

THE MANITOBA Teacher

SEPTEMBER 2020 VOLUME 99 NUMBER 1 NEWSMAGAZINE OF THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY



INTO THE UNKNOWN

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Tuesday, September 29, 2020

Tuesday, October 27, 2020

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Manitoba graduation takes on a uniquely collective importance





FROM THE PRESIDENT

JAMES BEDFORD

I gave consideration to writing about the Province's plan for reopening schools in the fall for this column, but I'm not. In all probability the plan as of mid-August will change by mid-September. That is not a criticism of the plan, but a statement of fact based on how frequently plans in our COVID-19 world change.

I'm going to write about the process. Having just listened to Minister Goertzen give a news conference on the latest iteration of the school reopening plan, I'll borrow some of his words. We work cooperatively because our decisions not only affect students and teachers, but all Manitobans. We listen respectfully to everyone, and especially the latest medical advice from the Chief Public Health Officer as it applies to Manitobans. And we ask for everyone to be respectful we recognize that we all have a responsibility to one other. Everyone's safety depends upon it.

I have seen criticism of the Society and its leadership over the summer. Some of that criticism has been directed at individuals for perceived acts of commission or omission. I can attest that no person in leadership in the Society has given any less than their best. The discussions have been nearly endless, and they have been carefully directed at every stage. Yes, the plans have developed incrementally, and they seem never to be complete. But the science of COVID-19 is not entirely understood, and its impact on Manitobans appears to cycle from under control to out of control.

The Society's leadership made a decision that the challenges presented by COVID-19 were not going to be solved alone, and they were not going to be solved through confrontation. If we are going to win, win on behalf of our members, students, parents and all Manitobans, we are only going to do so working together with all of our partners. Nobody, and that certainly includes Minister Goertzen, will ever say that working together means agreeing on every point. It means listening, explaining, and, sometimes, waiting until we know just a little bit more before we can act.

Members have had to endure a lot of waiting. Some of that waiting is because we have had to push harder on an issue. Sometimes we have to wait for a little more science to be understood. Sometimes we wait for more voices to be heard. And I am sorry that we have had to wait, but this hasn't been about reading from the playbook, it has been about writing the playbook.

I do not know the future, but I do know that the concern for everyone's safety is universal. That doesn't mean that we won't advocate for more resources, more money and more decisions to be made down the road to ensure that our schools will be safe. But overall, the one thing we need to depend on is everyone's respect. The future of our society depends on it, as does the future of our Society.

THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY

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INSIDE MTS

PEELING BACK THE CURTAIN

DANIELLE FULLAN KOLTON, PH.D., GENERAL SECRETARY

COVERD takes centre stage, floating to its mark like an apparition but anchored so squarely there is no mistaking its unyielding power, its presence. Cue the spotlight: glaring and bold, it has no filters to blanket the star of this show in softness.

A backdrop curtain is animated by reel footage that tells the story of uncertainty, anxiety, inequity, and the rawness of human experience in a pandemic. It details change and disruption. It demands your attention, and you cannot look away.

The curtain ripples and you advance cautiously to peel it back, revealing an unexpected flurry of action. There, you stand witness to the grit and resilience of teachers and school leaders who, in its shadow, offer security in spite of this menace.

Act I: It's the End of the World as we Know it

When COVID came to town, everyone else went home. The lines of work and life blurred and education got very creative as teachers learned in step with their students. Endless discussions on health and safety were surpassed only by consideration for how emergency remote teaching would sustain student and family engagement.

Mental health was on the minds of all who worried about students nourished by food programs, in-person connections, and the safe haven of school. Screen fatigue and the impact of social isolation weighed heavy as a surreal existence enveloped endless days. The end of the world as we know it took a heavy toll on teachers as they tried to manage diverse needs and gaping inequities that became more magnified in this crisis.

Protecting the welfare of teachers and working with education partners on the provincial Response Planning Team (Manitoba Education, MASS, MSBA, MASBO) dominated the work of the Society. Our collaboration on the provincial Teacher Engagement Survey brought valuable issues and ideas

to light, and digital communication became the lifeline to our membership. We saw record hits on mbteach.org and across social media platforms. In fact, in the last year, we noted a 70 per cent increase in users, a 67 per cent increase in sessions, and a 32 per cent increase in page views. We take much pride in our role as a dependable and current source of information in the midst of so much ambiguity.

Intermission: Into the Unknown

To the surprise of all, schools re-opened in June and we started to think about what living with this virus could possibly look like in life after lockdown. Reclaiming "normal life" seemed inconceivable, so we moved reluctantly onto risk management.

Society staff continued to meet weekly with education partners throughout the summer on the back-to-school plans. Public health restrictions decreased and the test positivity rate plummeted, lulling us (foolishly) into a calm before the storm.

As the positive cases resurged, we wondered why public health fundamentals - such as physical distancing touted as the key to outbreak prevention - took a backseat in classrooms. We demanded mandatory masks. We questioned class size and proposed a gradual return to school. We called for the government to commit to funding a sustainable plan in contrast to their "use your leftover money from last year, slash your budgets for this year, and let us know if you need extra help" script. It started to feel a lot like making stone soup, but not in the warm-and-fuzzy folk story way.

Act II: Losing the Plot

Mid-August we find ourselves side-stage for Act 2, sweaty palms and all. Under the illusion of detailed plans, this is all improv drama with a hope and a prayer thrown in for good measure. Hope is not a strategy.

In the midst of this action, Mr. Pallister is losing the plot; that is, the storyline of safety. Teachers are afraid, and while

our premier insists we should not "give into fear and panic," we know he will not be facing a classroom of students come Sept. 8.

To be sure, this is a complex dilemma like no other, and solutions seem illusive as we chase this moving target of COVID. But if we get this wrong, the cost will be much greater than dollars and cents.

We have participated in more than 50 meetings with education partners. While we come together with agreement on the importance of education, competing priorities and interests shadow our work. Education and economics seem constantly at odds.


To be clear, being at these meetings does not mean that we agree to everything or get what we want. It does mean that we are at the table, and this is important. Not being at the table would be worse. This demands that the behind-the-curtain work of The Manitoba Teachers' Society be solidly rooted in our core interests:

- The health and safety of all staff and students;
- Adherence to collective agreements;
- The status of teachers as the most reliable source of information on teaching and learning;
- Decision-making informed by public health direction; and
- Ongoing collaboration and communication among education stakeholders.

These interests steer our work, our conversations, our ongoing input, and our guidance to Members. Despite disagreement, there is a collective commitment to remain in conversation and stay solution-focussed going forward.

On the Wizard of Oz stage a booming voice warns, "Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain!"

It is not so in our theatre. No, here the voice demands that you pay careful attention to the people behind the curtain. These are our teachers and without them, this show will not go on.



All subject to change

BY GEORGE STEPHENSON

As teachers and students return to the classroom this September (and at the time of this writing, that was still the plan), they don't really know what they'll be facing.

They are entering the unknown.

While all school jurisdictions across North America and around the globe claim their plans are based on public health advice, the only constant is that there will be teachers, students and classrooms.

But many may not be in the same place.

In a school district in California, students were to return to school, but teachers were to stay home. The students, in groups of 12, would learn remotely from their teachers. The groups would be supervised by EAs or Subs. It was done to allow parents to go to work, for kids to get school-provided meals and to eliminate the problem of students not having adequate computer connections at home.

It's but one of thousands upon thousands of plans that school officials from Denmark to New Zealand have written, rewritten, scrapped and begun again.

Some plans have collapsed on the first day. In Indiana a number of students and staff in various schools tested positive on opening day. One school immediately switched to online learning.

With COVID-19 cases surging in the U.S., many districts opted to keep schools closed. CNN reported that of the country's 15 largest school districts, 13 opted to begin the school year online. Some will not consider in-school instruction until November, one until at least Jan. 29, 2021.

But, of course, things could – and will – change.

Many education departments in Canada announced plans and, sometimes within a week, followed up their announcements with changes from restrictions in schools to what dates those schools would open.

In Manitoba, the department went from encouraging the use of masks in school to mandating their use.

Despite all jurisdictions facing similar challenges there is “no clear consensus about what measures are and are not effective,” says Brandon Guthrie, a global health and epidemiology expert at the University of

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Washington. He told Vox news it's difficult to make head-to-head comparisons. Much depends on the spread of the virus.

For example, with 10 days to go before the opening of most schools in the U.S., it was reported that only two of the nation's largest school districts are in cities with infection rates below five per cent. By comparison Manitoba's rate at the time was 1.6 per cent.

Around the world, there are some similarities in the measures schools are taking, such as keeping kids in specific groups, staggering lunch and other breaks and imposing some sort of mask rules.

Denmark has been cited as one country that successfully reopened its schools. It first opened day cares and schools for children between two and 12. It kept students in class groups, what Manitoba is calling cohorts. The various groups have no interaction with each other and students remain in their classroom even to eat lunch. Within the groups, desks are physically distanced.

In Vietnam its 22 million school and university students must pass a daily temperature check. All students must wear masks all day.

However, there have also been disasters at schools that have opened in other places.

Public health experts have emphasized there's no guarantee that something that works in one place would work in another. Many say it depends on the prevalence of the coronavirus outside the school's walls.

Quebec re-opened schools in May while having one of the country's highest rates of infection. In the first three weeks almost 50 students and more than 30 staff tested positive.

In Los Angeles the nation's second largest school district, with 600,000 students and 75,000 staff, plans to test them all before schools reopen and then on an ongoing basis. The program includes contact tracing for students, staff and families.

"Extraordinary circumstances call for extraordinary actions, and while this testing and contact tracing effort is unprecedented, it is necessary and appropriate," said the district superintendent.

There are disagreements among public health officials and politicians about what measures are needed and which ones they expect to work. Behind the scenes debates include effectiveness, but also cost and the need to ease people's fears by being seen to be doing something.

Anxiety among teachers, students and parents is as prevalent as the coronavirus.

A poll conducted by Leger and the Association for Canadian studies found that 66 per cent of Canadian parents were worried about their kids returning to the classroom.

Just over 75 per cent were in favour of



Many education departments in Canada announced plans and, sometimes within a week, followed up their announcements with changes from restrictions in schools to what dates those schools would open.

students having to wear masks and 84 per cent saying teachers and staff should wear masks.

Teachers also have serious concerns about the safety of their schools. They are, in most cases, moving from being essential to being on the frontline.

In Arizona, teachers organized a "sick-out," phoning in sick on the first day to protest the lack of protection measures. In other states, teachers were threatening "safety-strikes."

The Canadian Teachers' Federation has said reopening plans in Canada "throw caution to the wind. Unfortunately, the advice of our profession and our sector has been largely ignored."

That has not been the experience in Manitoba. Unlike teachers' unions in most provinces, The Manitoba Teachers' Society has met with government officials more than 50 times, working on protocols for a return-to-school. The government has adopted some requests and some are still outstanding. That could change, too. For example, The Society called on the province to make usage of masks in school mandatory for students and staff because physical distancing was difficult, if not impossible, in most schools.

Less than a week later the province announced masks would be mandatory for staff and students in grades 4-12 where distancing cannot be achieved.

As with everything else, one of the constants is change.

Plans differ across MB

BY LINDSEY ENNS

Blended learning, physical distancing, cohorts and COVID-19 symptom screening are just some of the things school divisions laid out in their detailed plans to safely welcome back students this month.

While the pandemic back-to-school plans, released the week of Aug. 18, vary across the province, many had kindergarten to Grade 8 students resuming in-class lessons five days a week, with some high school students attending school either every day or a few times per week.

The Louis Riel School Division's (LRSD) plan was to design their 40 school spaces to achieve physical distancing of two metres, or six feet, between all students and school staff. If in a school physical distancing of two metres isn't possible, the concept of "cohorting" would be used.

"We are working diligently to finalize a plan that avoids a scenario where we can't achieve physical distancing of two metres (six feet) between all individuals in schools in LRSD," the division's plan reads.

The Pembina Trails School Division says their academic program will not require the cohorting of students. Instead, their four high schools will rely on physical distancing and students will attend class two days out of the six-day school cycle.

In the River East-Transcona School Division, students will be cohorted and will generally sit in the same desk throughout the day. High school students will return for up to five days of in-class instruction and school staff will move between rooms instead of students.

Similar to other school divisions, Seven Oaks says it will only make remote learning available to students who have a doctor's note advising against a return to class. In all other cases, attendance for all students is mandatory.

The Winnipeg School Division, the province's largest, released a 37-page document detailing how it plans to keep their students and school staff safe.

The plan states that everyone entering WSD property will be screened for COVID-19 symptoms, and they are recommending hand hygiene stations be

placed throughout their schools. They will also be bringing in additional custodial staff to sanitize high-touch surfaces and washrooms hourly.

Students who eat lunch at school will have to do so at their desk and they will continue providing breakfast programs in schools if they can find additional staff.

"Staff will practice all recommended health precautions such as good hygiene practices, the distancing of students when they are eating by providing options of more table space, taking breakfast to classrooms, staggering eating time to allow for space between students eating and ensuring thorough cleaning of all spaces after the serving of breakfast is finished," their plan reads.

The Lord Selkirk School Division (LSSD) says students must bring their own lunches to school and when lunches are provided by the school, they must be individually wrapped. Schools can also continue to offer breakfast and lunch programs with necessary adjustments to ensure Public Health guidelines are in place. Only staff members will be permitted to prepare and serve food.

As stated in the province's Restoring Safe Schools guidelines, the community use of all schools is suspended, with the exception of child care centres operating in schools.

"Unfortunately, this will mean that Christmas concerts and such will not be done this year," the Lakeshore School Division's plan reads.

The province says although visitors or volunteers are permitted at all schools, "visits should be minimized to the greatest extent possible." Schools should use video or telephone calls to interact with families, rather than in person.

The St. James-Assiniboia School Division says their school sports, music and choir, practical arts and culinary arts programs are being put on hold until further notice out of an "abundance of caution."

Students in the Hanover School Division will be taught music, French and phys-ed classes with appropriate measures in place. Hanover also says masks can be removed during outdoor recess "to provide a mask-free break."

Similar programs will also be allowed in Seven Oaks and Winnipeg school divisions, assuming public health guidelines are met. Reduced class sizes for these programs will also be considered.

The Portage La Prairie School Division, similar to other division plans, is following a no-sharing policy when it comes to food



Blended learning, physical distancing, cohorts and COVID-19 symptom screening are just some of the things school divisions laid out in their detailed plans to safely welcome back students this month.

and water bottles. Students are also being asked to keep their personal belongings with them as locker use will be limited.

School divisions are also encouraging parents to drop off their kids since busing will be limited at the beginning of the school year. Various school divisions said they are prioritizing space on buses for students with exceptional needs or living with disabilities. Other students will be able to ride the bus depending on their school and cohort.

Some form of blended learning is being made available to many high school students throughout various divisions.

Seven Oaks School Division says it is equipping every classroom with a camera so teachers can communicate with their students. Pembina Trails is also installing cameras in their classrooms but they are leaving it up to the teachers to decide whether or not they are used during classroom instruction. Teachers in the Winnipeg School Division can also choose to live-stream their in-class lessons for those learning remotely at home.

All of the school division re-opening plans can be viewed on the province's website at <http://www.manitoba.ca/covid19/restoringschool-divisions.html>.

Masks: A users' guide

BY MARIA GODOY

Reprinted with permission from National Public Radio

So you want to wear a face mask? Good call.

A growing body of evidence supports the idea that wearing face masks in public, even when you feel well, can help curb the spread of the coronavirus — since people can spread the virus even without showing symptoms. That's the main reason to wear a mask: to protect other people from you.

Face masks can also offer the wearer some protection — though how much varies greatly, depending on the type of mask. No mask will offer full protection, and they should not be viewed as a replacement for physical distancing of at least six feet from others, frequent hand-washing and avoiding crowds. When you combine masks with those measures, they can make a big difference.

But what kind of mask is best?

When choosing a mask, experts say focus on the fabric, fit and breathability. How well a mask protects is a function of both what it's made of and how well it seals to your face. But if you can't breathe well through it, then you're less likely to keep it on.

Here's a look at different kinds of masks you might consider and how effective they are at protecting the people around you — and you as well.

Since the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says people should wear cloth face coverings in public:

First, consider the fabric itself

"The tightness of the weave is really important. That's the first thing I would ask people to look into," says Supratik Guha, a professor of molecular engineering at the University of Chicago. To check your fabric, hold it up to a light: If you can easily see the outline of the individual fibers, it's not going to make a great filter.

Researchers say a tight-weave 100 per cent cotton is a good bet. That's because at the microscopic level, the natural fibers in cotton tend to have more three-dimensional structure than synthetic fibers, which are smoother, says Christopher Zangmeister, a researcher at the National Institute of

Standards and Technology. That 3D structure can create more roadblocks that can stop an incoming particle, he explains.

Zangmeister co-authored a new study in *ACS Nano* that tested how well dozens of different materials filtered. While two synthetics, including one that's 100 per cent polyester, did well, most synthetics ranked near the bottom, he says.

Think multiple layers

Several studies have found that masks made of multiple layers are more effective at blocking small particles.

A good option: a mask made of two layers of a tight-weave fabric with a built-in pocket where you can place a filter, says May Chu, an epidemiologist at the Colorado School of Public Health who co-authored a paper published on June 2 in *Nano Letters* on the filtration efficiency of household mask materials.

The best bet for the material to slip in as a filter is polypropylene, which is derived from plastic, says Chu. "If you go to Walmart, you look for Oly-fun, which is the brand name of that fabric. It's also called spunbond."

Chu says polypropylene is great as a physical filter but has another benefit: It holds an electrostatic charge. In other words, it uses the power of static electricity. Think of the static cling that can happen when you rub two pieces of fabric together, says Chu. That's basically what's happening with this fabric: That "cling" effect traps incoming — and outgoing — droplets. "That's what you want — the cling is what's important," Chu says.

And unlike other materials, polypropylene keeps its electrostatic charge in the humidity created when you breathe out, says Yi Cui, a professor of materials science and engineering at Stanford University who co-authored the *Nano Letters* study with Chu.

Cui and Chu note that polypropylene will lose its electrostatic charge when you wash it, but you can recharge it by ironing it or by rubbing it with a plastic glove for around 20 seconds. Once you've got static cling, ka-ching — you're back in business. Cui says a two-layer tight-weave cotton mask alone can filter out about 35 per cent of small particles. But adding a filter made out of two layers of charged polypropylene could boost that filtration efficiency by as much as another 35 per cent.

If you can't get your hands on polypropylene fabric, reach for tissues: Take two sheets of facial tissue, fold them over and put them inside your mask's pocket so that you end up with a four-layer filter that you can change out daily. "Surprisingly, the four layers of paper gives you adequate protection," says

Chu — though tissues don't have the added power of electrostatic charge.

If neither of those are options, a mask made of three or more layers of tightly woven cotton will also do a decent job, Chu says.

Though some sites online have suggested that coffee filters might make good mask filters, Chu and Zangmeister both advise against this. Zangmeister notes that coffee filters are hard to breathe through, so you end up breathing around the filter rather than through it.

Shape also matters

A mask's ability to filter out particles depends on not just what it's made out of but how well it seals to your face. When it comes to cloth masks, those that cup tightly to your face are best, Cui says. Masks with pleats or folds are also a good choice: The folds expand so that you have more air flowing through the fabric itself instead of leaking out through gaps at the sides of the mask. Masks with a flat front design are less effective, he says.

Another trick to improve the seal of your mask: Add a layer of pantyhose. Cut a length of hose about eight to 10 inches long, from top to bottom, from one leg on a pair of hose, and pull it on top of your mask. This forces particles that might have otherwise gone

around the loose edges of the mask and been inhaled to instead go through the mask, which can filter them out, says Loretta Fernandez, a researcher at Northeastern University.

What about neck-gaiter masks (also known as buffs)? Often made of synthetic fabric, they are designed to cover your face, nose and mouth and wrap around you. "There would theoretically be less chance for the air to escape laterally out of the sides like it would from a mask that's open on the side," says Dr. Abraar Karan, a physician at Harvard Medical School who's working on Massachusetts' COVID-19 response team.

Avoid masks with exhalation valves

Some cloth and disposable masks come with an exhalation valve at the front. The valve makes it easier to breathe out, but it also releases unfiltered air, so it doesn't protect others if you're contagious.

Keep it clean

Experts say cloth masks should be washed daily with soap or detergent and hot water. Make sure the mask is completely dry before you reuse it, as a wet mask can make it harder to breathe and can promote the growth of microorganisms.



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#NO GOOD WAY

TO USE THE R-WORD

BY MICHAEL BAKER

Manitoba schools are doing a fantastic job during these unprecedented times.

During our COVID-19 lockdown, teachers, clinicians, administrators and parents have had the opportunity to reflect on the importance of public education. For precisely this reason, the Manitoba teaching community should commit itself to abolishing the “R” word from our schools for good.

Manitoba schools are spaces of inclusivity, where students, staff, and the public come to learn and grow together. Valuing difference, not in its assimilation or pretense of non-existence, is the cornerstone of Canadian values and of progress. Too often, the word “Retard” is used in our public places to “poke fun” or malign.

The insidious nature is disguised in its everyday commonality. At the store, airport, restaurant, sporting event, or on public transit one might encounter its use. We have all heard the phrases: hey retard, that’s retarded, tard. I think it is time we recognized this word for what it is, hate speech.

Although hate speech lacks a universally accepted definition globally, the Canadian Human Rights Act prohibits grounds of discrimination based on disability. An oft-cited definition of hate speech is defined as any expression that is “abusive, insulting, intimidating, harassing and/ or which incites to violence, hatred or discrimination”.

I have never encountered the use of the

“R” word where it promoted equality or efficacy. The “R” word, like many other racial and bigoted slurs directly degrade and ostracize an entire group of people. The 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability, conducted by Statistics Canada, reported one in five (22 per cent) of the Canadian population aged 15 years and over – or about 6.2 million individuals – had one or more disabilities. The prevalence of disability increased with age, from 13 per cent for those aged 15 to 24 years to 47 per cent for those aged 75 years and over. The continued use of this word in our schools and public places contributes to Canada’s cyclical pattern of systemic ableism and discrimination against all people.

The Global Partnership for Education notes that education is one of the most effective ways to break the cycle of discrimination and poverty that children with disabilities often face. Schooling is nothing short of preparing the nations next generation of citizens. As a teaching and learning community we should seriously consider what kind of community and society do we want, what kind of morality shall we hold in common?

Inclusive education, Truth and Reconciliation, and disability studies teaches us that inclusion must constantly be won and re-won. Inclusion is not an objective that one reaches and has gone far enough. Inclusion is something we constantly strive for, bettering ourselves and our community in the process. My Canada includes everyone. And if

it happens that in this process we have discriminated, neglected, or oppressed, we will acknowledge it and take steps to correct it.

Always remember, you possess the power as an individual teacher to initiate change -- no matter how small or great-that can contribute to making public schools a better place for all children. Thursday Oct. 8, 2020, is Special Olympics Manitoba Campaign for the discontinued use of the “R” word.

Please join me in educating our students, staff, colleagues, parents, community members, family, and loved ones on this issue. By visiting <https://www.motionball.com/nogoodway/>, you can take the pledge to stop using the “R” word.

Canada, and Manitoba, have a shameful history of its treatment of people with disabilities. Exclusion, institutionalization, and systemic ableism has shaped the way all Canadians experience, treat, and think about disability. The inclusive education, truth and reconciliation, and the disability studies/rights movement have taught us a way forward. Lets call discrimination what it is, discrimination. When we start our 2020-2021 academic year, Lets make the “R” word a thing of the past in Manitoba schools.

Michale Baker is a High School Student Support Service Teacher (Springfield Collegiate), PhD student at the University of Manitoba and consultant for the Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

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BY ANNE BENNETT

GRADS PASS THE COVID TEST



Teachers will always find a way. And in June they proved it would take more than a pandemic to spoil graduation for Manitoba's high school seniors.

Indeed, a novel virus spawned novel methods of celebrating. From doorstep convocations with Pomp and Circumstance blasting out of portable speakers to videotaped ceremonies screened at drive-in theatres, public school educators ensured the Class of 2020 got the send-off it deserved.

Across rural Manitoba, where entire communities embrace children who grow up and attend local schools, graduation takes on a uniquely collective importance. Plans that at first felt like a COVID compromise quickly evolved into heartfelt events that deepened bonds and spread joy.

Teacher Cathy Pleskach says staff at Warren Collegiate considered many options, including a drive-thru convocation and a travelling stage going out to grads' homes. Ultimately, they landed on holding a school-

based convocation for each grad. The school gymnasium was festooned with decorations, complete with a 'grad2020' photo booth for grads and families, each of whom were given

"Grad was a unique experience this year. It was wonderful that so many staff got involved this year. We are a cohesive team in regular times, but grad during COVID really pulled us tighter as a group. We worked together on this common goal for all 'our kids' to be recognized."

- Bobbi Willets, Hapnot Collegiate

their own convocation time slot. Once the family was seated, their grad—in cap and gown—entered the gym to a song personally selected for the day.

"At first, giving each student an individual grad ceremony over three days sounded daunting," Pleskach said. "In the end, though, we were privileged to witness the true joy, sense of accomplishment and personal experience of each grad and their family. You would never experience that in a large graduation ceremony, nor could you be a part of each student's celebration in such an intimate, community-minded way."

"We did some very special things, and may continue some of them in the future," continued Pleskach, "like delivering lawn signs to grads and lining the street leading to the school with banners featuring graduate names. It helped us celebrate with the community."

Bobbi Willets, a teacher at Flin Flon's Hapnot Collegiate, agrees. Many COVID-inspired graduation initiatives may become new and cherished traditions for the school. This year's formalwear parade is one example.

"The kids got all decked out and stood



outside while the townspeople drove by," she said. "We got great feedback from the community. Many think that we should do it that way every year now! The yard signs were a huge hit as were the grad signs hanging from the light poles down Main Street."

The pandemic reality has brought the importance of personal and professional relationships into sharp focus, and at Manitoba schools, impending graduations became a reason to connect.

"Grad was a unique experience this year, to say the least," said Willets. "It was wonderful that so many staff got involved this year. We are a cohesive team in regular times, but grad during COVID really pulled us tighter as a group. We worked together on this common goal for all 'our kids' to be recognized."

At Winnipeg's Collège Pierre-Elliott-Trudeau, grads convoked in small, socially distant groups with immediate family in attendance. "Our graduation ceremonies were live-streamed, making the event accessible

to the community," said Lillian Klausen, CPET teacher and Présidente, Éducatrices et éducateurs francophones du Manitoba (EFM). "Students were thrilled to learn that

"We did some very special things, and may continue some of them in the future, like delivering lawn signs to grads and lining the street leading to the school with banners featuring graduate names. It helped us celebrate with the community."

- Cathy Pleskach, Warren Collegiate

in addition to their extended family, many of their early and middle years teachers were also tuned in and cheering them on."

Landmark Collegiate principal Greg

Sawatzky suffered through a tense day watching clouds roll over their school's outdoor convocation set-up.

"The forecast kept changing and we could see the rain coming across the fields from the west. In the end it held off and started right after I said 'good night' and dismissed the families!"

Sawatzky fondly remembers the growing excitement among his grads, who, like most senior students, were disheartened that traditional celebrations weren't possible.

"As we released details about our plans, the grads became more excited. In the end, they were very appreciative of the efforts of the staff and school division to make this day possible. Many of them have been in school together since kindergarten, so to finish together was important."

Sawatzky and his team kept in mind the significance of graduation for those who have supported the students over the years.

"For me, it was not only important to have

this for our grads, but for their families. They invested in that education journey. It was also important for the staff of Landmark Collegiate who worked so hard to make the day special. So to see it all come together was gratifying for them as well.”

Many teachers are parents, too, and some had graduates in the family. For Marianne Fenn and Tania Sigurdson, the occasion was especially meaningful. Principal and vice-principal respectively at Morden Collegiate, they presided over their own daughters’ convocations in June.

“This is for sure a year to empathize with parents and students who envisioned this day very differently—so did I,” said Sigurdson. “I imagined my daughter crossing the stage and shaking her hand and Marianne moving her tassel over. We were all coping with the fact that this was going

to look very different. But while it looked different what we’ve realized is that it feels the same. There’s still that pride and joy and sense of accomplishment. There’s still lots to look forward to and lots ahead of them.”

The emotional roller coaster of grad planning heightened the impact of an already powerful experience for Manitoba students, staff, parents and communities alike. Fenn recalls arriving at home after the first day of individual graduations, sitting in her car looking at a text containing the first 10 seconds of the school’s convocation video.

“I just sat there and sobbed. It was just so good and so real and that was when I realized that all the planning and all the effort were absolutely worth it. I’m so proud of all the staff who worked so hard to make it happen for the kids, for all of us.”

At McGregor Collegiate’s drive-in convocation, Principal Kyle McKinstry spoke of the tenacity of spirit and resilience among this graduating class, and thanked parents and extended families for the privilege of watching their children grow. He concluded with a special acknowledgement of his staff, words that apply equally to teachers in McGregor and in cities and towns across the province.

“Thanks to the best staff team that a principal and any student could ask for. Having to completely change your mode of teaching—essentially in a day—and do it seamlessly, is a testament to your caring professionalism and compassionate, nurturing character.”

Likewise, he addressed the graduates. “To the Class of 2020: Your time here is ending now, but your journey is barely beginning. Congratulations, and may this be only the first of your many amazing accomplishments!”



LAUREN COGAN of Winnipeg’s Oak Park High School was awarded the 2020 Virtual Valedictorian Scholarship by the National Society of High School Scholars (NSHSS), an international honors and scholarship program co-founded by Claes Nobel and James Lewis. The scholarship program recognized select students who submitted inspirational and encouraging video messages to the class of 2020 around the globe.

What was the message behind your virtual valedictory?

For me the video was intended to show all 80 students featured in the video as “valedictorians.” They shared their fondest high school memories, thanked those who have supported us along our journey and left the Class of 2020 with meaningful advice as we move on into the next chapter of our lives. These are all aspects of a conventional valedictory address done in a non-conventional kind of way... which makes sense given that 2020 has been very unconventional.

What inspired you to create and direct your video?

Because this pandemic is global and is affecting everyone, I wanted to make a video dedicated to Class of 2020 graduates around the world, as we are all in this together.

As you say in the video, it’s fair to be sad, and feel a bit cheated because your graduation experience was so unusual. Would you say, though, that in some ways it was even more meaningful or special than most?

I give credit to the Oak Park staff for making graduation not only happen this year but making it a special day. Other Oak Park students also feel the same about the outdoor convocation that took place in the school’s parking lot. Each student was allotted a time to come to the school and receive their diploma. Because it was outside, I actually brought my dog up on stage with me...not sure if it was allowed but I did it anyway and it was adorable.

How have your teachers contributed to your personal and academic development?

A year and a half ago I went on a school trip to Kenya with Oak Park staff members and other students. There the children don’t refer to themselves as students. Instead, they call themselves learners, because they were there to learn. When I came home I thought about this a little more and I came up with why I also consider myself a learner and not a student:

“Students complete assignments, attend classes and receive grades; however, the mentality of a learner revolves around developing objectives, seeking understanding, and being curious. Once you leave school, you are no longer a student, but the pursuit of learning can be lifelong.”

This is the mentality of most of the Oak Park staff, which is why I have grown so much as a person throughout high school. What our teachers emphasised was the importance of staying curious through asking questions, coming up with unique solutions and expanding our horizons through getting involved in the school community and elsewhere. When you are curious you never stop learning... even outside the classroom. This is how I have grown academically and as a person.

What is your favourite moment from your unique COVID-19 grad experience?

My favourite moment was creating this video of course. I worked closely with my good friend Reis Best who spent hours editing the entire thing. He also graduated from Oak Park this year.



Keep all of your professional development options open

Consider online programs with Extended Education

The unprecedented challenges stemming from the pandemic remind us that being an effective teacher requires professionals to keep learning and keep adapting.

“Ongoing professional development is an inherent part of the profession,” says an administrator in Extended Education at the University of Manitoba, with more than 40 years of experience in both public and post-secondary education. “Once you finish your initial teacher education program, you’re certainly not done. The current pandemic reminds us that professional development is an integral part of teaching.”

Most teachers are familiar with how to develop professionally through post-baccalaureate and graduate degree options, but they may not always think about the non-degree options offered by Extended Education that can also help them to broaden their knowledge and skill base, and develop professionally.

“As teachers adjust to our new reality, they should be asking themselves what else they can do to broaden their knowledge and skill set. We are all rethinking our assumptions about what teaching will look like and what kinds of skills will be needed in the future,” says the administrator. “I encourage teachers to consider all of their options, to think beyond more traditional forms of professional development, and consider how non-degree programming can help too.”

Extended Education at the University of Manitoba provides several options.

In these ever-evolving times, the Change Management program can help you gain helpful and practical expertise related to the change management process, an area that will be in high demand. Add this UM Letter of Accomplishment to your resume and become an asset to your school or school division.

To supplement your ability to use technology effectively, the E-Learning Letter of Accomplishment will build on your knowledge and expertise in designing and delivering online learning.

And, if you are considering moving from pedagogy to andragogy, there’s Program Development for Adult Learners (PDAL). This UM certificate will help you expand on your current teaching skills so that you can become an effective adult educator at a time when an increasing number of people are returning to school.

“PDAL is a nice option for teachers looking to move in that direction, a great way to test the waters. In fact, you may enjoy the PDAL program so much you may want to use it as a springboard to pursuing a graduate degree in adult and post-secondary education.”

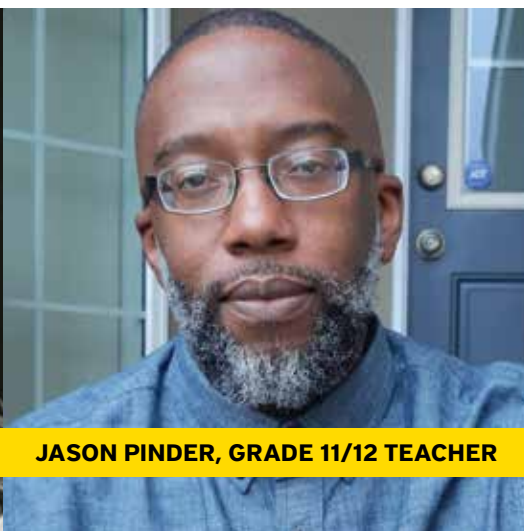
In this way, non-degree programs offered by Extended Education can actually complement more traditional degree programs offered by other UM faculties.

Explore the options and learn more.

UMExtended.ca/Online



BATHÉLEMY BOLIVAR, COORDINATOR



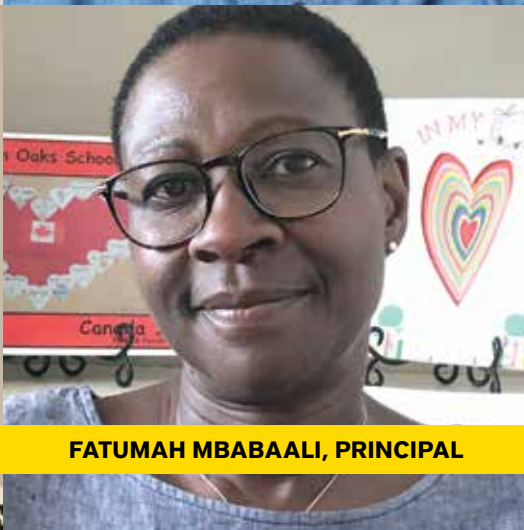
JASON PINDER, GRADE 11/12 TEACHER



JILL SUTHERLAND, GRADE 7 TEACHER



SONYA WILLIAMS, MUSIC TEACHER



FATUMAH MBABAALI, PRINCIPAL



MICHELLE JEAN-PAUL, PRINCIPAL

BLACK LIVES (AND LEARNING) MATTER

BY LINDSEY ENNS

As the Black Lives Matter movement and Justice 4 Black Lives rallies continue to see a surge in support across the globe, teachers say education is key when it comes to addressing racism.

“It’s kind of a wake up call ... an awakening for everybody,” said Bathélemy Bolivar, a division and numeracy coordinator with Division scolaire franco-manitobaine (DSFM). “This has woken people up.”

Bolivar says schools can help fill the gap of opportunities among different races, address social inequalities and help students flourish and achieve their full potential.

This movement is “very valuable” for students of colour, he added, and he’s hopeful it’s a turning point towards more racial equity.

“It means their voices are heard and

we hope that we not only be in a more tolerant society but it’s also about opportunity for those Black students,” Bolivar said. “They should know that there should be something better for them.”

Jason Pinder, a Grade 11/12 English teacher at West Kildonan Collegiate, says he’s hoping this movement leads to real change.

Pinder said it was inspiring to see so many different races out supporting the Justice 4 Black Lives rally in Winnipeg on June 5. The gathering of nearly 20,000 people at the Manitoba Legislature was sparked by the death of George Floyd,

a 46-year-old African American man who was killed by a police officer in Minneapolis.

"But it can't stop there. There needs to be systemic change," Pinder said. "I live and breathe education ... what I want to do as an individual is to continue the work I've been doing in terms of anti-Black racism ... really just try to teach the best I can and be the change."

Pinder and another teacher at his school helped start a Black student union after noticing a need for it. He says the group gives students a place to just be themselves and connect with other Black students at their school. The goal is to make them feel celebrated for their intelligence, while exposing them to other possibilities, Pinder said.

"The level of pride and the connections that they've started to form has been the main piece for me ... creating that cohesiveness that wasn't there before."

Jill Sutherland, a Grade 7 teacher at École Charleswood School, said the rally in Winnipeg inspired her to start an online petition to change the name of Cecil Rhodes School.

"I thought this would be the time to apply a little pressure ... and gain public support for that change," Sutherland said, adding she first came across the name of the school while looking for teaching jobs. "It's always been in the back of my mind that this should change."

Sutherland said Rhodes was a "self-proclaimed white supremacist," a British businessman, imperialist and politician who controlled and exploited southern Africa in the 19th century. His ideas also served as one of the foundations for apartheid.

The online petition on Change.org has garnered more than 1,700 signatures. Sutherland said the motion to change the school's name was tabled during a Winnipeg School Division board meeting on June 15. It is now entering a consultation phase and Sutherland is hoping that with enough support and community involvement, the name will eventually be changed.

Sonya Williams, a music teacher at Technical Vocational High School, says Black Lives Matter "opens the door to a bigger conversation" when it comes to addressing all lives.

"I'm excited about the awareness and the actions that are being taken in ensuring that this is a more global thing

and not just a Black thing or a white thing it's an everybody thing," Williams said. "I recognize that everybody's going to have a different role ... and I respect all of that."

"My hope ... is that we all are treated equal and recognize that people are people first."

Williams says she has had conversations about racism with her students and many of them are surprised that this is still an ongoing issue in 2020.

"I'm excited about the awareness and the actions that are being taken in ensuring that this is a more global thing and not just a Black thing or a white thing it's an everybody thing. I recognize that everybody's going to have a different role ... and I respect all of that. My hope ... is that we all are treated equal and recognize that people are people first."

*- Sonya Williams, music teacher
Technical Vocational High School*

"They have been actively checking themselves and their own biases," she added.

Williams encourages teachers to do their own research and to not be afraid of having these conversations with their students.

"Because of our profession we get stuck in the idea that we have to know something really well in order to teach it but it's important for students to see that we're learning too," she said. "We're all learning."

Fatumah Mbabaali, principal at Collicutt School, says recent rallies and

demonstrations around the world are just a reminder of how much more work needs to be done.

"We've seen this before ... people being supportive and then we go backwards, it's not the first time," she said, adding this is a step in the right direction. "But keeping that movement and belief going forward with action is the challenge."

Mbabaali says she works for a very progressive school division and their schools will be adding books that address racism to their libraries. She added she gets a lot of questions from students about being Black.

"Education is key," she said. "Schools have lots of responsibility ... we can't ignore this anymore, just like teaching about the history of the Indigenous people, the topic on racism has to be embedded in the curriculum and has to be explicitly taught. It serves a big role."

Pinder says it's important for teachers to educate themselves, do their own research and have an open dialogue with their students. He recommends reading Desmond Cole's "The Skin We're In: A year of Black resistance and power" as well as "Policing Black Lives" by Robyn Maynard, which both have a strong Canadian focus.

"In terms of Black history, I want to see more of that stuff woven into Canadian school."

Principal Michelle Jean-Paul says she hopes anti-racism education doesn't just become a trend.

"My hope is that this time around we stay in the discomfort, live in it, and actually start dismantling these oppressive structures that lead to this reality for Black people in North America and around the world," she said. "Those of us living in the Black community in North America know that these events happen too frequently."

"These are not new things that we are dealing with."

The need to change and address systemic racism is also very real, Mbabaali said.

"For me, as an educator and having worked in different positions, I feel exhausted sometimes ... like I've been fighting a battle," she added. "The walls need to be broken and some people are not aware of the walls built within systems, which reinforce systemic racism."

"I just hope the momentum doesn't die out because that's the problem."



BY LINDSEY ENNS

Care for newcomers



Riwas Kahil admits moving to Winnipeg from Syria with her two young daughters wasn't easy.

But a newcomer program she had heard about from family members helped make their new surroundings feel like home.

"This program provides a safe and nurturing environment for my daughters while I attend English class," Kahil said with a smile while standing in a hallway at Lord Wolseley Elementary School earlier this year. "They are in a safe space and my daughter learns language and culture as well."

The program she's referring to is the Care for Newcomer Children (CNC) program, which is available at Lord Wolseley Elementary School and Hampstead School in the River East Transcona School Division (RETSD). CNC is designed to support children aged 19 months to five-years-old and their families who are new to Canada while they access Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) funded services.

While the adults learn English and about Canada's culture, their children work on their numeracy, literacy and gross motor skills in a classroom setting.

"Our goal is for them to learn skills and different things so they can transition into kindergarten," said Kim Campbell, manager of community initiatives at the RETSD.

"When I came to Canada my daughters wanted to go to school," Kahil said. "I can attend class with my daughter so that's good for me. It's a really good program."

The program also helps children feel welcome, safe, and secure while supporting their development as their families settle in Canada. Some of the families who have taken part in the program have come from India, Syria, China and Japan.

"Some of the moms for example are very isolated so it's nice to have them come with their children and be able to take part in the program, learn English, meet new people and feel comfortable in the community," Campbell said.

During COVID-19 their programming went virtual, Campbell added. Along with online language classes for adults, they also prepared virtual story time, songs as well as creative activities for the parents to try with their children. Teachers also dropped off kits for the families so they had access to supplies and their settlement team made up recipe kits along with a link to a short video on how to prepare the recipe.

"Those are a few of the great things that



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- Kim Campbell, manager of community initiatives at the RETSD

have happened," Campbell said, adding they plan to return offering the program in-person with proper protocols in place this month.

Ester Schellenberg, CNC programming lead, who has been with the program since 2008, says they've made many changes and additions over the years to help things run as smoothly as possible.

"When we started we had no real idea what it was going to look like," Schellenberg said, adding she remembers the first few days a lot of the children would cry once their parents left. "We didn't understand the separation anxiety thing, especially with kids coming from other countries. Over the years we realized we had to come up with a system."

Through the years, the program has grown and expanded to include new classes to help with the challenges newcomer families face, Campbell said. They now have settlement workers on hand to help them find housing and employment so they can be successful in Canada.

"The team does such a great job, I'm really proud of the program," Campbell said, adding the program is free of cost and is funded through IRCC.

Marlene Jackson, one of the four teachers involved with the children's programming, says their biggest challenge is often the

language barrier when it comes to teaching in this environment.

"The biggest thing for me was to shorten my words and simplify everything," Jackson said, adding this has been a very rewarding experience for her from a teacher's perspective. "We have had some children be with us since they were two until they start kindergarten ... it's fabulous to see when we can get a child for all those years to really see that growth."

Earlier this year, a typical day started off in the morning with some free play, then they have clean up time, do some active time, then move into circle time where they do some reading, sing songs and dance. They then have all of the students wash their hands before eating a healthy snack and if there's time they'll do a craft. The program runs from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. three days a week at Lord Wolseley Elementary School.

Kahil says although she knew a little bit of English beforehand, the program has allowed her to strengthen her speaking and listening skills.

"This program is good for me to connect with people ... and learn about the culture of Canada," she said, adding she would encourage newcomer families to check out the program. "I really appreciate the staff ... they make a great effort for children."

PORTFOLIO

THE DEVIL CAME DOWN TO D.C.

Again with the Trumpster Fire. Through his Twitter feed the stable genius promoted the pandemic beliefs of a supposed doctor who believes that some reproductive disorders in women and men are caused by demon spirits having sex with them. Stella Immanuel, a pediatrician and leader of something called the Fire Power Ministries, also believes the discredited drug hydroxychloroquine is a cure for Covid-19 and wearing masks are not important. The president repeated her words. Facebook took down her page. She responded that Jesus would unplug their servers.

Trump's unintended **consequence**

BY GEORGE STEPHENSON



When Donald Trump finally ascends the Trump Tower golden escalator that brought him down to the world's attention five years ago, there will be something to thank him for.

It won't be for his service, competence, empathy, honesty or his golf score.

It will be for propelling forward a progressive sea change that began in U.S. cities and flowed over its borders through towns and cities across the globe.

Without Trump, the death of George Floyd at the knee of a cop in Minneapolis might well have been another passing example of deadly police racism. It would be protested, but quickly slipped into the file joining Trevon Martin, Jamar Clark, Philando Castile, Tamir Rice, Eric Garner, Breonna Taylor ...

Not so this time. Trump ensured the names of Floyd and others would be remembered and that Black Lives Matter mattered. He gave voice to the racists most people might only encounter on a nearby barstool. Racism, now on a grand scale, could no longer be ignored or denied.

Trump made disparaging comments about BLM and the protestors in the streets. He added an exclamation point by ordering federal agents from Homeland Security agencies to go into cities like Portland to put down the protests.

Portland. It must have galled him to see so many white faces protesting for racial justice. It is, after all, a city with a Black population

FOOTBALL ISN'T EVERYTHING?

Canadian Laurent Duvernay-Tardif, a starting guard with the champion Kansas City Chiefs, has decided to forgo \$2.7 million in salary to help patients through the coronavirus pandemic. In the off-season he has been working with COVID-19 patients in Quebec, on his way to becoming a medical doctor. He decided to opt-out of the upcoming NFL season. He says he'd rather risk getting COVID-19 by helping people than by playing football, "a sport that I love." Amazing. Eh?

WHERE IN THE WORLD?

Donald Trump's re-election campaign apparently has no borders. A Facebook ad showing a statue of Jesus proclaimed that "WE WILL PROTECT THIS". The statue pictured was Christ the Redeemer monument that towers over Rio de Janeiro. Another ad bore the caption "Public Safety" and included a picture of a police officer on the ground surrounded by protesters. It was captioned "Chaos & Violence". The photo was taken six years ago in the Ukraine.

of less than six per cent. So, on screens across the world people watched federal agents tear gassing and beating protestors, including the Wall of Mothers who linked arms to protect the demonstrators.

Trump's actions and those of his fellow travellers could not have done more to galvanize opposition to him and spark a re-examination of the age-old complaints of Black and minority communities around the world.

A New York Times/Siena College poll released at the end of July found that 63 per cent of registered voters said they would rather back a presidential candidate "who focuses on the cause of protests, even when the protests go too far."

Less than a third said they would support a candidate "who says we need to be tough on demonstrations that go too far."

Issues big and small that lingered for years were super-charged. Symbols of slavery such as the Confederate battle flag and statues commemorating slaveholders and racists literally fell to dust. Print media adopted the practice of referring to Black people with a capital B. After years of discussion, the move was made, as The New York Times said, to illustrate a shared cultural identity. As a Black editor said: "the capital B makes sense as it describes a race, a cultural group, and that is very different from a colour in a box of crayons."

Not all changes were earth shaking, but all

of them mattered.

Perhaps most importantly it provided an opportunity for some self-reflection of people not in minority communities. Would we white males be in positions we have if we were Indigenous, or Black or any other visible minority. Or, even still, women?

Certainly we like to believe we attain our positions in society and our careers through hard work and determination. Perhaps we even overcame challenges such as poverty. All well and good, but there's no doubt the mountain would have been steeper if we looked different. The so-called privilege wasn't in anything we expressed or did. It was simply our gender and skin colour.

It's doubtful Donald Trump has bothered himself with any of these thoughts. If he did, he might realize if he was a Black man, he wouldn't be president of the United States, he'd be in jail. But, credit where credit is due: his ignorance is making the world a better place.

But, there's still a way to go. In early August the Louisiana Supreme Court upheld the life sentence for a Black man who was jailed in 1997 for attempting to steal a pair of hedge clippers. Only one of the six justices sided with the defence, saying "the sentence imposed is excessive and disproportionate to the offense the defendant committed."

That justice was the only woman and only Black person on the panel.

SPELLING COUNTS

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

DECEASED NAME: ROBERT WILLIAM BERGER

DATE OF BIRTH: [REDACTED] SEX: MALE

PLACE OF BIRTH: TITUSVILLE TOWN

DATE OF DEATH: 09/21/2019

CAUSE OF DEATH: HEACER

DECEASED'S RESIDENCE: [REDACTED]

DECEASED'S SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER: [REDACTED]

DECEASED'S MARITAL STATUS: SINGLE/NEVER MARRIED

DECEASED'S COUNTY OF RESIDENCE: HEACER

DATE FILED WITH REGISTRAR: 09/25/2019

AMENDED DATE:

ISSUED BY:

New Jersey Department of Health, Office of Vital Statistics and Registry

Jenny Sanders, Deputy Registrar

Prosecutors allege a man in New Jersey tried to fake his own death and avoid a term in jail. His plan unraveled because of typos. He also wasn't much on design. He faked a death certificate that was submitted by his lawyer to authorities to end sentencing of him on theft-related charges. The District Attorney's office noticed the font type and size varied and he misspelled the word registry. Based on that, the district attorney double-checked with the vital statistics department and found the certificate was a forgery. The lawyer says he was also duped and dropped the man as a client.

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

SEVEN TIPS FOR MTS LOCAL SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGERS



Gearing up for another fall of tweets, grams and Facebook posts? It's going to be a year like no other. If you manage any social media accounts for your local association, you'll have to be extra smart about it. Here are seven tips to preserve your sanity.

1. Fly in tandem

Social media work is no walk in the park, it can be rewarding and stressful. You will be head-spinningly busy this fall. At times you'll be sick, worn out, in desperate need for a vacation. Let your local president know early in the year that you need a backup. Make sure your new social media partner is willing – and has the skills – to post, monitor and even alert your president if anything goes sideways. Most importantly, make sure that person, along with your president, knows the usernames and passwords for all your social accounts.

2. Keep track of your passwords

While we're on the subject, keep your phone close and your passwords closer. One simple way to do this is to use the Chrome browser. It will frequently ask to save your passwords. Hit yes each time and you will never have to fall into the "forgot password" rabbit hole again. Simply go into your

Chrome settings on your phone or desktop, hit "passwords" and cry tears of joy when you find those TikTok details.

3. Remember who you are

Ever heard of wrong piping? That's when you post something meant for your personal account on your Local account, or vice-versa. Always remind yourself who you are before you hit send. It will happen once in a blue moon. Clean it up quickly!

4. Take confrontations off-line

"Haters want more than solutions—they want an audience to share their righteous indignation," says Jay Baer, author of *Hug Your Haters*. Don't be baited by people who simply want to provoke a reaction. Raising the heat online will never be as effective as talking things through offline. Angry social media messages, whether public or private, can cause more grief than you need.

5. Some commenters don't deserve responses

You owe respect to your members, parents and other publics. You owe nothing to trolls. If you get particularly egregious comments from someone spoiling for a fight or from an anonymous or suspect account, dive into

their tweets. Are they one of your members? Are they mostly aggressive or vicious? Who are their followers and how many do they have? Are they worth the interaction?

6. Photograph your local events

If you're planning an event for your Local, make sure you or someone with a knack for taking mobile pics is there. Always ask for permission and tell subjects why. Those pictures are gold. Feature as many members as you can. Make sure you have permission whenever you photograph kids. Many times a school will request signed releases from students' parents to cover posting photographs to web and social media sites.

7. Back up your pics

Can you imagine losing all those amazing event and meeting photos? Make sure you back them up to at least one online and one physical source. One of the most hassle-free ways to do this is through the Google Photos app. Whether you have an iPhone or Android, you can get free, unlimited photo and video backups. Plus, every single person you photograph will be automatically organized into their own folder.

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