to dismantle many of the similar benefits Americans have built over the past couple of decades.

As with some forces in this country, he and his supporters want to live in the 1950s. Mad Men forever.

There are some lessons for Canadians.

The main one is something already being debated



GLAMOUR WOMEN OF THE YEAR

YOU'VE COME A long way, baby (kind of)

Apparently faced with a worldwide shortage of notable women, Glamour Magazine has included U-2 frontman Bono (or Paul Hewson to his mum) among its 2016 Women of the Year. Editor said the idea of including a man had been discussed in previous years and rejected.

"But it started to seem that that might be an outdated way of looking at things, and there are so many men who really are doing wonderful things for women these days," Yes, so outdated and, really, men in general and Bono in particular just don't get enough publicity and awards without being included in a women-of-the-year feature.

Meanwhile, the United Nations also found itself up against the notable women shortage, naming comic book character Wonder Woman as its new Honorary Ambassador for the Empowerment of Women and Girls. It eventually backed down in the face of rational outrage. Just what this pretend person was to do was unclear. There would, however, have been great savings on travel costs. She could have just travelled through the Internet or through the mail for the cost of a stamp.



IN MICHAEL, WE TRUST

The pollsters may have been somewhat off in predicting the outcome of the U.S. election, but one well-known gadfly and documentary producer called it. Back in July Michael Moore penned an essay on why Donald Trump would be elected president. He nailed it. Next time phone him.



in Canada – the need to change the way we vote. We do need to replace the first-past-the-post system.

Overlooked in much of the analysis of the American election is the possibility that Donald Trump would not be president-elect if the U.S. had a system of preferential voting where voters ranked the possible choices.

Under such a system, voters rank candidates, picking first, second and third or more choices. Candidates with the fewest first place votes are eliminated and their votes are assigned to their second choices. That continues until a candidate receives a majority of the votes.

Trump won the election by getting the most votes in the swing states of Florida, Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin. All were decided by margins less than the number of votes that went to third and fourth candidates. In other words the results might have been different had there been second choices available to voters whose first picks were the Libertarian or Green Party candidates.

For example, in

Wisconsin he beat Clinton by 27,257 votes. Five other candidates garnered more than 150,000 votes.

It is impossible to know where the second choice of those third-party votes would have gone, but under a ranked system they wouldn't have been irrelevant and could well have changed the outcome.

If such a system were in play during the Republican primaries, it is unlikely – given the depth of dislike for Trump – he would have become the nominee. He survived because the votes against him – a vast majority of the total -- were split among so many other candidates. His minority base kept him in the game long enough to win.

With the rise of third parties, the issue has become a growing concern in the U.S. A number of cities have adopted ranked voting and the state of Maine voted in favour of adopting such a system during the past presidential election. Because Maine has a number of active parties, it has a history of electing winners who fail to get a majority of votes. That has resulted in the election of its governor, Paul LePage, a mirror image of Donald Trump. The Washington Post once referred to LePage as a "three-ring circus of unhinged racism and ravings."

He won the last election with 38 per cent of the vote.

It seems odd that someone wins after

being rejected by 60 per cent of the electorate, but in Canada, we often have a name for politicians who get 38 per cent of the vote -- Prime Minister.

And it's not beyond imagination that a Canadian party could nominate a leader that is as inexperienced and unfit for public office as Donald Trump or Paul LePage. This fall, as possible candidates were lining up for the Conservative Party of Canada, polling showed the preferred candidate among members was Kevin O'Leary. He is a Boston-based businessman and a right wing gasbag with no public service experience, known mainly as a reality-TV personality in his native Canada. Outside of the Canadian part, it's a familiar-sounding resume.

While we don't see it as often or as overtly in Canada, there is a base of voters who would favour the casual lying, racism and crude attacks continually spread by Trump over his adoring fans and against minorities, women and any Others who opposed him.

Depending on the size of that base, it could lead everyone else over the same cliff.

Ranked voting may not be a cure-all, but more than half the voters (Clinton did get the most votes overall) in the U.S. would no doubt have liked to have had that as the only Trump wall the country constructed.

WAS IT RIGGED?

Throughout the U.S. election campaign, Donald Trump made the accusation that the whole election was rigged – by the media and at the ballot box. Was that true?

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?
I'D LOVE TO HELP.
REACH ME AT [RJOB@MBTEACH.ORG](mailto:rjob@mbteach.org)

REFRESH

BY RAMAN JOB, PUBLIC RELATIONS FACILITATOR

Teacher Tech Dreams for 2017 & how they'll use technology with their students



Jennifer Young

We are looking forward to getting a MiniToY 3D printer. That will allow us to quickly bring toys to life in our Grade 5 classroom. We hope to write stories that include a toy character and share our creations with people from the Congo in a refugee camp in Tanzania!



Andy McKiel

With the rise in popularity of escape rooms, I'd love to see more classrooms in my school division and throughout Manitoba creating and sharing 'lock box' challenges through platforms like Breakout EDU to 'gamify' learning for their students.



Devon Caldwell

My senior kindergarten class is passionate about helping ducks and preserving wetlands (a totally student-initiated project...I was surprised). Already we're using Skype to construct knowledge, asking important questions to provincial experts at Ducks Unlimited and Oak Hammock Marsh.



James Lindsay

It was suggested recently that I watch the online documentary, "If You Build It" and I'm glad I did. I'm teaching Industrial Arts this year and I am looking forward to developing a community build project that will hopefully be ready to start this fall.



Matt Henderson

At the Maples Met, we are really excited about using Project Foundry as a way to propose our projects, track our learning, and organize our evidence of learning.



Meghan Reid

I want to teach how to learn tech without the fear associated with it and without thinking it can do everything and anything. Tech still needs you, it still needs your brains behind it.



Blue Jay Bridge

I'm excited to try the Monsuta Fitness app. Essentially, it's a Pokémon Go experience. You place virtual monsters in your school and community. Students search for them with the app, then battle them with exercise.



Jessica Lister

One project I'm looking forward to trying is for our Substance Use and Abuse Unit. There is a "What Youth Need to Know..." video contest, where students can submit a video that captures what they think youth need to know about alcohol, drugs, gambling, and healthy living. Students learn how to make storyboards using Storyboard That, how to properly shoot a video using a camera or their iPhone, and how to edit their project using iMovie, WeVideo or Animoto.



Eva Brown

My RRC students will be working on a Designing Learning with Virtual Reality project for WestCast 2017 and a protocol for Drones in Education.



Andrew Mead

I'm adding to our maker space at my school—Sphero, codeable drones, MakerBots, Raspberry Pi, Makey Makey. We're building a culture of creating and designing things.



Brandi Nicolauson

I will be doing a wearable technology project with the Grade 6 students. Conductive thread and fabric, LED lights, coin batteries and creativity will all come together as we learn about electricity.



Maria Nickel

Yes, I'm most looking forward to trying out coding challenges with EV3 LEGO Mindstorms on a Mars space mat.



Leah Obach

I am looking forward to our Makerstation project. Our school doesn't have space available to develop a makerspace, so I am working on creating portable Makerstations that can be moved to any classroom/space for students and teachers to use!



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