

WINTER 2022 | VOLUME 100 NUMBER 1

# MBTEACHER

NEWSMAGAZINE OF THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY



## LEARNING FROM INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES

BLACK HISTORY  
IN MANITOBA

DISABILITY  
IS NOT A  
BAD WORD

SISLER CYBER  
SCHOOL



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## COVER STORY LEARNING FROM INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES: COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITY ELDERS

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## DISABILITY IS NOT A BAD WORD: IDENTITY, COMMUNITY, AND PRIDE

No matter what your role as an educator you've most likely encountered, used, and engaged in this terminology. However, as teachers working toward the creation of a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive school community and society, we need to reconsider carefully what we're saying when we use these words.





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The MB Teacher is published three times a year by The Manitoba Teachers' Society. Articles and views published herein do not necessarily represent the policies nor the views of the Society.

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**PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT**

40063378 ISSN 002-228X

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to Contact Services at The Manitoba Teachers' Society.



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Educational  
Press  
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FROM THE  
PRESIDENT



## NEW ISSUE MARKS CHANGE

**James Bedford**

We are very much about positive change in how we communicate.

Welcome to your MB Teacher magazine, featuring a new look and a new publication schedule. It has been some time since our last issue, but good things are worth waiting for.

This issue marks a change for our Society. The MB Teacher will publish fewer, but larger issues each year; print fewer paper copies; and a shift in emphasis with practical support for members in their classrooms. News you can use!

The MB Teacher will also complement other forms of member communications that have been greatly enhanced in the last couple of years, including an increased presence on social media, direct membership emails and more two-way communications with local leaders. We are very much about positive change in how we communicate.

### CHANGE WE'VE SEEN

Change that hasn't been positive was Bill 64. My thanks to all who spoke up about that proposed legislation. You were certainly not a minority, but you were indeed vocal. And the withdrawal of Bill 64 was really about democracy and listening to voices from across the province. The interest in public education in Manitoba was no surprise – recent polling by the Canadian Teachers' Federation showed that there is significant interest in public education across the country.

One of the disconcerting outcomes of Bill 64 were the voices outside of public education that accused teachers of resisting change. Anyone familiar with our schools knows of the myriad changes dedicated teachers have made in the interests of educating students during this pandemic. I believe that we've never seen change on this scale before and it stands as a

sharp denouncement of those who say public education cannot change. However, teachers and parents know that change must benefit the students in our classrooms. And Bill 64 was not the change we needed.

### LOOKING FORWARD

Looking forward, we must continue to advocate for the changes our members told the K-12 Education Review Commission were needed for teaching and learning. We must also continue to advocate for funding that meets the needs of our students and will support the implementation of necessary changes in the public school system. For the past five years we have seen education funding touted as "more than ever before". But the reality is education funding has fallen behind the growth in student population and behind the rate of inflation for years. The result is less funding to meet the increasingly complex needs of our students.

This month we will see another education funding announcement. With the demise of Bill 64 and recommendations from the K-12 Education Review that clearly identify the need to address issues like poverty, reconciliation, racism and a teacher shortage, the next education funding announcement will be a test of whether the government is willing to appropriately fund education or stand on its record of underfunding services vital to our students. This government has said it is committed to education that gives all students a chance to reach their full potential. We will hold them to that. **T**

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FROM THE  
GENERAL  
SECRETARY

## CONSTANTS AMID CHANGE

**Danielle Fullan Kolton, Ph.D.**

The only constant in life is change. While this may be true, I'd argue that teacher dedication to students and education remains pretty darn constant.

Change showed up in epic proportions over the last 24 months – COVID, Bills 16, 45 and 64, The K-12 Education Review, the *Best* strategy, and 38 collective agreement settlements, to name a few.

Each instance showcased teacher commitment and perseverance. But this is nothing new. No, teachers and principal teachers have been doing this work behind the scenes forever. What was new was the spotlight on their role, credibility, and value. Our public opinion poll tells this story in numbers: 76% of Manitobans turn to teachers as their most accurate source of information on education.\*

The impressive and creative work of teachers and school leaders throughout the COVID-19 pandemic has been worthy of admiration, yet often overshadowed by continuing apprehension, uncertainty, and anxiety. COVID is not done with us. Many teachers report that they are the most challenged they have felt in their careers, but they keep showing up and responding in real time to unpredictable and arduous circumstances, twisting themselves this way and that, in service to kids and communities and learning. This is a constant amid change.

The pandemic advocacy work of the Society is another unwavering constant, and we remain solidly rooted to 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. And we will not stop, pandemic or otherwise. Your voice and feedback also inform this work and drive the narrative, and we count on you to stay connected to us. *Your* information is *our* power.

The MB Teacher magazine, too, has remained a constant. From a hot-off-the-press newsletter 103 years ago to the magazine it is today. The MB Teacher has been, in the words of former editor George Stephenson, both a mirror and a window to the province's teachers, reflecting their reality and inviting them to engage with an evolving world of practice. George passed away on December 5, 2021, and you'll find a tribute to him on page 11 of this magazine.

With this issue, the MB Teacher evolves once again. In this issue, you'll read about teamwork and mental health in the pandemic work of women in rural school leadership, an Indigenous Elder sharing the wisdom of the past in classrooms of the present, resources that support our understanding and instruction of Black history in Manitoba, and students forging the future of cyber security. Check out book reviews, apps, and lesson plan links from a wide variety of member and guest contributors. This is a new vision for our magazine – meant to inspire and challenge in equal measure, and we are proud that it will be as organic as the changing landscape of education.

Yet, as that landscape shifts beneath our feet and circumstances compel us to recalibrate, MTS and the MB Teacher will continue to reflect the work of teaching and leading, amplifying the faces and voices of the membership in news you can use – two constants amid constant change. <sup>†</sup>

\*Viewpoints Research, November, 2021



# LEARNING FROM INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES:

## COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITY ELDERS

By Jordan Laidlaw & Elder Dr. Winston Wuttunee

Teachers across Manitoba are making conscientious efforts to integrate Indigenous perspectives and wisdom into their practice, opening the door to reconciliation with Canadian children and youth.

As a music educator in Seven Oaks School Division, I'm eager to incorporate Indigenous perspectives into my classroom and school community. I admit, though, that it hasn't always been easy. I've been apprehensive at times, and I've had a lot of questions. Where do I begin? Am I approaching these songs and topics with respect and authenticity? How do I proceed? Fortunately, many of these anxieties were resolved after attending a professional development session with Elder Dr. Winston Wuttunee.

### FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE

"My people and I come from the Eagle Hills in Saskatchewan," says Elder Winston. "Our First Nations is now called Red Pheasant First Nations, after one of

my ancestors. We have been chiefs since the early 1800s. I was hired specifically to start an Indigenous program of music to write songs in the "Y" dialect of the prairie Cree people. We also interviewed the old people to gather the history of every song."

With an abundance of wisdom and lived experiences in Indigenous ways of knowing, Elder Winston accepted my invitation to come to our school to share the gift of music with my students. Since that day three years ago, we have collaborated both inside and outside the classroom, co-composing and performing music with students. And I have learned so much from his wisdom and perspective on education. With funding from the Manitoba Arts Council,

we have been incredibly blessed to work and learn from him.

Elder Winston began collaborating in schools in Saskatchewan in 1973, with the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural College (now Saskatchewan Indigenous Cultural Centre). "I always feel culturally fulfilled in the role I play in Manitoba schools," he says. "I have first-hand experience with what it is like to feel left out."

"With my staff, we worked on every Cree First Nation in Saskatchewan. We use some of the Indigenous material with my work with Jordan. I start every session in school with a prayer. I was pleasantly surprised with one young East Indian student who said he knew the prayer song I sang. So we sang it with

him and the other students applauded him for his fine work."

Elder Winston notes the importance of recognizing the social and cultural diversity of Manitoba youth.

"It is important to help the many immigrants to Canada by including them in my songs. We can sing together and dance together. We have good fun learning about each other. Our questions are always respectful and thoughtful."

This, he says, is what builds community, and the lessons resonate deeply with students and teachers alike.

"I am proud to be teaching Indigenous songs and dances to brown, black and white students. Indigenous dancing and languages, dress and customs are the main relevant topics we now teach as

Indigenous teachers to non-Indigenous students. They seem to be the most important, and so we keep on going with that."

### WHERE TO START: PARTNERING WITH ELDERS AND KNOWLEDGE KEEPERS

There is undoubtedly crucial value in partnering with community Elders or Indigenous Knowledge Keepers when initiating school-based projects concerning Truth and Reconciliation. However, not all teachers have the experience or relationships with members from the community and may be uncertain where to begin.

Elder Winston provides counsel for teachers: "First, they need to research

the Elders working in the community. Find out if an Elder has the Indigenous knowledge of protocols and practices. It is very important to preserve the protocols and practices of our Ancestors."

In addition to being mindful of the experience and wisdom the Elder brings, Elder Winston reminds us to be conscious of differences in cultural understanding.

"I would suggest teachers conduct research the same way they would if they were going to visit another country. Their physical, emotional, and mental needs are not necessarily the same as ours."

It has been a tremendous honour learning from Elder Winston, and I am confident that other teachers





across Manitoba share collaborative experiences similar to my own. In addition to working with our students in Seven Oaks, Elder Winston is highly sought after and continues to work with students across Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and (with the assistance of technology) across the world.

This past February, Elder Winston worked with students in Ukraine, engaging in various cross-cultural learning experiences. In Manitoba, he is also involved with Pembina Trails School Division, sharing his insights with youth, as well as collaborating with other community Elders within the division.

Clearly, community Elders and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers have valuable wisdom that may benefit students and teachers alike. We have much to learn from their knowledge and perspectives on education and learning. ①



# IN MEMORY OF GEORGE STEPHENSON

OCT. 19, 1952 – DEC. 5, 2021



By Matea Tuhtar

George joined us at MTS in 2001 when he built the Society’s first real website. Shortly after, he became the editor of the MB Teacher magazine which grew and flourished under his influence.

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of our colleague, friend, and former editor of the MB Teacher, George Stephenson.

George was a respected and influential journalist long before he came to work for The Manitoba Teachers’ Society, most notably as the city editor and managing editor at the Winnipeg Sun, and as the news director at the CBC Radio Winnipeg. The many hundreds of heartfelt expressions of loss and sorrow after his passing reveal just how broadly his influence was felt in education, communications, and journalism circles.



He was an accomplished, bold and analytical writer – with a razor sharp wit often seen in the Portfolio section of the MB Teacher where he poked fun at trending stories in politics and entertainment. Writing was what George did best and he continued after his retirement in April 2021 with a few op-ed pieces in The Winnipeg Free Press. His other talents included art, photography, singing, and tap dancing.

## LEAVES BEHIND A LASTING LEGACY

Those of us who worked closely with him at the Society were witness to his integrity, kindness and fierce loyalty. He was a natural leader, though perhaps not always a willing one. George perfected the balance between nudging and pushing and succeeded in helping those around him reach and, in many cases, surpass their potential. He was the kind of person who you wanted to make proud. If you could meet George’s standards then you truly had succeeded. He leaves behind a lasting legacy and will be greatly missed.

George passed away from natural causes on December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021 in his home in Winnipeg. ①

## COMPELLING WORK IN UNION COMMUNICATIONS

George joined us at MTS in 2001 when he built the Society’s first real website. Shortly after, he became the editor of the MB Teacher magazine which grew and flourished under his influence. His compelling work in Union communications through the years did much to advance the teaching profession in this province.

George had a deep respect for teachers and enjoyed interviewing and meeting many of them over the years. He visited schools across the province

and would often say that there was never a shortage of stories to be told about the impressive work that teachers were doing in the classroom. Those who he had interviewed over the years would recall his classic journalist style, armed only with a pen and a little notebook he kept tucked in his back pocket – no recorder necessary. He had a knack to cut through the clutter and noise to see the heart of an issue and report it accordingly.

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# BLACK HISTORY IN MANITOBA: OFTEN OVERLOOKED IN CLASSROOMS

By Karen Ragoonaden, Ph.D.

In December 1995, the House of Commons officially recognized February as Black History Month in Canada. The intent is to recognize and celebrate the achievements and contributions of Black Canadians and their communities who, throughout history, have fundamentally shaped the fabric of Canadian society and continue to advance its culture.

When The Manitoba Teachers’ Society reached out to me to write about the history of Black Teachers in Manitoba, I set out on a search for references. A rapid Google search came up with a three websites, Black History Manitoba, Black History and Antiracism in Canada, Educators of Colour Network, and the April 2019 Winnipeg Free Press article (WFP), ‘Canadian Black History largely overlooked in classrooms’.

What I noted about the WFP article was 17-year-old Oluwadamilola Ojo’s calls to reconceptualize a curriculum that represents the rich experience and deep diversity of Black populations in Manitoba. In the same article, NDP MLA Uzoma Asagwara addresses how antiracist education can provide contexts to discuss systemic inequalities, to identify ways in which systemic racism exists, functions and impacts communities. Along the same lines, antiracist education can also support individuals with the tools, the language and the resources to dismantle inequitable systems.



Recently, Manitoba Education updated its supplementary Canadian Black history and anti-racism education. Yet despite the racial reckoning of the last two years, teaching the material is not mandatory. The document, ‘Creating Racism-Free Schools through Critical/Courageous Conversations on Race from Education Manitoba’ does address the importance of engaging in complicated conversations about race to create racism-free schools.

Michelle Jean-Paul, in-coming District Principal in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism at Louis Riel School Division, believes this hesitance to mandate Black studies presents a disadvantage for all Manitoba students. Like Ojo and Asagwara, she is calling for a mandated Black curriculum that addresses those systemic inequities. Jean-Paul stresses that a comprehensive Black history curriculum in Manitoba should include the early Black settlement of the nation and the Prairies, with a focus on integrating contemporary achievements of Black Canadians into all aspects of the school curriculum.

Coming back to the original request to explore the history of Black teachers in Manitoba, my search seemed to indicate that there was little documentation available. For example, I could not find any disaggregated data about Black teachers in Manitoba. Malinda Smith, Vice-President Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at the University of Calgary, and author of The Equity Myths states that disaggregated demographic data helps in understanding the representation, experiences and perspectives of Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC). Access to this empirical data informs the design of equitable and inclusive services, builds supports and enhances outcomes. Further, the infographic data presentation also recognizes the importance of presenting research findings in ways that are accessible to diverse publics.

Using infographics of disaggregated and intersectional data, Smith demonstrated how three of four Employment Equity Act federally designated equity groups (FDGs)—gender, Indigenous peoples, visible minorities – and their intersections



Michelle Jean-Paul, District Principal in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism, Louis Riel School Division

were poorly represented in academia. The three infographics provided answers to, and visual representations for, the following questions: (1) “Where are the Indigenous Peoples at Canadian Universities?” (2) “Where are the women at Canadian universities?” and (3) “Where are the visible minorities at Canadian universities?” Each infographic presents national and, where available, disaggregated, and intersectional data on Indigenous peoples (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit), the 10 visible/racialized minority groups, and gender (including white, Indigenous, and visible minority women and men).

Despite anti-racist policies and mandates in teacher education, access, equity and equitable representation remain ongoing challenges.

We know that white, middle-class, able-bodied, heteronormative students populate the majority in faculties of education across Canada. For some of these teacher candidates, gaining insight into the lives of “other people’s children,” as education scholar Lisa Delpit puts it, can support multiple ways of reaching out to the diversity of students.

By disrupting notions of assumptions, biases and prejudice, educational institutions can become more aware of

existing inequalities in their communities as well as the whiteness of textbooks, novels and multimedia materials used as reference points and resources in class contents.


### LET’S TALK ABOUT RACE

Ibram X.Kendi, author of *How To Be An Antiracist* says North Americans avoid talking about race, and treat it like a taboo subject. In fact, he says, we need to talk more about race, especially race as a social construct. Others echo Kendi: Canadian journalist Desmond Cole challenges people to shake up their complacency in his recent book on race, *The Skin We’re In*.

Recognizing Kendi and Cole’s calls to action, contextualizing Smith’s questions to the Manitoban context may provide future direction in exploring the history of Black teachers in Manitoba.

(1) Where are the Black teachers in Manitoba K-12 schools?

(2) Where are the Indigenous Peoples in Manitoba K-12 schools?

Maybe now is the time for Manitoba to collect this data so that we can respect the calls to action and to develop robust antiracist policies that go beyond lip service to dynamic action. 

# BLACK HISTORY MONTH RESOURCES & LESSON PLANS

From Mathieu Da Costa, a navigator and interpreter whose presence in Canada dates back to the early 1600s, to Viola Desmond, a Black businesswoman jailed for refusing to leave a “whites only” area of a movie theatre in 1946, to studies of present-day discrimination and inequity, victory and courage, Black History Month offers compelling learning opportunities at all grade levels.

Don’t want to copy long urls to find them? Go to our new **MB Teacher Magazine** webpage at [mbteach.org](https://mbteach.org) and click the links.

## THE MANITOBA & CANADIAN EXPERIENCE:

### Early Years

CBC has assembled a series of stories, videos and activities designed to bring Canadian Black history alive for early years learners.

<https://www.cbc.ca/kidscbc2/explore/black-history-month>

### Senior Years

The Ontario Teachers’ Federation offers a variety of Black History lesson plans for Grades 9 & 10 on Canadian and world studies, business studies, English, the arts and social sciences.

<https://www.otffeo.on.ca/en/resources/lesson-plans/literacy-black-history/>

### Black Women and the Arts

Driven to overcome histories of prejudice and marginalization, Black women are among Canada’s most innovative artists. The 15 dynamic artists featured in this exhibit – a mix of poets, playwrights, filmmakers, musicians and visual artists – refuse to be limited to one medium or style.

<https://thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/black-women-in-the-arts>

### The Role of Black Fur Traders

Explore the role of Black fur traders in Canada during the 1700s and 1800s through readings and a variety of activities on the Canada’s History Society website.

<https://www.canadashistory.ca/education/classroom-resources/exploring-the-role-of-black-fur-traders>

### Veterans Affairs Canada – Black Canadians in Uniform

The tradition of military service by Black Canadians goes back long before Confederation. *Black Canadians in Uniform* chronicles the service and sacrifice of Black Canadians including the Korean War and post-war years.

<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/people-and-stories/black-canadians>

### Black History Manitoba

Black History Manitoba provides educational information to honour, recognize, and celebrate the past and evolving role of Black experiences within the Canadian historical context.

<https://www.bhmwinnipeg.com/>

### Timeline of Black History in Canada

This fascinating, detailed timeline takes students on a journey through Canadian Black History from the early 1600s to the present day.

<https://thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/timeline/black-history>

### Black History in Canada; an Education Guide

Historica Canada offers a number of resources, including *Black History in Canada; an Education Guide*. Drawing from Lawrence Hill’s award-winning historical fiction, *The Book of Negroes*, the work is structured around themes of journey, slavery, human rights, passage to Canada and contemporary culture. The guide asks students to examine issues of identity, equality, community, and nation-building in both a historical and contemporary context.

[https://tce-live2.s3.amazonaws.com/media/studyguides/EN\\_BlackHistory\\_Digital.pdf](https://tce-live2.s3.amazonaws.com/media/studyguides/EN_BlackHistory_Digital.pdf)

### Facing Canada

This blog post outlines resources to use throughout Black History Month in February and beyond. It aims to excite students to learn, unite in their shared humanity and empower them to champion a more equitable, compassionate, and informed tomorrow.

<https://facingcanada.facinghistory.org/black-history-month-resources>

*Black History in Manitoba* by Karen Ragoonaden, Dean, Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba

<https://www.bhmwinnipeg.com/black-history>

<https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/multic/bhm.html>

<http://eocn.weebly.com/about.html>

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/canadian-black-history-largely-overlooked-in-classrooms-574233202.html>



# ALLIED TEACHER'S CHECKLIST

By **Gail-Ann Wilson** **Maxine Hackett**  
Diversity Education Consultant    Foods Teacher  
Edmonton Public Schools    Jasper Place High School

Anti-racist teachers genuinely wish to be part of the solution in dismantling systemic racism. This work requires teachers to deeply evaluate their own biases and assumptions of race-based differences. A transition toward allyship will require a decentering of privileges that create a conscious or unconscious advantage over racialized people. Teachers who are authentic allies for diversity and inclusion can be very effective at interrupting the power imbalance associated with racism.

## 5 WAYS TO BE A GOOD ALLY

### 1 ACTION: BUILD AN INFRASTRUCTURE

#### EXPRESSION:

- Establish the characteristics of an anti-racist ally and seek out like-minded allies.
- Create anti-racism or social justice groups to build community based on common interests to increase collective action.
- Create a Black community safe space: for listening, not for providing unsolicited solutions or judgments.
- Network with anti-racism educators, consultants and specialists to compile resources.

### 2 ACTION: BE PERSONALLY AND CULTURALLY CONSCIOUS

#### EXPRESSION:

- Assess your own bias before demanding changes to others or institutions.
- Be prepared to acknowledge your emotions, such as guilt, resistance, denial, judgment, discomfort and uncertainty.
- Consider whether you benefit from unearned advantages because you are not a person of colour.
- Address your resources:
  - Critically assess why you are considering resources that present the N-word.
  - Remove resources that contain racial bias (even subtle forms); unflattering imagery; race-related humour; exaggerations of character, physical traits and oppressive archetypes.
  - Present prominent representations of Black scientists, mathematicians, literary artists, historians, musicians, athletes and cultural icons.

- Establish credibility of a narrative:
  - Investigate resources to ensure the voice and perspective is that of a Black person.
  - Be conscious of sensationalized portrayals of Black people to exaggerate negative cultural experiences.

- Assess and dismantle unchallenged norms and biases in your classroom:
  - Be conscious of the stereotype that Black students are more disruptive in your classroom.
  - Don't assume that Black students are foreign born or newcomers.
  - Challenge beliefs that Black students perform lower academically or are less suited for STEM programs.

- Acknowledge individual and multigenerational trauma:
  - Recognize that Black people experience forms of trauma that you may not easily recognize.
  - Consider that Black people may be vulnerable to multigenerational trauma perpetuated by a 24-hour news cycle and media images of unjust killings, protests and incarcerations.

### 3 ACTION: SUBSCRIBE TO LIFELONG LISTENING AND LEARNING

#### EXPRESSION:

- Listen with humility to others with lived experiences of racism:
  - Seek faculty and community members that you can ask meaningful questions to, to support your role as an ally.
- Learn:
  - Understand the history of Black people as it relates to your subject area to add dimension to what you teach.
  - Reject sensationalized stories, controversies and current events that reinforce negative stereotypes of Black people.
- Be responsible to educate yourself about racism:
  - Black people are not responsible to teach you about racism.
  - Challenge long-held beliefs with discourse and critical thought.

### 4 ACTION: DECENTER YOUR ROLE AS AN ANTI-RACIST TEACHER

#### EXPRESSION:

- This is a racism renaissance; remember that you're playing catch up:
  - This situation is centuries old, yet many people are only now being enlightened about the history of racism.
  - Racism is not a contemporary issue; it has affected generations of people.
- Avoid portraying yourself as a saviour based on your anti-racism actions.
- Honour narratives with humility:
  - Historic and contemporary stories should not be sensationalized.
  - Don't use racist stories to overgeneralize life lessons.

- Avoid setting an agenda for the racism to end:
  - Group initiatives shouldn't be based on a feel-good outcome; racism will still exist.
- Recognize that there are no rules about racism:
  - Occurrences of racism are dynamic and ubiquitous.

### 5 ACTION: BE A RESPONDER NOT A REACTOR

#### EXPRESSION:

- Respond by:
  - Sustaining your efforts over a long period of time. Don't wait for an act of discrimination to have to prove that you oppose racism.
  - Calling out racism when you see it.
  - Focusing on progress in the fight against racism and not redirecting attention to assign blame.
  - Modelling behaviour that is anti-racist by demonstrating diversity, equity and inclusion in all areas of teaching and learning.
- Avoid reacting by:
  - Denying when racism is happening; macroaggressions, unconscious bias and gaslighting make it difficult for Black people to express when they are experiencing racism.
  - Internalizing the racist offense; no matter how disturbing the acts of racism are, this is not about you.
  - Saying racist acts were unintended, accidental or a joke.
  - Offering hugs and comfort words as a solution to Black people.
  - Competing with stories of your own experiences with racism.
  - Viewing cultural and ethnic festivals as solutions to racism.

#### What should a teacher or school leader do if they witness racism or experience it themselves?

If a teacher witnesses racism they need to call it out. Speak to the individual to see if they are aware of what they are doing and why, and help them understand why the action or comment is unacceptable.

If you experience racism yourself, tell the person to stop the behaviour and tell them why you will not accept that kind of behaviour directed at you. Calling out behaviour sends a message that it will not be tolerated.

If the behaviour continues after you've spoken with the individual, inform them of your intention to raise your concern with proper officials.

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# SISLER CYBER SCHOOL

By Matea Tuhtar

Charles Bazilewicz and Robert Esposito run the Sisler Cyber School, the first of its kind in Canada, which specializes in technology education.

It's a rare occurrence to have employers reach out to high schools looking to recruit students straight from the classroom into the workforce. But for technology teachers Charles Bazilewicz and Robert Esposito, this is not out of the ordinary, nor surprising.

"With the model we have here, we have kids who are employment-ready right out of high school," says Esposito. "I don't think a lot of people realize the tech sector has an almost zero unemployment rate for the most part. What other industry in history has come in asking for high school students?"

The school offers an eight-course cluster in Networking and Cyber Security covering topics such as hardware, operating systems, network technologies, security systems and server administration. The goal of the program is to prepare students to be effective digital citizens, enable students' successful transition to post-secondary, and to ultimately contribute to Manitoba's IT workforce. Students completing the Network and Cyber Security Academy receive a specialized high school diploma in Senior Years Technology Education, and advanced

placement within several post-secondary programs. Post high school students also have the option of coming back to finish courses free of charge.

## CYBER SAVVY STUDENTS ARE JOB-READY

"This program is an excellent steppingstone," says Esposito. "All the systems that they're using here, all the infrastructure and all the content is no different than in post secondary programs or the workplace."

The Sisler Cyber School's first iteration dates back to 2010 and has since evolved to a full Grade 9-12 course program taught by Bazilewicz and Esposito who have a tech background and the credentials to teach the curriculum.

"Cyber security is the focus of the program due to the need in the industry and we recognized a long time ago that it will create employment opportunities for students," says Bazilewicz. "This class for example is working on a program called Cyber Ops.

They're getting fundamental skills on what it's like to be an entry level cyber security analyst in a security operations center."

Those abilities begin in Grade 9 when the students are first introduced to computer technology. The first year class integrates offices skills such as Power Point, Excel and Word and teaches students practical computing tasks such as how to move and un-compress files or take a screenshot and the fundamentals on how to stay secure online.

"With the Grade 9s we start off at the very beginning – like why you should have a password, and how to secure your user accounts. I've had a student tell me their Instagram account was hacked and I'm like 'Okay great, let's use this as a case project and find out what went wrong from a security perspective."

"Even if a student is not interested in getting a job in tech, we are really built into the technology portion of an academic school where we have students who come just to learn how to build a computer, or to learn the networking system of the internet.



Robert Esposito and Charles Bazilewicz, Technology Teachers

And they leave high school with a fairly good understanding of this digital world that they're living in," says Esposito.

"The misconception is that kids know a lot about tech," says Esposito. "But truthfully they don't. They know how to access games and apps on their mobiles devices but if you dive deeper they don't really know how the internet works, or how to install an operating system, or the setting for the firewall on their computer."

In fact, the teachers see some Grade 9s coming in who don't even have email addresses.

"This generation hasn't grown up on desktops. They have a phone and a tablet but you put a mouse in their hand and they don't actually know how to use the system," says Bazilewicz.

This is one of the many reasons the lab at Sisler Cyber School only runs desktop computers. iPads, laptops and mobile devices become outdated quickly, are not easily fixed and do not have the same computing power as desktops which easily last the 5 year cycle and have parts that can be easily replaced.

"One of the things I love is how cost effective this program is. Most of the software the students are using is available for free. The hardware is the biggest expense but it is very cost efficient. If done correctly it's not going to bankrupt the school budget."

The students do not need laptops for the course or have to purchase any equipment themselves. And when Covid hit the program seamlessly transitioned to at home learning. "Everything we've done since 2010 has been online. Everything we can do here at school the kids can do at home online."

## AWARDS FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

Both teachers have been recipients of the Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence and got a chance to meet Justin Trudeau. The pair have also attended numerous cyber competitions with the Cyber Defence club, travelling with students to places such as Washington DC, New York City and all over Canada. Banners from all the competitions decorate the two computer labs.

The cyber competitions are a big perk of the program and challenges run throughout the year. The Cyber Defence club usually enters around seven competitions a year where students must figure out various security measures, answer forensic questions and solve integrated puzzles. The team plays against other student teams across Canada and internationally.

Bazilewicz and Esposito say they've had questions from other teachers across the country and have had people come to tour the labs at school interested in learning more about how the program operates. The two are happy to provide support and advice to others.

"We've had learning curves and made mistakes but now we have an efficient and sustainable model going forward," says Esposito. "Education over the past 20 or so years has tried to figure out what technology ed means and what it looks like. And I think we have it, we have the model. And the results are here – kids are getting jobs, they're going to post secondary, we have a lot of interest and a waiting list. This model provides all students an opportunity."





# DISABILITY IS NOT A BAD WORD

By Michael Baker

“Special needs”, “special education”, “exceptionality”, or just “special” are words we in education use and hear a lot, and for good reason. They’re entrenched in Manitoba curricular documents, philosophy of inclusion, and are integral to education funding.

No matter your role as an educator, you’ve most likely encountered, used, and engaged in this terminology. However, as teachers working toward the creation of a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive school community and society, we need to reconsider carefully what we’re saying when we use these words.

As educators who work for and with students with disabilities, we want to support and engage students to the best of our ability and encourage exploration and wonderment about all aspects of our global village. After all, a student’s experience in school will have a considerable impact on their world view and relationships to those around them.

So, when it comes to the terminology we use, we need to ask ourselves two important questions: What does the disability community say about terms like “special needs”? And what does the research say about these terms?

## IDENTITY, COMMUNITY, AND PRIDE

Anjali Forber-Pratt, assistant professor at Vanderbilt University, is one of six authors of a paper that outlines the rationale behind and importance of the broader #SaytheWord movement. She says alternate wording for disability diminishes the identity and reality of disabled persons.

“Disabled people are reclaiming (their) our identities, our community, and our pride. We will no longer accept euphemisms that fracture our sense of unity as a culture.”

K-12 Canadian education has a long

history of perpetuating stigma and marginalization of people with disabilities. With a shift away from the medical model, educators need to make a shift in the way disability is viewed, treated, and understood in our schools. “Decisions about language have important sociocultural meanings in the disability community, and erasure of the term ‘disability’ can evoke fear and frustration among those who claim a disabled identity and align with disability culture.”

Around 15 per cent of the world’s population, or estimated 1 billion people, live with disabilities, comprising the world’s largest minority. It’s clearly time to listen to what people with disabilities are saying, and if we are serious about inclusion, equity, and diversity, we as educators need to stop using “special needs”, “exceptionality”, “special”, and the like.

## WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

Euphemisms are expressions used in place of words or phrases that otherwise might be considered harsh or unpleasant. “Special Needs” is an ineffective euphemism” is the title of a study published in the Journal of Cognitive Research: Principles and Implications, in 2016. It sought to explore the effects of the term “special needs” and its connotations when compared to the term “disability”. Researchers observed that persons are viewed more negatively when described as “special needs” than when described as having a “disability”. Even for members of the general population who have a person connected to disability (e.g., as parents of children with disabilities), the euphemism “special needs” is no more effective than non-euphemized term “disability”. The study also collected free associations to the terms “special needs” and “disability” and found that “special needs” is associated more negatively:

“special needs” conjures up more associations with negative stereotypes and stigma, whereas “disability” is associated with notions of inclusivity.

Unfortunately, history has shown that many contemporary slurs for members of racial, ethnic, or sexual minority groups began as euphemisms and became dysphemisms.

Confronting your ‘isms’ – racism, sexism, ableism – starts with watching what you say and do. Use ‘disabled’, it’s not a dirty or bad word, it’s an accurate descriptor.

## LIFELONG LEARNING: IT’S WHAT WE DO

Educators are leaders. We are also learners in all that we do. Finding space for inclusion means listening and learning from the communities we serve.

Dr. Nancy Hansen is an Associate Professor and Director of the Interdisciplinary Master’s Program in Disability Studies at the University of Manitoba. Dr. Hansen urges educators to understand the implications of alternate terminology for disability.

“We are not hurt by or ashamed of the word,” she says. “It is a source of pride and dignity for myself and many others.”

The word disabled connects people to each other, a common disability history, and to the lineage of all those who fought, protested, and persisted so that one day we could be proud of disability history, too.

The language we use mirrors the way we think. Embracing the word disabled, fighting the urge and conditioning that demands we distance ourselves from it, is a powerful illustration of self-determination in action. It epitomizes how far the disability community has come. Let’s make terms like “special needs”, “exceptionality”, and “special education” a thing of the past. Let’s demonstrate our commitment to lifelong learning. ①

#SAYTHEWORD

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CONFRONTING YOUR ‘ISMS’ – RACISM, SEXISM, ABLEISM – STARTS WITH WATCHING WHAT YOU SAY AND DO. USE ‘DISABLED’, IT’S NOT A DIRTY OR BAD WORD, IT’S AN ACCURATE DESCRIPTOR.





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#### CHILDREN'S BOOK

**Once a Wizard: A Story About Finding a Way Through Loss**



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## MTS NEWS



## MTS LAUNCHES NEW COUNSELLING SERVICE

### HUMANACARE AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS AND ELIGIBLE FAMILY

As public school teachers face and embrace another ever-changing school year, increased, timely access to mental health services are critical. Supports are needed to address struggles when they occur, but equally important are resources that build and maintain emotional wellbeing as part of each MTS member's ongoing self care.

As of January 1, 2022, counselling services to MTS members—and now their eligible family members, too—will be provided through HumanaCare, an integrated provider of counselling and support services in Canada with more than 150 counsellors right here in Manitoba. Services include individual therapy, as well as counselling for family and couples, legal and financial needs, grief and bereavement, diet and nutrition, substance abuse and crisis and trauma.

**Check your MTS email dated December 15 for the access code** to set up your personal HumanaCare profile and request services.

"MTS was among the first organizations in Manitoba to offer an EAP to its members, and the service provided by

the program and its counsellors has been invaluable," says Danielle Fullan Kolton, MTS General Secretary. "Demand has grown substantially, however, particularly during the pandemic. We knew a change was required to keep up with demand and deliver timely service to the membership. HumanaCare offers a host of services in a variety of ways, such as in-person, virtually, and by text, which addresses our priority to provide equitable access no matter where in the province our members reside."

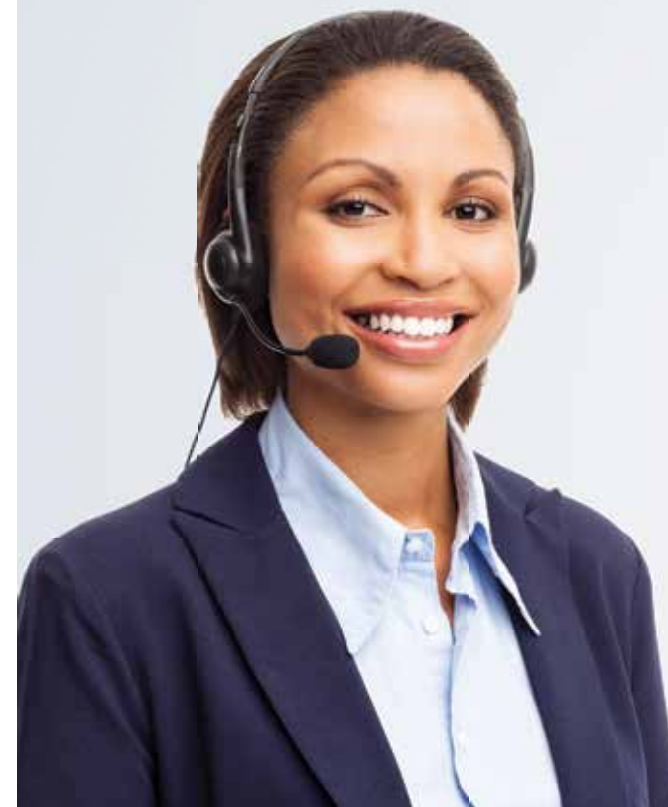
Our former EAP counsellors are still very much a part of the MTS team, having migrated to Professional and French Language Services in a role that will build ongoing services to support, educate, and advocate for teacher mental health and wellbeing. Their unique understanding of the needs of teachers and the education landscape will inform the creation of new programming and support services tailored specifically to MTS members.

Watch for updates on [mbteach.org](http://mbteach.org) and in upcoming issues of the MTS all member newsletter, *The Sub*.

# Member & Family Assistance Program (MFAP)

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### HumanaCare's supports and services can assist in the following areas:

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- Family and Parenting
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- Anxiety
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- Substance Use
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- Behavioural Management
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- Work-Related Stress
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- Crisis and Trauma



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Check your MTS email dated December 15 for the access code to set up your personal HumanaCare profile.



# YOUR PURPOSE, YOUR PASSION, AND A PLEA

By Zach Schnitzer, M.Ed, CCC



In our new roles at MTS, my colleagues and I can help expand the ways in which our education system celebrates and recognizes the work educators do. The joy and passion you feel, in part, comes from knowing that you make a huge difference every single day.

I've worked with teachers as a therapist for many years and have been a full-time EAP counsellor since January, 2018. As you likely know, the counselling role at MTS is changing. Our work has been a labour of love and my colleagues and I will miss working with you one on one. Fortunately, our new roles, still taking shape, allow us to continue to support teacher mental health. Contributing articles like this one to the MB Teacher is just one of many ways to do that.

If I could pick one issue that troubles educators the most, I'd say it's burnout (surprise, surprise).

## THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF BURNOUT

Clinically, there are three dimensions of burnout: exhaustion, depersonalization, and low accomplishment. Today I'll focus on low accomplishment. It creates soul-crushing feelings of inefficacy; "I suck at teaching;" "I'm not making a difference,." Seriously, do yourself a solid and pick up *Teachers These Days* by Dr. Jody Carrington and Laurie McIntosh for more on this insidious soul-sucker.

One thing I've noticed over the years is that recognition of how big a difference educators make can mitigate burnout.

In the marathon—sometimes the grind—of being an educator day in and day out, it's easy to lose sight of how important and impactful your work is. You get into this profession to make a difference and certainly not to get pats on the back, but they sure help. In fact, you need them. We all do. Not because you're weak, attention-seeking, or needy, either. It's because you're human.

Yes, my wonderful educators, I hate to be the one to tell you this, but you're a walking, breathing, messy, bipedal,

meaning-seeking human. You have feelings, needs, vulnerabilities, struggles, and limits (though educators seem to push these personal limits beyond most others).

One of my favourite definitions of burnout comes from Michael Gungor, an American singer, songwriter, author, podcaster, and educator (thanks Wikipedia):

"Burnout is what happens when you avoid being human for too long".

Humans need water, food, shelter, and love/belonging. We also need self-efficacy—"I am good at what I do, I can keep doing it, and I make a difference." Educators, I know that you don't move mountains day in and day out for the sunshine and rainbows of praise, but you could definitely use more of it. I've had educator clients say they just received one small bit of praise, not much, but it gave them fuel for an entire month. It's OKAY to need praise and acknowledgment.

Teachers perform miracles every day. Here's one I witnessed the other day (before Manitoba turned into the planet Hoth):

Every day after school, when I get home from work my six-year-old daughter and I go to the park. She usually meets up with friends and plays on the structure while us parents tell 'war stories'. One day I was talking with the other parents when I suddenly noticed that my daughter was not on the play-structure. I wildly looked around and noticed a child quietly reading on the park bench, eating her grapes (ok, I'll be honest, they were Oreos). She was completely engaged in her book, oblivious to her enthusiastic, monkey bar-swinging friends. It was my daughter!

I walked over and said, "Hi honey, what are you doing?" To which she replied (eye roll in tow), "Daddy, I'm clearly reading one of my Pete the Cat stories. I'd like some quiet please."

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IN THE MARATHON –  
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IT'S EASY TO LOSE SIGHT  
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AND IMPACTFUL YOUR  
WORK IS.



It's a moment I'll never forget. And it's a moment that makes me emotional with joy and gratitude. She could only have achieved this miraculous feat with wonderful, patient, caring, professional, educated, hard-working, evidence-guided, and loving educators.

It's not just that she can read, my friends, it's what the ability to read means. It means that she can independently scan, decode, and comprehend anything that piques her interest in this world, even without her parents' help. The world was now hers to see, hers to understand, and hers to feel and interpret.

So, you educator miracle-workers, you not only create a safe, joyful, fun, and inquisitive space for students every single day, you produce citizens who will change our world one Pete the Cat book at a time. And while you run on food, water, shelter,

clothing, (and coffee), at their very core educators run on the joy derived from seeing students get excited about learning. This joy is one antidote to burnout.

Author Dr. Jody Carrington writes, "Passion rides shotgun to purpose." Well, friends, your purpose is to change lives. It gives you the passion you need to educate students. But feelings of low accomplishment can douse your passion and cloud your purpose.

In our new roles at MTS, my colleagues and I can help expand the ways in which our education system celebrates and recognizes the work educators do. For now, maybe it's a co-worker, a mentor, a supervisor, spouse or friend; but make sure you have these people in your corner and reach out to them. The joy and passion you feel, in part, comes from knowing that you make a huge difference every single day.

## COUNSELLING SERVICES OFFERED

Now, here's my plea: Take care of yourself. Please know that counselling services are still offered through MTS, to you—and now your eligible family members, too. HumanaCare has been engaged to provide one-on-one counselling services, and I encourage you to connect with a counsellor using the information found in the HumanaCare ad in this magazine.

Finally, thank you so much for allowing us at EAP to walk with you all these years. Knowing that we could help you stay in the classroom and feel better about the incredible work you do has been a great honour. **T**



# THE PRINCIPAL OF THE THING

## TRACY VANSTONE AND LAURIE BACHEWICH TALK TEAMWORK AND MENTAL HEALTH

By Anne Bennett

There isn't a public school teacher in Manitoba that COVID hasn't hit like a freight train, and principals and vice-principals are no exception.

For two Manitoba school leaders, the experience—often taxing—has also yielded critical lessons in team care, self care, and the fundamental importance of human connection.

"During the pandemic, my leadership has shifted from being very goal driven to prioritizing what is essential in a school year, and in a classroom," says Tracy Vanstone, principal/directrice at École Crescentview School in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba.

The shift came quickly, the day Vanstone received word that her school population was about to be spread over four separate locations to accommodate physical distancing.

"We got the call from our superintendents to relocate 175 students. So we quickly moved to our local recreation facility, exhibition building and the town fair board office. At school we moved into the music room, the library, multi-purpose room and gym. The shift from one school under one roof to four different locations was very much the most challenging experience of my career."

### WRESTLING WITH PHYSICAL DISTANCE, AND EMOTIONAL DISTANCE, TOO

Laurie Bachewich relates to the weight the pandemic placed on the shoulders of all school leaders. The principal of Erickson

Elementary School in Erickson, Manitoba, wrestled with the physical distancing, and like Vanstone and school leaders across the province, with emotional distancing, as well.

"The job is demanding in a regular year, and the pandemic added another layer of responsibility, stress, and challenges. For us, being rural and having limited space was hard."

In addition to the relentless logistical challenges Manitoba principals and vice-principals faced, Vanstone and Bachewich point to the strain COVID placed on interpersonal relationships. Bachewich is quick to recognize how essential her team has been in navigating such a lengthy period of unpredictability.

"I couldn't have come through it without a great team," she says. "My educators, support staff, custodians, bus drivers, parents, and of course our amazing students. They pivoted with me, supported and collaborated with me, and the team always did their best to meet the kids' needs. Their perseverance, resilience, and support are what stand out for me from this difficult time. Also the support of my fellow administrators and division."

Vanstone agrees.

"Teaching through a computer screen is far less than ideal. Children need human connection and they need to be with

their peers and teachers, and our staff need each other, too. Working from home caused isolation and a disconnect. After at-home learning, being spread between four locations caused further challenges in our connection and collaboration."

Bachewich says her team's pre-COVID relationships provided a firm foundation that sustained the entire school community.

"We had to learn how to pivot quickly, readjust our sails, and be flexible in the face of ever-changing health orders. Our close-knit school community grew even stronger, and we leaned on each other the whole way."

### COMING BACK AND COMING TOGETHER, COMMUNICATION IS KEY

Coming back, both principals underscore that they needed to reestablish bonds within the entire school community when students returned last fall.

"We went back to grade group meetings, COVID-safe staff gatherings, field trips and COVID-friendly fun, says Vanstone. "Hosting an outdoor bonfire on my farm for staff to come together, and having classes come to pick out pumpkins were a couple of small things I could do to put smiles on faces."

Communication is always critical to the

success and health of a team, but during the pandemic it took on even greater importance.

For Vanstone, this translated into timely, transparent dialogue within the school and with families as well.

"Even when I had to tell staff something they didn't want to hear, they appreciated the truth. Whenever I had updates on the pandemic or a current school situation, I would do my best to communicate comprehensively. Keeping everything transparent seemed to be what people needed."

Bachewich says connecting on an emotional level so that folks feel valued was a priority.

"While I work very hard to let people know how much they're valued, this was extremely important during the pandemic. When we cannot control our circumstances, the best thing we can do is make sure that the people around us are heard and that they know they and their work are valued. It's important for me to be in the trenches with my colleagues, and to be human. We're all doing the best we can."

### LEADERSHIP LESSONS LEARNED

On lessons learned going forward, Bachewich points to the need to be

present, and not focus unnecessarily on what may or may not lie ahead.

"One of the biggest lessons I've learned is that there is so much that's out of our control and we must take each day as it comes. If I focused too far into the future, things became overwhelming. Some days it was moment by moment!"

With feelings of responsibility for the health of the team comes a tendency for school leaders to put themselves at the back of the line for care and attention.

"To be honest," says Vanstone, "this is something I struggle with. I'm working on letting things go, walking with a colleague whenever I can, and have key people in my life to talk to. My farm might be the best thing to support my mental health. I love growing food and in particular, pumpkins! I love growing, harvesting, canning, baking, and showing people the benefits of farming. Never in a million years did I think I would find so much joy in the farm. The sunsets, canola fields and quad rides fill my heart and balance my health."

Bachewich agrees that a school leader's mental health can be neglected in prolonged, trying circumstances.

"There are certainly times when I'm out of balance. I'm becoming more aware

of ways to maintain my mental health. Learning to not own everything, knowing I don't have to have all the answers or can fix everything, and taking time to pause have been the biggest lessons for me personally. I love being in nature, exercising, hiking and reading. Making sure that I continue to do things that give me joy is important. Easier said than done," she laughs, "but it's a work in progress."

### WORDS OF ADVICE FOR SCHOOL LEADERSHIP COLLEAGUES

"Be gentle with yourselves," says Bachewich. "Leading a school on a good day is hard work, let alone in a pandemic. Compassion is important in this job, towards yourself and others."

Vanstone echoes the message.

"Life is short. Put yourself and your family first," she says. "Take breaks, drink your coffee before it goes cold and sit down and eat lunch. We are good at what we do! We were chosen to lead for a reason, so believe in yourself. We've all accomplished a lot in the past two years. And if you're struggling, lean on your team and don't be afraid to say you need help. "It takes teamwork to make dreamwork." ❶



Laurie Bachewich, Principal, Erickson Elementary School



Tracy Vanstone, Principal/directrice, École Crescentview School



# APPS FOR YOUR PROFESSIONAL TOOLKIT

By Raman Job

Pandemic or not, teachers have always found creative ways to inspire students, communicate with parents and manage classroom activities. We asked Manitoba teachers which applications are must-haves in their professional toolkits.



## COLLABORATORS USE POWERFUL MICROSOFT DIGITAL BINDER

Devon Caldwell and Leah Obach

Known as the "Kenton girls," Devon Caldwell and Leah Obach are personal and professional collaborators. Both are sold on Microsoft OneNote. Here are a

few ways they use this powerful digital binder.

### MICROSOFT ONENOTE

In her current role as a resource teacher, Caldwell organizes all of her meeting notes, schedules, student programming ideas, clinician caseloads and agency contact information with OneNote. At the end of the school year, she prints out all her meeting notes and adds them to pupil support files.

As a PhD student, Caldwell created a OneNote called Doctoral Studies. For every course she took, she created a separate section. She added every class she attended as a page in the section. "I always made sure to take pictures of important paper information from professors and add them to the correct page," she says. "The OneNote platform was absolutely invaluable."

Leah Obach, a former classroom teacher, found writing report card comments in OneNote a real godsend. "I was able to create a page for each student and write their first, second, and third term comments on the same page," she says. "It was so convenient for glancing back at what I said last term. I'd copy and paste the comments into PowerSchool with no worries about things crashing or comments being lost."

When Obach and Caldwell collaborate on papers or articles, they'll create a new OneNote as a planning/pre-writing tool. They add sections to match the sections of the paper, then add pages to outline information, ideas, and resources. "It's a shared space we can both work in," says Obach.



## TOP APPS FROM MOUNTAIN VIEW TECH COORDINATOR

Kirsten Thompson

As coordinator of ICT for Mountain View School Division, Kirsten Thompson knows her way around all things edtech. She's a Ph.D. student, certified MicrosoftEdu

trainer and Google Educator level 1. She's active on a plethora of social media platforms. Here are some of her choices for must-have applications.

### TIKTOK

TikTok allows you to quickly film and edit videos for easy content creation and share them through designated classroom platforms. Similar to other social media platforms, there are teacher communities on TikTok where educators can find teacher tips, professional development, and curricular content. Searching for hashtags like #teacherTikTok #MicrosoftEdu #GoogleEdu #teachertok can be a great place to start!

### CANVA

With Canva you can choose from thousands of templates and multi-media options to create visual presentations, reports, fliers, worksheets, calendars, and more. You can share digitally in a variety of formats or print hard-copy. Templates allow you and students to focus on sharing content and the inclusion of multi-media encourages you to operate within copyright regulations.

### MICROSOFT OFFICE LENS

Office Lens allows you to capture written content, both typed and hand-written, using the camera on your device. You can scan and upload your content as an image, PDF, or import it into a Microsoft 365 account as a Word or OneNote file—and those files can be integrated into your OneDrive. You can also access the Microsoft Immersive Reader accessibility tool in real-time to have content read-aloud and manipulated using the program's text, grammar, and reading settings.

## MORE TOP APPS RECOMMENDED BY MANITOBA TEACHERS

### PLANBOARD

My favourite app is Planboard which is run through the Chalk.com website. I love using Planboard on my MacBook or iPad, for many different things. By setting up a timetable on the platform you can create a day plan for each day of the week. It allows you to attach files and link to websites in the day planner feature. I love it because I only need one thing open on my computer at work and I can access all the links I need depending on the particular period. Planboard can connect to your Google Classroom as well. It also has a markboard to record your marks for each class, plus an attendance feature.

-Zoe Bettess, TTA

### MICROSOFT TEAMS

Throughout the last 18 months, I've found the Microsoft Teams app to be SO beneficial! The chat feature and file sharing capabilities in Teams allow me to collaborate effectively with colleagues. The assignments and class notebook features provide robust digital workflows. And the Teams meeting platform provides a safe, secure way for Manitoba teachers and students to engage in remote learning!

-Andy McKiel, STJATA

### SEESAW

The app I use most frequently is Seesaw. It's a platform that allows students to document their own learning and share it with their family members at home.

It also came into perfect use during the school closure, as it allows teachers to assign assignments remotely. It provides options for videos, text, and HTML links to be shared.

Another great thing about Seesaw is it allows educators to create and share resources. It has a huge learning library of resources for teachers to use with their students, organized by subject area and grade level. You're able to assign specific lessons to specific students as well—which is perfect when differentiating or adapting for student needs.

Seesaw also allows teachers to create their own lessons and activities and share them with other Seesaw educators in their division.

Parents and teachers can communicate easily on the Seesaw messaging tab. My young learners who are not yet reading or writing can communicate easily with me through the voice recording option.

Overall, Seesaw empowers students to document their own learning and allows parents to be actively involved in their child's learning journey. It encourages quick and easy communication between home and school, an especially powerful feature during this pandemic.

-Christi Benoit, WTA

### GOODNOTES

I have recently started using the app GoodNotes. I have been in my current role for almost a year now and it's rare that I use paper anymore—for anything! I use GoodNotes to take meeting notes, phone call notes. This allows me to take my notes with me wherever I go. I'm using five per cent of its capabilities so far but it's been great for me!

-Andrew Mead, HTA

### INSTAGRAM

They say a picture is worth a thousand words; Instagram allows parents and the community to experience stories of Brooklands School as they happen. We make posts ranging from reminders of upcoming events to examples of student learning. A great tool to celebrate student engagement!

-Rex Ferguson-Baird, STJATA

### TEAM SHAKE

An app that I use virtually every day is Team Shake. I can't recommend this enough for Phys Ed specialists! It allows you to create teams/groups from the students in your class. You can go into the settings and ensure you have an equal amount of boys and girls in groups, that ability levels are equal throughout the groups, and you can keep certain students apart from each other. Team Shake also allows you to pull random names from the virtual hat if all you need is a single name.

-Blue Jay Bridge, PTTA

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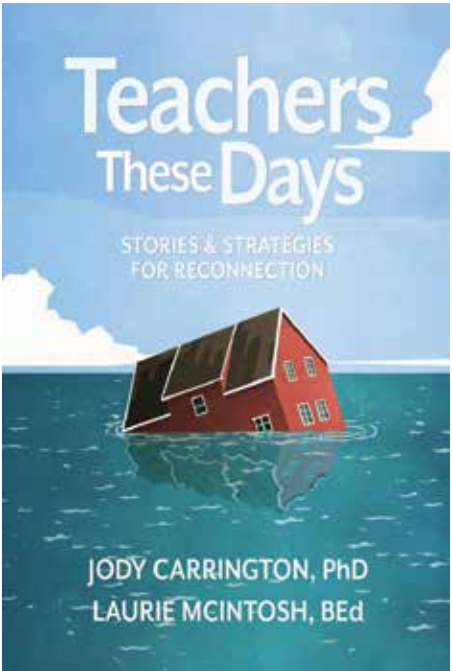
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# BOOK REVIEWS

By Jon Sorokowski

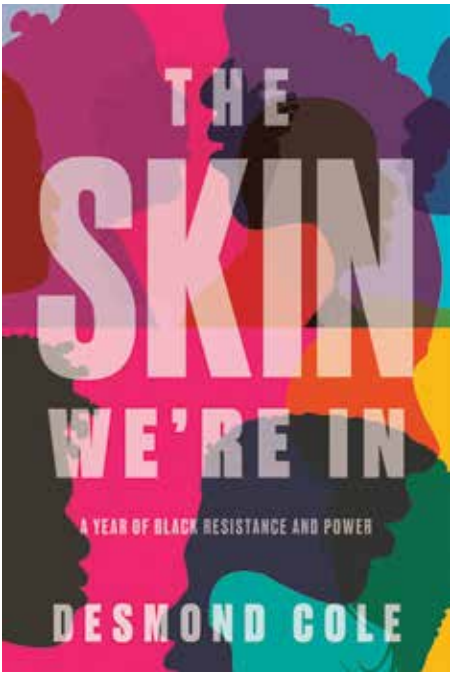


## TEACHERS THESE DAYS: STORIES AND STRATEGIES FOR RECONNECTION

Authors: Jody Carrington and Laurie McIntosh  
Publisher: IMPress (2021)

Clinical psychologist and speaker Jody Carrington joins kindergarten teacher Laurie McIntosh in *Teachers These Days: Stories and Strategies for Reconnection*. Teachers seeking to rekindle the flame that ignites their passion for our noble profession will find comfort in the many stories from educators that Carrington and McIntosh have shared. The Canadian duo reminds us of the enormous influence we have on our students and that every child deserves someone who believes tremendously in them. They touch on trauma, grief, and regulation and provide guidance on navigating these challenging situations. Peppered through the book

are mantras that fans of Carrington will immediately recognize (“The kids are only going to be OK if those of us holding them are”), and the conversational writing style blends heavy topics with accessible advice. Ultimately, Carrington and McIntosh urge educators to mend the broken relationships with those around them – students, families, colleagues, and even themselves – by prioritizing reconnection, rest, joy, and gratitude. Educators feeling burnt out but eager to feed their souls and feel their experiences affirmed should move this book to the top of their pile. *Teachers These Days* offers hope and validation.



## THE SKIN WE'RE IN: A YEAR OF BLACK RESISTANCE AND POWER

Author: Desmond Cole  
Publisher: Doubleday Canada (2020)

*The Skin We're In: A Year of Black Resistance and Power* shines a light on racism in Canada. Journalist and activist Desmond Cole writes vignettes covering a year of racial injustice against Black people in Canada. Cole masterfully weaves together research, personal anecdotes, news coverage, and interviews to produce a text that packs numerous punches. Along the way, he chronicles his experiences calling for accountability in the Toronto police service. I was embarrassed that I knew about so few of the incidents that Cole highlights, especially given their recency. It is precisely this discomfort that makes

this book so vital. Many white Canadians are inexcusably unaware of the relentless daily hurdles experienced by minoritized people in this country. Cole's book spurs readers into action. High-school teachers should consider adopting the text for study in English Language Arts or humanities classes; middle school teachers should consider using excerpts for class discussions about contemporary racial injustice. *The Skin We're In* is a must-read for all Canadians.

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Visit [labourschool@mbteach.org](mailto:labourschool@mbteach.org) to be put on an email list for more information.

Details coming this Spring.