

**“ HOW ARE WE CREATING SPACES
WHERE TEACHERS FROM DIVERSE
BACKGROUNDS FEEL WELCOME?
WHERE THEY CAN BE WHO THEY ARE.
WHERE THEY DON'T HAVE TO HIDE
PIECES OF THEIR IDENTITY.
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WANT, SPEAK THE WAY THEY WANT,
AND USE THE NAME THEY WERE
BORN WITH.
OR BE ABLE TO SAY MY WIFE
INSTEAD OF MY PARTNER BECAUSE
IT'S A SAME SEX COUPLE. ”**

Michelle Jean-Paul, principal

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In the summer MTS members, elected officials and staff were out in force this summer



FROM THE PRESIDENT

JAMES BEDFORD

“Just because you do not take an interest in politics doesn't mean politics won't take an interest in you.”

A quote from the ancient Athenian political leader Pericles, which I think is very relevant today. With the recent provincial election and its summer campaign, there may be many Manitobans who would have preferred not to take an interest in politics. But for those of us who work in public education, we know that politicians take a very keen interest in the work we do.

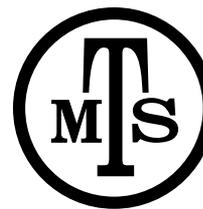
The leadership of your Society is looking forward to working with the new government to do what we always do, to promote and protect public education in the province. It is essential that children in Manitoba have the best public education in the country; their future depends on it. And we can only provide that education with the cooperation of our elected politicians.

On the immediate horizon we await the report from the Manitoba Government K-12 Education Review. In my travels of the past year I have been deeply impressed by the level of engagement that members have had with the Commission. This is no surprise because the Commission will likely make sweeping recommendations that will impact our profession, and as the experts on education it is your right to be heard. Your Society leaders shall continue to seek every opportunity to engage with the Commission to ensure that the recommendations are positive for our profession and our students.

Further on the horizon are the familiar issues that we must have politicians address; poverty, class size, French language and indigenous education supports and violence in our classrooms. Too often the solutions to these issues involve money, and adequate funding for public education must be at the top of our list.

As a new president my work will go beyond engaging with politicians and commissioners. I must also engage with you, our members. As vice president in celebration of the 100th Anniversary of The Manitoba Teachers' Society, I was privileged to visit over one hundred schools with Myles Blahut, Chair of the Council of School Leaders. As we begin the second century of the Society, I firmly believe that school visits must continue. Both Vice President Nathan Martindale and I shall visit as many schools as we are able to because we firmly believe in the importance of connecting with our members. We must be prepared to speak wisely and knowledgeably on your behalf.

I speak for the entire Provincial Executive when I say that we are committed to working hard on your behalf towards a strong and well funded public education system for all Manitobans. Have a great year and I hope to have the opportunity to meet many of you over my term of office.



The Manitoba Teachers' Society

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INSIDE MTS

THE GLOBAL STRUGGLE FOR EDUCATION, UP CLOSE

ROLAND STANKEVICIUS, GENERAL SECRETARY

“Free Lula! Lula Livre!”

This was our introduction and reception for our Canadian Teachers' Federation delegation in attendance at the Education International World Congress this past July in Bangkok, Thailand.

The World Congress was an exceptional experience to broaden and deepen a global understanding with all of our brothers and sisters involved in public education worldwide. Our Canadian delegation and our Canadian public education traditions, as can be imagined, are the desired and “gold standard” for so many of this world's educators. Our partnership and dialogue with our world partners on the challenges and attacks on publicly funded public education is vital to provide hope, solidarity and a path forward for all. The stories we heard were a mixture of sadness, fear with a sprinkling of hope. Here are a few tidbits of what was learned and about the teachers and leaders bravely speaking truth to power.

Luís Inácio Lula da Silva, former President of Brazil was jailed in April, 2018. As reported by Education International: *“The 500 days in prison of former President Luís Inácio Lula da Silva is a sad milestone for the recent history of Brazilian democracy. ... the president who enjoys the highest approval ratings among the Brazilian population: Lula has been an ardent defender of quality public education for all Brazilians. None of the charges against him are true, but the silence of the Brazilian judicial control organs makes them all accomplices of this wrongful imprisonment. We're all Lula! Freedom for Lula now!”*

The passion and commitment demonstrated by so many teachers and activists from all corners of the world was inspiring and humbling at the same time, as we learned about the many forces and resources that are intent on destroying civil and democratic institutions and to commercialize (for profit) every aspect of our social and community institutions. The E.I. World Congress, as the United Nations of the global public school movement, was an unsurpassed personal learning experience. The many special and extraordinary moments and individuals

can't all be described in these few paragraphs (see my Twitter page @mtsroly for some of those treasured moments.) Teacher activists continue to challenge the ‘powers that be’ in all corners and quarters at great risk to their careers, personal freedom and safety; their stories are gripping.

Jalila al-Salman, at the time of her imprisonment, was the vice president of the Bahrain Teacher's Association (BTA). Jalila Mohammed Ridha al-Salman, as a Bahraini female teacher, worked as an educator for 25 years. According to Human Rights First, her efforts to reform the Bahrain education system as a union leader resulted in her having “faced numerous threats.” Due to her role in a Bahraini protest/strike, she was arrested for 149 days, allegedly tortured, and sentenced to three years in prison. Two dozen security officers raided al-Salman's house after midnight and arrested her in front of her family, including her three children, while she was wearing her nightdress. Her sentence was reduced to six months' imprisonment by an appeals court.

Canadian Education Researcher Curtis Riep, was arrested in 2018 for ‘impersonation’ and criminal trespassing during a meeting at a local café while collecting data for his research on private, for-profit schools in Uganda. Researchers have been looking into these issues around for-profit public schooling and their efficacy as authentic education. *Bridge International* (financially supported by Bill Gates and Mark Zuckerberg) is a private company that operates ‘low-fee private schools’ (a growing business model for commercial interests vying for public funding of K-12 education). The charges against Curtis were proven to be unfounded and he was released, none the ‘worse for wear’ from the intimidation and detention, as an academic seeking out facts and transparency. The good news is that his research has been completed and has been recently published. Further, the Ugandan Ministry of Education has closed many of the schools that did not meet teaching and learning standards, including those schools operated by *Bridge International*.

“Bridge International Academies appears to be losing its foothold in Uganda following

a government decision to close 87 for-profit primary schools, including those belonging to Bridge, after failing to comply with minimum standards and regulations.”

France Castro, as a teacher and activist, established the *Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT)*, assembling teachers into one trade union. As a teacher's representative she fought against neo-liberal reforms in education and for improved rights and welfare of education workers. In 2016, the union negotiated the first collective agreement for public school teachers for teachers in the Philippines. #HandsOffOurTeachers is a hallmark of her struggle and the success of her defense of human rights and labor activism in the face of powerful opponents in the *Rodrigo Duterte* regime.

These are the stories of four outstanding individuals who have made the struggle for a better world through high-quality, publicly-funded public education their mission. They are a small sample of the strength and determination that was part of World Congress experience. Our solidarity with teachers and union leaders from around the world is an important strength that our Education International partnership provides. The challenges and tests that we face as teachers in Canada may not be as dire as others, but our work and determination must continue as we face our own adversaries looking to undermine our public school progress and public school successes.

Our journey home to Canada was briefly newsworthy, as our Air Canada flight was turned back to Bangkok when the massive crowds of pro-democracy advocates flooded Hong Kong International Airport and the streets protesting in support of upholding and continuing their own democracy. Recent estimates are that 1.7 million protestors are now challenging the Chinese government to back away from more authoritarian control over Hong Kong. Our one-day delay home, so very insignificant to their struggles.

Power to the People!
“There's something happening here... What it is ain't exactly clear.”

- **Stephen Stills (1966)**

THE NEED TO colourize the classroom



MICHELLE JEAN-PAUL, PRINCIPAL

On any given school day at École James Nisbet, one or more of its 15 parent volunteers could be in the building helping students to read.

All 15 have education degrees but can't teach at their children's school. Their degrees were all earned in other countries, mainly India, and a string of barriers has prevented the teachers from getting certified in Manitoba.

For Principal Michelle Jean-Paul it's a constant reminder of the growing need to get more visible minority teachers into classrooms full-time.

As classrooms have become more diverse – with some school populations boasting some two dozen home languages – the faces at the front of the room have changed little over the past decades.

"School divisions have developed these diversity hiring policies, but my big question is what are we doing to change the system so that we're not expecting our newcomer families to assimilate to us, but we're actually adjusting to create a school system reflective of the kids that are in it?"

"And not just the newcomer families, but our Indigenous families. For me, the question isn't necessarily that those people need to fit the system, but the system needs to change to fit the people it is supposed to be serving."

Jean-Paul has researched the issue extensively for her Masters and doctorate and was a founder of the Educators of Colour Network that helps visible minority educators become full-time teachers in Manitoba. And beyond that, help them when they do get jobs.

"I think part of it is that lack of representation. Kids don't see themselves reflected, so they don't feel a true sense of belonging. If a teacher never looks like them, then what is a teacher? A teacher is a middle class white woman in most cases."

- Michelle Jean-Paul, principal

The network's goal is to get more racial minorities at the front of classrooms whether through the certification of internationally-trained teachers or getting more visible minority students to become teachers.

"I interview in the faculties of education every year and the graduating class has not changed all that much from the time I was

there," she says. "In large part, the people who are sitting in front of us are not representative of our schools."

Jean-Paul says she has known many minority kids who loved school, but didn't go into teaching after graduation.

"I think part of it is that lack of representation. They don't see themselves reflected, so they don't feel a true sense of belonging. If a teacher never looks like them, then what is a teacher? A teacher is a middle class white woman in most cases."

Cynthia Taylor agrees. She is a member of The Manitoba Teachers' Society provincial executive and student support teacher at Glenlawn Collegiate in Winnipeg.

"There's a lot more work that needs to be done," she says. "There needs to be more mentorship in the profession, especially for teachers of colour, and also for them to identify and eventually mentor other teachers."

And the need goes beyond having students see themselves in their teachers.

"The schools are changing and the demographic is changing. I think overall, we shouldn't just be talking about students and their comfort level, it's also about families," Taylor says. "We talk as teachers about making sure our schools are part of the community."

Parents may not feel comfortable



MALAIKA BRANDT-MURENZI, TEACHER



CYNTHIA TAYLOR, MTS PROVINCIAL EXECUTIVE

advocating for their kids or asking questions of teachers when it may not appear anyone on staff can relate to their backgrounds.

“Sometimes just having someone who looks similar to them kind of brings down that barrier.”

Malaika Brandt-Murenzi has seen that first hand.

Brandt-Murenzi is an education student at St. Boniface University, having decided to become a teacher after earning a history degree and most of a science degree. She was working at the Manitoba Museum, teaching kids about science, while attending university.

“You see a kid who looks like you and they connect with you on another level because they don’t usually see someone that looks like me in a teaching role or in a science role. I get to be the mad scientist, although in all the old movies you don’t see a mad scientist who looks like me – even though I do have the hair.”

Brandt-Murenzi, whose father emigrated from Rwanda, recalls a specific incident when she taught a group of kids some words in Kinyarwanda to say to her father who works for the Francophone school division.

“This little kid – super shy – puts up his hand and some kids came up after and said their parents spoke Kinyarwanda too. That was the first time I was able to bond with someone over that and they were so excited

and I was so excited.

“If I interact with someone who lives outside the stereotype one might put them into, we can connect over that and it’s really funny because people would think that you’re different, but you’re different kinds of different.

“You see a kid who looks like you and they connect with you on another level because they don’t usually see someone that looks like me in a teaching role or in a science role. I get to be the mad scientist, although in all the old movies you don’t see a mad scientist who looks like me – even though I do have the hair.”

- Malaika Brandt-Murenzi, teacher

“For example, if I were to wear a scarf in winter and someone were to assume I was Muslim and then they were to speak to me differently, I would be so weirded out by that because you should speak to everyone the

same way. You’re not going to assume that I am someone or something else.”

Michelle Jean-Paul says that can play out for visible minority teachers, especially if they are the only person of colour in a school.

“I still, if I make a decision that people don’t agree with I get the challenge that ‘they might do things differently where you’re from’ or questions about my competency or my level of education.”

Jean-Paul’s father, also a teacher, was from Haiti and she was born and raised in Winnipeg. She has two Bachelor’s degrees and a Masters. Throughout her education she had one teacher of colour.

“I can’t imagine for the newcomer teacher trying to penetrate the system who was hired with great intention, but with no work being done within that school or system to challenge the way that people are thinking.

“Hire them, yes, but hire them in numbers that are great enough that they are not going to feel as though they are an only. You can actually create systemic change. Once you hire racialized minorities, you must support them.”

Cynthia Taylor, who can’t recall a single teacher of colour when she was a student, says part of that is just getting potential teachers into schools and helping them navigate a system that is truly foreign.

“How do we help those teachers, not necessarily with the certification process, but how do we help them more with the Canadian context so they are able to take their skills, their background, their experience and be able to know there are differences here in Canada.

“How do you get into the school system without working in schools? They are looking for that experience so they come onto a sub list. They’re trying to get experience but you just sort of hop from place to place and that mentorship never happens for them.”

Jean-Paul sees that with her parent volunteers.

“They are all certified teachers who are choosing to work as substitutes, education assistants. They are working restaurant jobs. They are doing whatever they can to help their families transition to life in Canada. They are prioritizing their kids over themselves and their careers. We are talking about educators with doctorates who were heads of schools in their home countries who are subs at best here.”

Brandt-Murenzi has no illusions about the system she wants to enter – she’s already faced at least unconscious bias by being a person of colour and a woman – but says she hopes she can be an agent of change.

She remembers how new students were viewed when she was in school.

“If there was a new kid and they were white they were a new kid and if they were a new kid and they were brown they were an immigrant. We had new, white kids from France and they were new kids and we would have a brown person from a school three kilometres away and they were an immigrant.”

She says her experiences, being treated different by different people can help.

“I think it helps me connect with people who may not feel that they fit in. I think it is an important thing in a classroom, especially with younger kids that are still working with their sense of self and just figuring out why they feel they don’t fit in. You have to make clear the differences that you see are good things and when someone has a different culture, you get to learn of a new way of seeing the world.

“I’m just really excited to become part of the environment of learning and to teach people non-judgmentally and open-mindedly and having more people who think like that, whether they are people of colour or not.

“If the generation younger than you is dumber than you, that’s your fault.”

Educators of Colour can be reached at educatorsofcolour@gmail.com



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NEXT PHASE FOR REVIEW

BY SAMANTHA TURENNE

The Manitoba Commission on Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education wrapped up its three-month consultation process with three days of public hearings in June. It now begins the next phase, writing its report to the provincial government.

Individuals, organizations and special interest groups were invited to submit a 2,000 word brief outlining their recommendations for improving Manitoba's public education system for consideration to present before members of the commission at a public hearing.

There were 62 briefs submitted from a diverse group of individuals and groups, including The Manitoba Teachers' Society (MTS). Submissions were also received from The Child Nutrition Council Manitoba, Parent-Educator Partnership for Literacy Achievement, The Manitoba Association of Psychologists, Canadian Centre for Child Protection, Société de la francophonie manitobaine, Inclusion Winnipeg, several school divisions and more. All of the briefs can be viewed on the commission's website.

Half of the briefs were selected to be presented before the commission. MTS was not selected but will be meeting privately with the commissioners in September, for a second time to discuss its 17 recommendations.

Many of the recommendations made by the presenters were consistent with The Society's, focusing on poverty, access to clinicians and student support services, curriculum and assessment, class size and composition, professional learning and development for teachers, French-language education and The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

Sel Burrows, a North Point Douglas resident and community advocate spoke about the importance of addressing the high rates of absenteeism in schools, which were significantly higher in the inner city.

Burrows compared the attendance for a school in a middle class neighbourhood and a school in the inner city and found that on the same day, 38 kids were absent at Kelvin High School (middle class neighbourhood) and 161 were absent at St. John's High School (inner city).

"To have a successful education system it is not enough to have an exceptionally good curriculum, good physical schools and excellent teachers," he said. "Children must be in an educational setting or they do not receive the benefits of an education."

He said the provincial government needs to do a better job to ensure foster children attend an educational program, and also called for the development of "a wide variety of educational programs to meet the needs of those students who have difficulty attending a formal school."

The importance of alternatives to the formal classroom structure was echoed by representatives from the Pembina Trails School Division. The division has a space located above the Winnipeg Blue Bombers store, at the Investors Group Field, filled with students who were identified as needing special attention from their high schools.

Superintendent Ted Fransen said the students' school day is personalized by needs and that this approach has helped graduation rates. The division also recommended the development of professional standards for teachers.

Fransen said it is important to align professional development with the standards.

"You can't expect achievement of standards without access to PD," he said.

The Brandon School Division took the call for standards a little further and recommended the establishment of a regulatory body to oversee the professional behaviour of teachers as a means to increase transparency and accountability.

The Society is opposed to the establishment of a regulatory body, such as a College of Teachers. Under its current structure, The

Society, is already able to review and resolve complaints about the conduct of a member.

However, The Society is in favour of developing uniform teaching and leadership standards for the profession and has made this recommendation to the commission.

There was no dominant theme that emerged from the public hearings, but the far-reaching effects of poverty on education were echoed by many presenters.

The Manitoba School Boards Association (MSBA) said, "Addressing poverty is imperative because poverty accounts for why two out of 10 students do not meet or exceed anticipated standards on assessment exams. Poverty remains evident in attendance and graduation rates, and provincial assessment results."

Kelli Riehl, Swan Valley School Division Chair, agreed with MSBA and said poverty reduction strategies must be devised and implemented to increase students' chances of success.

"We must strive to ensure that all students can enter the school system close to the same level of readiness, and that families have the support systems required to ensure their needs are fulfilled for their best chance of success," she said.

Other presenters such as the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba, Dietitians of Canada and the Pembina Trails School Division called for meal programs.

In its brief to the commission, the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba called for the government to "increase and sustain an annual investment for universal school breakfast, snack and lunch programs, available for any school-age student at no cost regardless of perceived need." The investment would be used to expand existing nourishment programs, enable existing programs to further improve the nutritional quality of the food served and provide support to programs in new schools.

The Manitoba Teachers' Society called for a universal meal program for all school-age students, bus tokens for transportation to and from school and the establishment of a task force to focus on how socio-economic conditions affect access to education, with a mandate to improve access for the province's most vulnerable students.

The commission
review into K-12
education in Manitoba
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1,260 TEACHERS SUBMITTED
SURVEYS

11 PUBLIC, INTERACTIVE
WORKSHOPS

31 PUBLIC
PRESENTATIONS

BACK TO SCHOOL (Literally)

BY WILL BURTON

"Now is the time" says Elliot Macdonald, a middle school vice principal, who's going back to school for his Masters in Education.

"I have always thought of education in a more academic context and having been planning on returning to school since first graduating and have been meaning to go back to university for a number of years."

Settled in a school division and role in administration, he saw graduate studies as a natural next step in his life and career.

When students are curious and provided with the time and space to dig into areas of interest, powerful learning emerges. The same could be said for adults - sometimes it takes moving to post-secondary school or beyond to find that hook, that idea or question that pulls on us, that we toss over in our minds, and converse with others in an effort to seek an answer or resolution.

Structurally our schools imbed opportunities for teacher professional development through learning groups (PLC's), in-service days, and professional development and conferences. We may find more questions than answers in these spaces, but opening up to the possibility is crucial for the curiosity to emerge. Beyond opportunities to develop our craft as educators that are built into the work day, many in the field are motivated to seek out ongoing, voluntary and self-determined experiences such as mentorship, book clubs, online communities and reading.

Educators who choose this path live the words of lifelong learners and recognize the power of teachers to create environments for exposing learners to captivating experiences, developing a safe-space for risk taking or just being. One way educators are undertaking this learning is through going 'back to school' themselves.

With a Bachelor of Education, a teacher can apply for enrollment in a Post-Baccalaureate Diploma in Education (PBDE) or Masters in Education (M.Ed.), with the latter opening up the ability to continue to a Doctor of Education (Ph.D. program). In the 2018-19 school year, the University of Manitoba had 342 students enrolled in a PBDE, 256 in Masters in Education and 45 in the Ph.D. in Education program. Brandon University had 245 Masters in Education students, and the University of Winnipeg had approximately 400 students in their PBDE program. Though the M.Ed. program may be taken through a course-based or thesis route, it is differentiated from the PBDE by a focus on theoretical and research focused readings and discussion, over the theory and advanced practice in PBDE.

Both the University of Winnipeg and University of Manitoba offer programs in the PBDE, which require the completion of 30 credit hours of courses, usually taken as 10 three-credit courses. The University of Winnipeg offers courses leading to certificates in both Special Education and School Counselling, with the University of Manitoba offering the aforementioned plus certification in School Leadership and programming leading to partial fulfilment of School



Michelle Dombek
Senior years teacher is in her final course in a PBDE with a focus on Guidance Counselling



Elliot Macdonald
Middle school vice principal is going back to school for his Masters in Education

Administration. For folks living outside of either Winnipeg or Brandon, Distance Education courses are an option in some cases.

What compels a teacher to go back to school? Michelle Dombek, a Senior Years teacher is currently in her final course in a PBDE with a focus on Guidance Counselling. The program is comprised of 30 credit hours from a selection of courses offered on evenings and weekends. She originally enrolled in the general post-baccalaureate program, but by chance took a course in guidance counselling that connected deeply with her. Dombek realized that the course was speaking to questions and practices of how she was working in the classroom, with readings and conversations throughout the courses demanding her to reflect on her pedagogy, exposing her to ideas of counselling in the broader teaching space in Manitoba.

After completing his PBDE, Middle Years teacher Chris Dasch enrolled in the M.Ed. program with the Masters in Education for Sustainable Development and Well-Being at the University of Manitoba. As Dasch says, the most important factor for him applying was “a passion for a change in education,” with the M.Ed. program providing the opportunity to dig deeper into an issue “for [himself] personally and provide the means to give it a voice professionally.” The benefits he claims have been “nothing short of enormous,” impacting the way he views education, students, the role of our institutions in society, and even the role as a leader among my peers and colleagues.

Thomas Falkenberg, associate dean of graduate programs and research in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba, says the main difference between the PBDE and M.Ed. “is a stronger engagement with educational theory in an M.Ed. program. There is also a greater emphasis on academic writing in the latter than in the former.” Falkenberg points to a number of benefits that he

believes can be gained from engagement in graduate work such as connecting with other educators around questions and issues of critical importance to the profession, exposure to new educational theories, and the experience and capabilities needed to develop research-informed practices.

When weighing up a return to university, Dombek believes that a teacher needs to look at what is on offer for programming and courses, and see if a connection emerges between them and your needs or goals. Likewise, Dasch suggests that when weighing up your decision, the “journey needs to be one undertaken with a willingness to grow and self-reflect, and that the field chosen represents an area of passion or one where there is a tension of friction point between what is in education and where one thinks education should be.”

For Macdonald, going back to school was always a matter of not if, but when. On his return to university this fall to start his graduate program, his plan is to focus his thesis around Middle Years curriculum through an investigation on the connection between learning outcomes and the provinces initiatives around trade, commerce, and economy, a particular area of interest for him. For him, the M.Ed. program is a better fit for his personal professional goals.

So are you ready to go back to school? Educational theorist Joe Kincheloe believed that there is real power in teacher’s returning to school. He argued effective teachers should be researchers in understanding and navigating power structures in education and curriculum, and acknowledging their students’ backgrounds and the forces that shape them. Enrolling in a PBDE or Masters program can provide the structure and guidance to bring these issues to light.

Will Burton is a Grade 11 advisor at the Maples Met School.

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“One of the key principles of adult learning is making a connection to what you are learning, for motivation. In Extended Education programs, instructors know you come with experience. They acknowledge it, and encourage you to share it,” says Antaya.

Many students come back to keep learning after a long time away from structured studies. When they study online, they can do it at their own pace and ease into it, she says. “They find it is quite doable.”

There are many benefits to online learning. For example, she says, there is more opportunity for feedback. Another benefit is the opportunity to obtain a wider perspective on your learning and make professional connections with fellow students from across Canada. With online learning, you are entering a national classroom.

Find the answers you are looking for

In Antaya’s PDAL courses, during the first week, she asks students to pose three questions they would like to have answered by the end of the course. “I have yet to have a student who cannot answer their questions. They all do it. They work through, and find the answers they are looking for.”

Online learning has come a long way from the old correspondence courses, she says. “Students can get to know each other even better online, and still feel a part of the class.”

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THE
MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY
In the Summer





MTS members, elected officials and staff were out in force over the summer, literally raising the flag at various events across the province. Members marched in a number of Pride parades including Winnipeg, Brandon, Portage, Morden, Steinbach, Flin Flon and Thompson. We were involved in the Winnipeg Folk Festival, Teddy Bears' Picnic and Indigenous Day Live. Can you see yourself here?





NEW PATH FOR PD

BY ANNE BENNETT

If you want to see Danielle Fullan Kolton lean into a conversation, talk about making changes to The Manitoba Teachers' Society services with the customer in mind. The MTS Assistant General Secretary is eager to tear down, pull apart, and challenge processes in order to meet the needs of members. And lately, the delivery model for professional development (PD) services has been in her cross-hairs.

Providing PD services is foundational to the mandate of MTS. Each year thousands of members take part in workshops and events designed to deepen their practice and build resiliency – increasingly important as the role expands while funding shrinks.

The MTS Professional and French Language Services Department, where Fullan Kolton also serves as department head, designs, delivers and tracks feedback on more than 130 PD offerings annually.

These include one or two-day workshops at MTS's McMaster House, as well as customized workshops requested by members, training in Equity and Social Justice (ESJ), Teacher-Led Learning Teams (TLLT), and Special Area Groups of Educators (SAGE). Then there are individual presentations on a wide variety of topics and Field-Led Courses required to obtain the School Leadership Certificate. Events are many and varied, and well-attended. According to Fullan Kolton, though, there's room for improvement.

"It's great to see the level of engagement of our members when it comes to PD," she says. "Workshop and presentation evaluations point to the value, and helps us evolve the programs to meet changing needs. We're also hearing, though, that as demands on teachers increase, it gets tougher to carve out time to attend sessions. That feedback is reflected in dips in enrolment for some sessions that typically generate strong attendance."

So Fullan Kolton and her team at MTS dug in to find out exactly what the barriers were, and developed a plan to respond.

"Our analysis revealed specific challenges to accessing MTS PD, including difficulty getting release time, shrinking access to qualified substitutes, travel time, and accessibility issues."

The response: If the teachers can't come to the training, take the training to the teachers.

"We're not abandoning programming at McMaster House," says Fullan Kolton, "but we're seeing a clear need to take the show on the road to a certain extent, with facilitators deployed directly to schools. That way teachers don't have to uproot themselves or worry about whether the training is worth all the stress of getting the time, finding a sub, and factoring in travel time and expenses. We see clearly the need to make our delivery model more flexible and member-focused."

It's an effort to shift the thinking around program delivery from what's convenient to some, into what makes sense for the majority.

"It's distinctly service-oriented thinking," Fullan Kolton adds. "The process of obtaining PD that enriches your practice and builds your personal and professional resiliency shouldn't be a cause of stress."

Other changes are in the works as well.

"We've also reevaluated our approach to bringing in 'big name' speakers. There's certainly value in it when expertise is unavailable locally—and we'll do it for some events and conferences—but again, we need to challenge our thinking and approaches with value for the membership in mind."

PFLS staff conducted an environmental scan designed to reveal areas in which local teachers have extraordinary expertise to share, and that would deliver a high return on PD investment.

"It's clear that we have tremendous bench-strength within our membership, and we're going to capitalize on that."

Research has also shown that teachers benefit from learning together—taking part in collaborative learning opportunities. MTS PD is evolving to enhance opportunities for just that.

"Our members want to improve their practice through teacher-oriented collaborative enquiry, and we want to foster that. Learning in this way is both convenient and effective, impacting practice, professional judgement, efficacy and school culture. So we've turned our attention to how we can support that work. The Collaborative



Learning Team Grant offered through PFLS is one way we can facilitate it.”

These grants support teacher-initiated professional learning that focuses on problems of practice. The goal is to improve instruction and ultimately student learning, with projects that take the form of action research and/or study groups.

Ultimately, the best professional development isn't simply acquired and utilized by one individual. It's experienced in a way that builds capacity within a team, generates energy, and encourages further enquiry. The MTS CL Facilitator Team supports collaborative learning teams as they move through the inquiry process.

“I love it when members share how the learning caught fire with their colleagues; that fundamental changes and growth are evident because of shared curiosity and collaboration. It takes the learning out of the academic realm and makes it tangible. That context creates energy, enthusiasm, and feeds a love of teaching that is 100 per cent contagious. It's the fuel teachers live on, and we're here to fill that tank.”

MTS PD programs continue to evolve and develop based on member feedback, current research and the landscape of education in Manitoba.

“If you don't see something that you need in our Professional Learning Services catalogue, we're a phone call away,” says Fullan Kolton. “We take our commitment to member service very seriously.”

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To understand multiplicative thinking, students must explore factors and multiples, develop concepts of area and engage with patterns of all kinds. Literature connections, open-ended tasks and games will be shared.

For part of the session, Carole will work with a group of students. Come prepared to play!



Carole Fullerton is from Vancouver, B.C. and works with districts across western Canada. She has authored several teacher resource books and has presented at national and international conferences.

Cost: \$165, Early bird rate: \$150 if registered by Sept. 27. Discount for groups of 4 or more.

For further information, e-mail gaysul@me.com or phone 204-772-9222.

Prep time: does anything count?

STORY BY DIANE BERESFORD

There were fireworks and surprises during the first phase of a seminal grievance arbitration between the Brandon Teachers' Association (BTA) and Brandon School Division on teacher preparation time.

The week of July 8 to 12 saw teachers testify about the myriad tasks of teaching, the demands of their personal lives, and the additional burden placed on them by the assigning teacher team meetings during negotiated preparation time. And they pointed out such meetings occurred before and after school or during duty-free meal periods.

A K-8 teacher in Brandon is afforded 240 minutes of preparation time per six-day cycle, according to the collective agreement. By scheduling a 60-minute mandatory meeting per cycle during a common prep, a teacher's preparation time is reduced to 180 minutes.

The work of planning, preparing to teach and the many other tasks teachers must do to fulfil their contractual responsibilities, or choose to do to support and develop their students, are pushed to before school, after school, or their duty-free lunch. Instead of

spending prep time doing some of this work (much is done outside the school day), they use yet more time on meal breaks, evenings and weekends to complete it.

Dr. Donna Michaels, retired former superintendent of Brandon School Division, testified on behalf of Brandon teachers as to the understanding of both parties of the meaning of "preparation time" at the time the original collective agreement clause was negotiated. She also gave information about an associated Letter of Understanding negotiated later providing for reimbursement of prep time lost to emergencies.

Testifying on behalf of the Division were Superintendent Marc Casavant, his deputy, Mathew Gustafson, and several principals. Mr. Gustafson concentrated on arguing the merits of the division's improvement plan—something neither the BTA nor MTS disputes.

During his testimony, Casavant admitted the division's contention in their response to the grievance that these meetings were voluntary, that teachers were given options, and that they elected to meet during their prep

periods or after school was inaccurate.

He also contended that the Division was limited by direction from the department of education to cap local school taxes. Counsel for the BTA and MTS, Garth Smorang, put it to him that the division was capped at a two per cent increase in the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years, but chose to increase the local levy by only 0.8 per cent and 0.9 per cent. This decision had the effect of leaving more than a million dollars on the table—a million dollars plus that cannot be back-filled later on. Mr. Smorang suggested the Division could have used the extra revenue to either hire extra teachers to enable principals to build meeting time into the school day without affecting prep time, or for substitute teachers to cover the time.

Additional hearing days have been scheduled and the arbitration proceeding is not expected to wrap up until late September. It will take some time to receive a decision from the arbitration panel.

project overseas A Gift to the Globe

Project Overseas is accepting applications from Manitoba educators wanting to work with colleagues in developing countries in the summer of 2020.

Application deadline is Monday, October 28, 2019

This year, MTS, in conjunction with The Canadian Teachers' Federation, will be sponsoring five teachers. Criteria include membership in MTS, an appropriate teacher's certificate, five full years teaching experience in Canada, Canadian citizenship and excellent health.

For more information & application forms contact:

Danielle Fullan Kolton

Assistant General Secretary

Programs | Professional and French Language Services

The Manitoba Teachers' Society

191 Harcourt Street, Winnipeg, MB R3J 3H2

Telephone: (204) 831-3064 / 1-866-494-5747 ext. 282

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Eeeeeewwww!

Science in the summer

BY MATEA TUHTAR



A chorus of delighted “ewww!”s spreads across the lecture room as a group of Grade 6-7 students insert gloved fingers into the chambers of the pig hearts laid out on trays in front of them.

They're performing detailed examinations of the anatomical features of the valves, arteries, veins, ventricles and atria to get a sense of how the circulation of blood runs from the heart, to the lungs and to the rest of the body. It's hands-on learning at its grossest and it's happening in July, long after school is done for the year.

The students are part of a week-long science summer camp run by the Biomedical Youth Program (BYP) - an initiative of the University of Manitoba's Rady Faculty of Health Sciences. The BYP fulfills the University of Manitoba's mandate for community outreach by working with Winnipeg School Division teachers and science consultants to engage and inspire Winnipeg's inner-city youth and expose them to science enrichment programming.

“There's an equation that education equals jobs equals health,” says James Gilchrist, professor and director of BYP, and head of the Inner City Science Centre. “For me, it's all about creating a sustained curiosity in kids. I feel compelled because interest in science really supports our technological future.”

The science summer camp is just one of the many programs run by BYP. The star of the show is the high technology science laboratories of the Inner City Science Centre, located at Niji Mahkwa School. “This centre is a bit of a jewel, it's not something that we have anywhere else in the province,” says Gilchrist.

Established in 2008, the Centre is a partnership project involving the inner-city community in which it is based, the Winnipeg School Division, Manitoba Education, the Winnipeg Foundation, and the College of Medicine at the University of Manitoba. The goal of the Centre is to engage Winnipeg's inner-city youth in collaborative lab-based activities to enhance the experience of science as a hands-on subject and broaden their career aspirations.

“The idea was to create this laboratory space with high end equipment and resources. We work hand in hand with the Winnipeg School Division and it's an important partnership that we have with them. We have some pretty fantastic pieces of equipment and we offer that little bit extra to those that want it - the experience for our kids is first-class.”

The programs at the Inner City Science

Centre are voluntary and the bulk of the programming happens after school. However, interested teachers can bring their Grade 5-12 students during school hours and the BYP will design a program for them. Activities include chemical reactions, immune and protein detection, population genetics, learning about the periodic table, bases and acids, DNA, concepts of diffusion and osmosis, activities with blood and the use of microscopes - to name a few.

If some of these concepts sound advanced for younger kids - that's intentional.

“We take some fairly interesting topics and then try to draw the relevance to everyday life,” says Gilchrist. “It's a series of activities that is designed in having kids touch and do stuff. It's hands on and very little in the way of lectures. It's a combination of discussions, videos, presentations and hands-on lab stuff. We essentially expose them to university type learning.”

The programs are supplemented by input from university students, leaders in the field and partnerships with the scientific community such as the National Microbiology Lab.

While the Centre was established for Winnipeg's inner city which has a large indigenous and immigrant population, it is also open to kids from other school divisions across the city and province.

“I've done presentations to a lot of schools,” says Gilchrist. “For example, Sunrise School Division brought some students up here and we gave them half a day of different activities where they learned about DNA and how to isolate it, and the structure of it. It was way beyond what they would have at their schools.”

The program also offers mentoring and leadership experiences to undergrad and graduate students, and will be opening mentoring opportunities to high school students as well.

And, at its core, one of its mandates is to engage communities as well. “We have this great facility here and we have to open the doors and grab people and pull them in,” says Gilchrist. “We do that within the meaningful setting of Niji Mahkwa School. It's such a unique school and it is the cultural home of Indigenous schooling, being on the same footprint of the Children of the Earth School. And as we go along we try

to make more and more connections with Indigenous communities and reach out and invite the kids to come to our programs and our camps.”

BYP offers a Saturday Science Club at the Inner City Science Centre where kids have access to three hours of science programming every weekend throughout the school year. It also works in conjunction with the Health Career Quest - a math, health, and science program that aims to assist northern high school students in achieving a career in health care. In addition, it hosts two summer camps - one in Winnipeg and a mobile camp in Northern Manitoba, as well as the Junior Doctors Camp run in conjunction with the Winnipeg Aboriginal Sports Achievement Centre (WASAC). This past winter, kids from Isaac Newton School who were registered with WASAC attended 13 weeks of activities.

“We took them through everything - these were Grade 7 and 8 kids doing very high schoolish stuff. Isaac Newton School had never had a student present a project at the Winnipeg School Division Science Fair until these kids. Five students wanted to present their projects that year.”

Gilchrist recalls a student who got interested in the story of Rosalind Franklin who was one of the four people who discovered DNA.

“She was the scientist who sat in front of X-ray equipment trying to get shadow images of DNA and it was her image of Photo 51 that proved that the natural structure of DNA is a double helix.

“I told this story about how Rosalind Franklin did all this work in finding important clues but unfortunately she ended up dying of ovarian cancer due to the xray exposure. But they don't award Nobel prizes posthumously, so she never got an award. So there was a Grade 7 girl in the class who was so impacted by this story and she decided that she would write a story about this for her project which she called ‘Unsung Heros’. So she built a structure that was like a trophy, and in the Centre she built a double helix in Indigenous colours, and there was a door that opened and inside was Photo 51.”

This is the kind of stuff that really makes my day, when you ask the question of ‘what is your impact’ - this is the impact.”

“We're not trying to pressure anyone. The way we try to teach is fun, we don't want them to be intimidated by science. I think what we try to do is raise their curiosity and encourage them to ask as many questions as they can. We don't talk about whether or not they're going to be scientists one day. We just show them that the activities we do in science are actually quite interesting.”

PORTFOLIO

Cleaning up on every aisle



"The numbers are mind-boggling: \$70,000 per minute, \$4 million per hour, \$100 million per day.

"That's how quickly the fortune of the Waltons, the clan behind Walmart Inc., has been growing since last year's Bloomberg ranking of the world's richest families.

"At that rate, their wealth would've expanded about \$23,000 since you began reading this. A new Walmart associate in the U.S. would've made about six cents in that time, on the way to an \$11 hourly minimum."

- *bloomberg.com, Aug. 10, 2019*

From the hallowed halls of sad, sorrowful news

BY GEORGE STEPHENSON

BURNED OUT!

Crank up the Go-Fund-Me efforts, start the food drive, cue the violins.

According to the Financial Post Magazine: "Being a director is no longer a cushy job." It added that "increased workloads" have resulted in some not being able to serve on more than one board.

"The Age of Disruption seems destined to force the lucrative habit to go the way of the three-martini lunch."

Oh, man, down to two-martini lunches. Where are the Mad Men when we need them most?

Directors are now working an average of 300 to 400 hours every year or about five to seven hours a week.

As the website PressProgress points out that "Despite their strenuous work week, Statistics Canada data indicate directors for Canadian corporations still put in less than one-fifth the amount of time on the job as the average full-time worker who puts in 40 hours per week.

"Meanwhile, data from the Conference Board of

Canada show compensation for corporate directors has also continued to rise — most recently at a healthy rate of 5.94 per cent in one year."

The conference board found that compensation levels for chairs and board directors of publicly traded companies increased from an average of \$128,851 in 2012 to \$136,506 in 2014.

Jobs that command that kind of pay for a demanding seven-hour

The personal touch

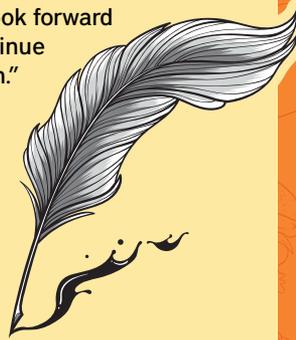


When Conservative candidates were announced for the provincial election, their biographies carried heart-felt quotes from leader Brian Pallister. They were touching.

Andrew Frank/Concordia... "His record of community service makes him the best choice to represent the new constituency of Concordia. I look forward to working with him as we build a winning team that will continue to earn the trust of Manitobans in the next provincial election."

Jasmine Barr/Burrows... "Her record of community service makes her the best choice to represent the new constituency of Burrows. I look forward to working with her as we..."

Aman Sandhu/Maples... "Her record of community service makes her the best choice to represent the new constituency of The Maples. I look forward to working with her as we ... blah, blah."



Canada's corporations comes about corporate directors

workweek are apparently not for the weak of heart, especially for those trying to cram in multiple positions at varying companies.

As PressProgress says: "FP Magazine suggests government controls and regulations are pushing corporate directors to the brink of burning out."

Yes, burn out!

Fortunately, other Canadians, those who only have to work some 40 hours a week and help contribute to every director's pay cheque, aren't facing that kind of pressure.

According to a study by Dalhousie University economics professor Lars Osberg:

- The lowest 10 per cent of Canadian income earners saw their real hourly wages drop by two per cent since 1980, a decrease of 24 cents per hour.
- Canada's middle 50 per cent saw hourly wages increase by 11 per cent, an increase of less than \$3 per hour for Canadians in the middle.
- Incomes for Canada's richest 10 per cent saw an increase of 25.4 per cent, or \$10.56 per hour.

On the other hand, the folks who aren't sipping lunch martinis have it pretty easy. They don't have to worry about what to do with themselves for those extra 33 hours a week or face the dreaded disorder of being "over-boarded."

The FP Magazine says being over-boarded is when someone serving on the boards of too many public companies begins to strain the "limited capacity of the human information system."

Yes, who among us can say in our go-to-work-every-day lives that we are straining the "limited capacity of the human information system"?

Whatever that is supposed to mean is unclear, but best guess might be that sitting on more than one board might mean your head is at risk of exploding. Apparently directors have a finite cranial capacity for information.

As Homer Simpson once explained it: "Every time I learn something new, it pushes some of the old stuff out of my brain. Remember when I took that home wine making course, and I forgot how to drive?"

Indeed, beware of corporate directors on the road.

Working class hero

Alberta Premier Jason Kenney should never have to go hungry for a hamburger again – unless served by a teenager under 18.

Putting a smile on the faces of the fast food industry, the premier's government cut the minimum wage for workers under the age of 18 to \$13 an hour from \$15.

Answering critics, the premier responded: "Look, 13 bucks an hour, that's a heck of a lot more than zero bucks an hour." Indeed it is, Mr. Financial Whiz. Now if we can just get those pre-teens back in the mines.



SKY NOT FALLING?

Marijuana use has fallen among young people in U.S. states where recreational use has been legalized, according to a study published in the medical journal JAMA Pediatrics. The study found that where pot was legalized there was an eight per cent drop in the number of high schoolers who said they used marijuana in the last 30 days, and a nine per cent drop in the number who said they'd used at least 10 times in the last 30 days.

"Just to be clear we found no effect on teen use following legalization for medical purposes, but evidence of a possible reduction in use following legalization for recreational purposes," the author of the study told CNN.

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

BRACE YOURSELF FOR SOME GREAT FALL READS

It's going to be a quick four months until New Year's. Don't let the blur go by without hitting pause to consider these recommended reads from your colleagues.



Devin King

Mindfulness and Its Discontents by David Forbes. Maybe instead of

stress-reduction strategies, we should start asking why students and teachers are stressed. David Forbes discusses the Buddhist roots of mindfulness to consider how we might employ mindfulness as social justice to combat neoliberal ideas at the heart of our anxieties.



Jay Nickerson

Critical Creativity in the Classroom by Amy Burvall and Dan Ryder. As the title

suggests, the book is about your intent in the classroom, and exploring the curriculum with thought and creativity. It offers tweaks and big ideas that can take your classroom to great places!



Christi Benoit

Truth and Reconciliation in Canadian Schools by Pamela Rose Toulouse.

Solid historical information and practical suggestions for a variety of grade levels, K-12. The lessons are ready to use and I find them very adaptable for my students! A helpful resource for any teacher who wants to bring Indigenous perspectives into the classroom, even if they don't feel super knowledgeable in the area.



April Waters

Seven Fallen Feathers by Tanya Talaga. It's hands

down one of the most important works of nonfiction in Canada right now – essential reading for us both as educators and as Canadians. It's full of hard truths that a lot of people still aren't aware of, so it can be emotional but inspires us to do better.



Rachel Thiessen

Counselling Insights by Vicki Enns. A great

resource for guidance counsellors and classroom teachers alike. Each chapter is written by a different author and provides a case study and practical strategies that can be used with students. While specific to counsellors, it gives good insight to classroom teachers as well.



Dana Emilson

I love Jennifer Serravello's books - both ***The Reading Strategies Book*** and

The Writing Strategies Book. They are super practical and have become my go-to when planning for English Language Arts!



Ian Mac Intyre

Achieving Aboriginal Student Success by

Pamela Rose Toulouse is packed with ideas for the classroom. Of particular interest is Chapter 3: Character Education and the Seven GoodLife Teachings. "Aboriginal student success requires culturally relevant components of character-education in school." It blends well with school initiatives around respect, responsibility and safety.



Jeff Hoepfner

Rest by Alex Soo-Jung Kim Pang. It's basically about how

to work smarter by resting more. We all know how our productivity decreases when we're stressed and exhausted. In this book, 'rest' doesn't just refer to naps and sleeping at night, but to being creative, exercising, deep play and stimulating hobbies.



Lorelei Steffler

Becoming by Michelle Obama. I loved this book

because it was a powerful story about a woman who was fierce, outspoken, who broke all the barriers and pursued her dreams. Whether she was sharing about being a student, wife, full-time mother, employee or First Lady, her story reminds us that we are all becoming something more each day.



Becky Rudd

The Hate You Give by Angie Thomas is popular with our

students and puts a fictional face to the Black Lives movement. This gives us a crucial entry point to talk with students about race, racism, and activism – and may even alter the way you view these issues.

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Information packages are available from:

Arlyn Filewich
Department Head, Teacher Welfare

The Manitoba Teachers' Society
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FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS!

tiny treasures

Nov 7-15 • MTYP Mainstage
Nov 18-Dec 20 • On Tour

WRITTEN BY Kevin Dyer



Thirteen year old James is caring for his unwell mother while helping to raise his younger sister. When a school trip comes up, James has to choose between caring for his family, or for himself for a change. *Tiny Treasures* was inspired and created by young caregivers in the UK.



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Adam Farrell in *Tiny Treasures*. PHOTO PROVIDED BY Theatre Hullabaloo

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Refresh and renew your passion for teaching! Meet other educators and learn about best practices in Indigenous education, centered around this year's theme, *Transforming and Healing through Education*.

Guest Speaker

We are pleased to present Dr. Niigaan Sinclair as this year's guest speaker. Niigaan is an Associate Professor and current Head of the Department of Native Studies at the University of Manitoba and regularly speaks and writes about Indigenous issues for CTV, CBC, The Guardian and APTN.



How to Register

For more information or to register, visit indspire.ca/national-gathering. Early bird ticket prices in effect until September 30, 2019. Register today, before the prices go up!