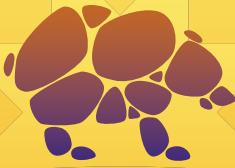


THE MANITOBA

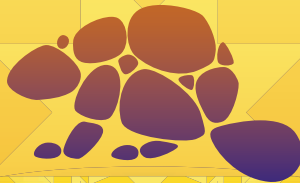
Teacher

MARCH 2015 VOLUME 93 NUMBER 5 NEWSMAGAZINE OF THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY



BEAR SPIRIT

Soongatiziwin: *Courage*



BEAVER SPIRIT

Amik: *Wisdom*



EAGLE SPIRIT

Zhawenjigewin: *Love*



BUFFALO SPIRIT

Kichi'inendamowin: *Respect*



SASQUATCH SPIRIT

Tepwewin: *Honesty*



TURTLE SPIRIT

Kawakaatiziwin: *Truth*



WOLF SPIRIT

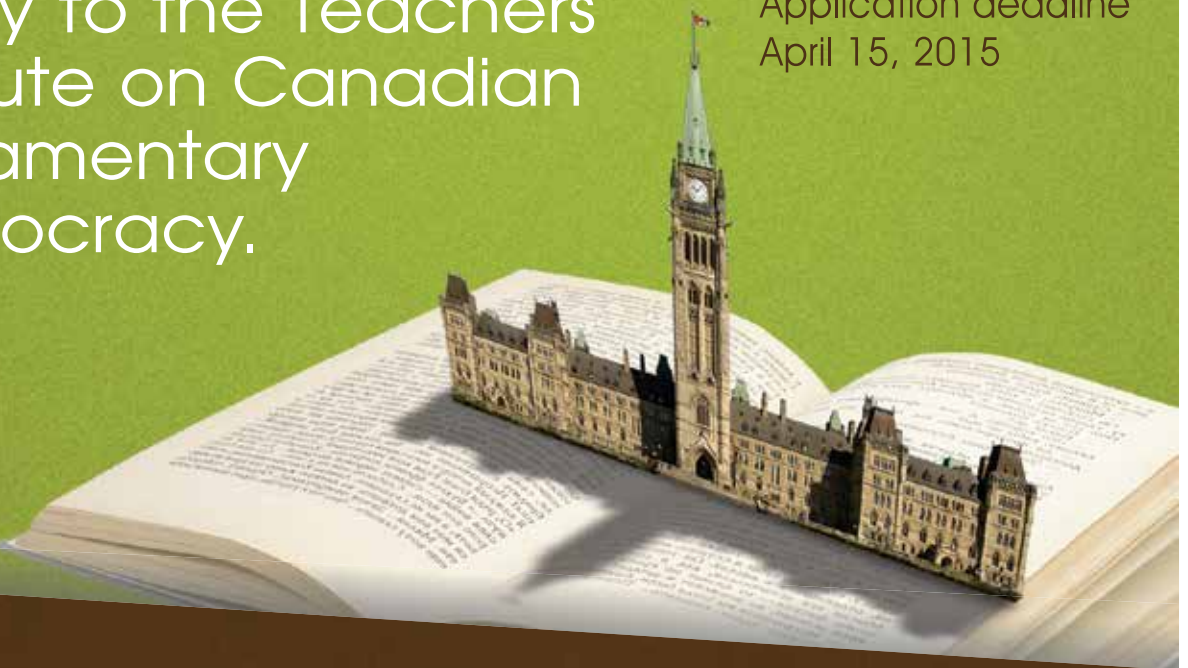
Tabasenimowin: *Humility*

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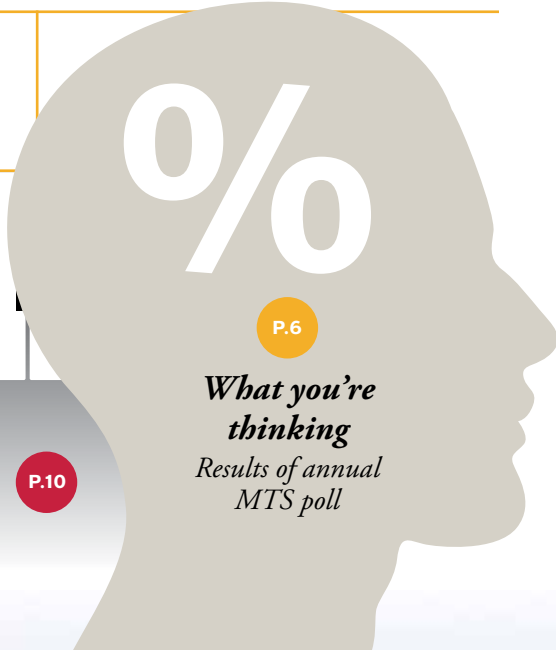
DISCOVER IT.

Teacher

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Reasons against are flimsy





PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

PAUL OLSON

So, how should we ensure that Manitoba students have the best possible teachers over the long term?

Simple answers are typically for political campaigns and snake oil salesman. I sure don't have a definitive answer on this, but I'm wondering about...pensions?

Before Manitoba teachers unionized, 'state salary' advertisements were the norm. Teaching jobs opened up at the end of the year, and those interested could apply, stating the salary they were willing to accept. The lowest bidder got the job.

In case you missed it: every teaching position was up for grabs. Your contract expired at the end of every year, and you were welcome to apply. (State your salary expectations, please.)

In this context, having a family or a home was almost impossible. Credit unions sprang into being in part because teachers couldn't qualify for mortgages. Far too often, teachers with any 'real' options left teaching.

In 1934, The Manitoba Teachers' Federation (now MTS) convinced the province to do away with the automatic lapsing of teacher contracts. It was then and there, in my view, that the teaching profession was born in Manitoba.

However great a new teacher might be, it's a pale shadow of what they'll be ten or twenty years later—especially if they take their PD seriously. Reflective practice, graduate programs, PLCs are all great—but they all assume there are new teachers willing to access those resources over many years to refine their practice. They don't work if the teachers don't stay teaching. Since no one looks forward to going hungry when they're 70, the only intelligent choice is to get out early.

Your TRAF pension is a Defined Benefit pension plan. It is the surest, best, and frankly only reasonable option that someone should consider for their retirement years. It's exactly what its name denotes: your retirement benefit is defined by policy. What it says you're gonna get? Yeah, you're getting that.

TRAF's investments are professionally managed and invested. It's a perfectly healthy, viable pension plan, though we need to keep an eye on the horizon.

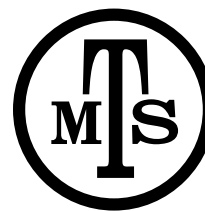
There's a larger problem, however, and it's not with TRAF.

Defined Benefit (DB) plans are under attack. The same good people who drove the global economy into the ditch in 2008 don't like DB plans because they invest carefully, not speculatively. (So, less room for the get-rich-quicker brokers to operate.) Some governments dislike them because they involve actual obligations.

You'll see other forms of pension being shopped around. 'Defined Contribution' and 'Target Benefit' plans are being imposed. Neither should bring comfort: the former is "You put in x, and you get out...pffft...damned if we know." The latter is, "We'll try. No promises."

Retirement isn't cheap—but it's nothing next to the human, social, and economic impacts of a deprofessionalized education system.

You can't stay in a profession unless you can retire from it. Please keep that in mind next time someone shows up selling snake oil.



The Manitoba Teachers' Society

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INSIDE MTS

KEN PEARCE, GENERAL SECRETARY

This month I want to outline for you the complexity behind a common task that our staff deal with—interpersonal conflict. All of us will experience from time to time the problems that disputes create in the workplace. When a staff officer is called for advice or assistance about such an issue, it is often the case that colleagues in a principal-teacher relationship have found themselves at odds.

When this happens, a staff officer will often begin by explaining the legal responsibilities placed upon principals, or explore the area of professional autonomy with the teacher. The tension between professional autonomy and the obligation to work within the myriad restrictions placed upon us by legislation and regulation can create challenging situations for both teachers and principals.

The topic of regulations and legislation is not a popular one; many involved in a dispute will quote aspects that support their case without reference to the language contained in the entire section; take for example the right of a teacher to suspend students directly from their class. The

context of the Education Administration Act outlining the responsibilities of teachers is contained in Section 39 (e):

“A teacher may suspend a pupil from the classroom...if the pupil has engaged in disruptive behaviour; and a suspension is the consequence for engaging in the disruptive behaviour under the school’s discipline and behaviour management policies and the school’s code of conduct.”

The important thing for teachers to note here is that the context of Part I is further qualified by the responsibility of the Principal under Part II of the same Act: “Subject to the Public Schools Act and the instructions of the school board, the principal is in charge of the school in respect of all matters...” Further, in Part V of the “The Suspension of Students Regulation 92/2013, the Act states that the principal must “develop categories of the reasons for which a student may be suspended.”

On the one hand, teachers have a right to suspend a student from their class but on the other hand, principals have the obligation to implement the various requirements of the Education Administration Act;

the school board’s policy on student discipline; the school’s discipline code and to understand a variety of other legal rights and obligations that place requirements upon teachers and principals. There is little wonder that confusion over the simple right of a teacher to suspend a student for two days from that teacher’s class is complicated by the rights and obligations of everyone else in the system.

We all have rights, but we all have responsibilities too. In the end, everyone would benefit from exercising good listening skills and knowing a little bit more than the sentence in a regulation.

A moment here to point out that staff at the Society have to assist those encountering difficulty in understanding their respective rights and obligations with the knowledge that many statutes, policies and regulations exist to complicate what appears to be a simple dispute between colleagues.

Okay, you get the point: nothing is as simple as it first appears to be but much can be accomplished by using common sense and, where help is needed, by calling one of your experienced staff officers for advice!

Election changes mark AGM

Bylaw I of The Manitoba Teachers’ Society requires that all resolutions proposing to amend bylaws be published and to meet this requirement bylaw resolutions received from associations and the provincial executive are published on the MTS website, www.mbteach.org. The home page of the website includes a link to all material available in advance of the Annual General Meeting, May 21–23.

Copies of resolutions can also be obtained via email from Marni Sharples at msharples@mbteach.org.

At press time, not all resolutions had been received due to the deadline date following our print date for this issue, therefore highlights of resolutions to be debated at the AGM will be included in the April–May issue of *The Manitoba Teacher*.

This will be an exciting Annual General Meeting because there will be a significant

change of practice from the past: this year, elections for every position, including that of President, will take place at the Provincial Council Meeting. There are elections for President, Vice President, and ten Member-At-Large positions on the Provincial Executive, all occurring at this AGM!

Those running for election, who filed nomination papers before the March 1 deadline, will be posted on our website and will appear in the April–May issue of *The Manitoba Teacher*. Other candidates may also be nominated from the floor at the Annual General Meeting.

Notice of Call

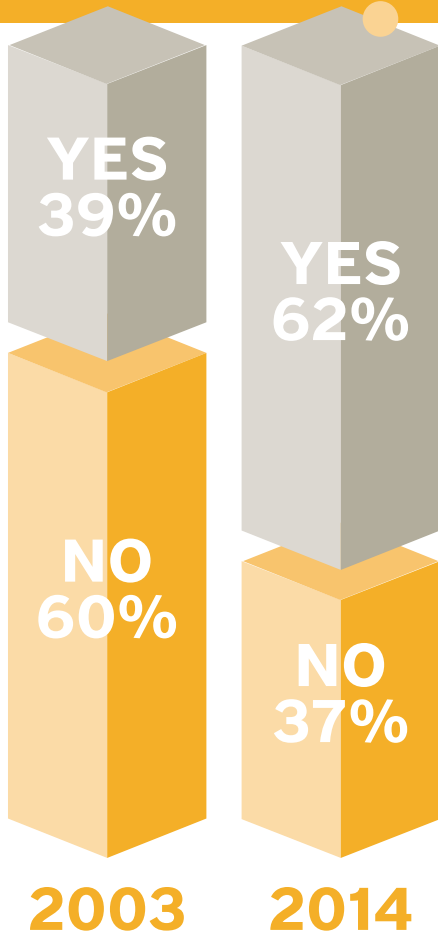
This notice is given in compliance with Bylaw II of the bylaws of The Manitoba Teachers’ Society. The 96th Annual General Meeting of the Provincial Council of The Manitoba Teachers’ Society will be held May 21, 22 and 23, 2015 at the Fairmont Hotel, Winnipeg. Provincial Council consists of representatives named by teacher associations and the *Éducatrices et éducateurs francophones du Manitoba* plus members of the current Provincial Executive. The number of delegates representing each association depends on the number of members in that association.

Ken Pearce, General Secretary
February, 2015



Number of teachers having to start under **term contracts** soars

Did you start your teaching career on a term contract?



MTS believes term contracts should only be used when a teacher is hired to replace a permanent teacher on leave.

Over the last decade there has been dramatic growth in the number of teachers who begin their careers on term contracts, according to the recent MTS member poll.

In a random telephone survey of 800 teachers conducted between Oct. 27 and Nov. 8, 2014, teachers were asked what type of contract they were on and if they started teaching on a permanent or term contract.

More than 60 per cent of teachers said they started on a term contract. When MTS asked the same question in 2003, less than 40 per cent of teachers said they began teaching on a term contract. This 20 per cent surge in the use of term contracts suggests that school divisions are hiring new teachers on term contracts more often than they did in the past.

Usually in Manitoba, a teacher signs either a permanent or a term contract. These two types of contracts are set out in provincial government regulations. If a teacher signs a Teacher-General Contract he or she is agreeing to teach in a school division from year to year without signing yearly contracts.

If a teacher signs a Limited Term Teacher-General Contract, their employment usually ends on the date stated in the contract or the day before the teacher being replaced returns to the classroom.

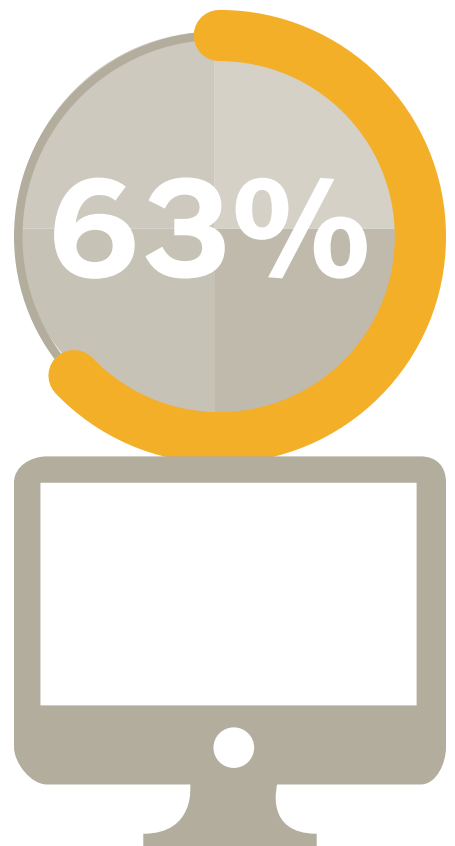
MTS believes term contracts should only be used when a teacher is hired to replace a permanent teacher on leave. As a result, school divisions shouldn't have more teachers on full-time-equivalent term contracts than teachers on leave. Unfortunately, in Manitoba there are no clear regulations on when term contracts can be used.

School divisions may be taking advantage of this murkiness. Some divisions offer new teachers term contracts, whether or not they are filling in for permanent teachers. Earlier research MTS did with new teachers found that getting a permanent contract is a top concern for them. The uncertainty of a term contract means many new teachers

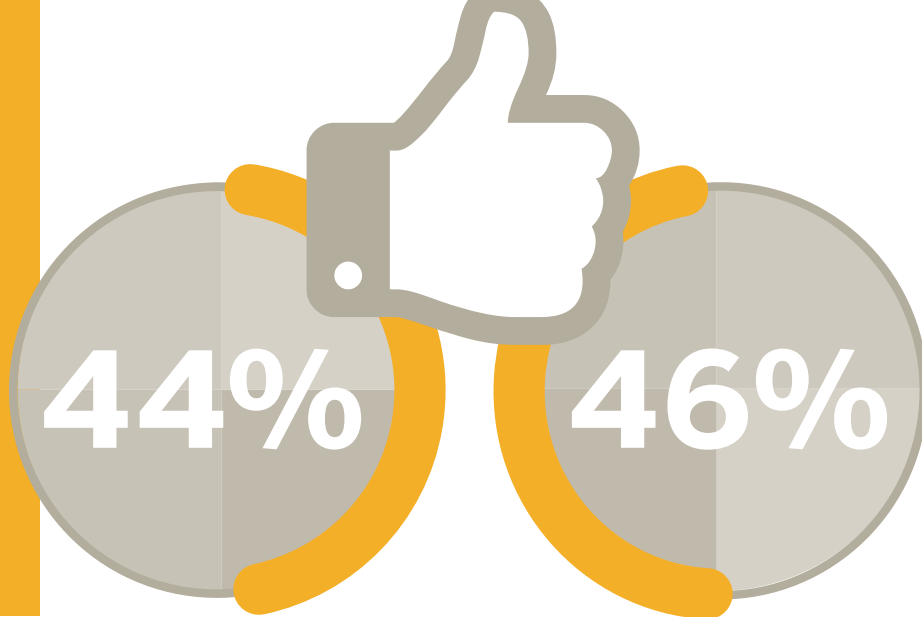
are delaying life decisions such as getting married, buying a house, or having a child.

New teachers often contact MTS about being offered repeated term contracts instead of permanent contracts. In the past, MTS has raised the use of term contracts with the government and asked for clearer regulations governing them. This new evidence showing a dramatic shift in usage will assist MTS in its efforts to correct the ambiguity in the regulations.

63% of teachers say technology has increased the time they spend on correspondence with parents and others.



Job satisfaction among teachers has been relatively stable since MTS began tracking this info in 1999. This year **44%** of teachers are very satisfied with their jobs and **46%** are somewhat satisfied.



MTS poll a valued snapshot

Teachers occasionally ask what MTS does with the data from the annual MTS member poll. The information (left) comparing the current use of term contracts with ten years ago provides the Society with evidence that supplements accounts from teachers on their experiences with term contracts. This is an example of how research can make the Society's rationales for changing legislation or policy stronger.

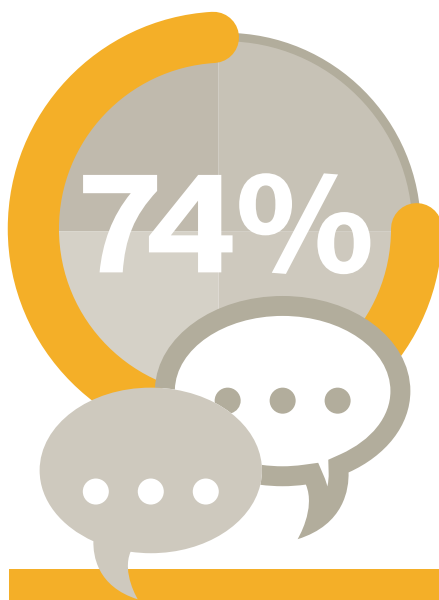
The most recent poll suggests that more of Manitoba's teachers are women than was the case ten years ago. Teachers are younger, too. Of the 800 teachers surveyed, 73 per cent are women compared to 66 per cent in 2003; 62 per cent are under 45 years of age compared to 50 per cent in 2003. Fifty-four per cent of MTS members have only worked under the NDP government—they have been teaching for less than 15 years.

Last year, the top concern for Manitoba's teachers was job stress. This year job stress and class size are tied at 17 per cent. Teachers are asked to name their top concern without being prompted from a list of concerns. Men are more likely to say class size, while women mention job stress more often. Class composition is the third most mentioned concern at eight per cent.

Delegates at the 2014 MTS AGM passed two resolutions asking the Society to work with the department of education and others to find a more effective way to fund and provide services to students with special needs.

When teachers were asked in the recent telephone survey the number of funded

Level 2 and 3 special needs students in their classes, the average was 3.6 students. This is similar to the results from last year's



74% of teachers have English as an Additional Language students in their classes with an average number of **8.3** EAL students per class.

survey and up from an average of two students in the 2011 and 2012 surveys.

This year teachers were also asked, "Do you teach students who should be receiving Level 2 or 3 funding who aren't receiving this funding?" More than 60 per cent of teachers said they are teaching students who should be receiving this funding, but are not.

Last year MTS conducted research on teachers' concerns with the new standard provincial report card. This year's telephone survey found that teachers are taking somewhat longer to prepare report cards than they did when MTS asked the same question in 2010.

A third of teachers polled said it took them less than five hours to complete report cards for one class. Twenty-one per cent of teachers took between five and 15 hours. About one in eight members said report cards took 16 to 25 hours, while nearly one in ten teachers said it took 26 to 35 hours (8 per cent).

Ten per cent of teachers took more than 35 hours to complete report cards for one class. (Sixteen per cent of members did not answer the question.) Men are more than twice as likely to take less than five hours to prepare report cards (55 per cent vs. 24 per cent women). Women are more likely than men to take more than 16 hours to complete report cards for one class.

A random sample of members' names and phone numbers were provided to Viewpoints Research by The Manitoba Teachers' Society. The margin of error on the total sample of 800 is ± 3.3 per cent, nineteen times out of twenty.



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LEFT TO RIGHT: Hera, 1st century AD. Italy. Marble. Zeus, 2nd century AD. Italy. Marble. © Antikensammlung, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.

wag



the music & magic

BY DONNA MAXWELL

A young music student at Winnipeg's River East Collegiate is fiddling with an instrument in Room 222 when someone, far too old to be a student at the high school, appears in the doorway. He casually calls out "Kula", like he's calling to a buddy, and band director Jeff Kula appears from behind a row of music stands and gear.

The student and a few others continue their discussion and fiddling while Kula disappears into his office to chat with a reporter about being named Teacher of the Year by MusiCounts, a music education charity associated with The Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences that works to keep music education in schools across the country alive.

The award was presented to Kula during a surprise ceremony at the school last March. Recipients are usually flown to the Juno Awards, but since they were held in Winnipeg last year, Kula and his wife were honoured guests at many of the events. A musician sponsors the award each year, and country artist Gord Bamford was the 2014 sponsor and Kula got to jam with Bamford's band.

While Kula is honoured with the designation, he's uncomfortable with the spotlight being focused on him, and he gets to that point straight off.

"I just feel fortunate that I have a chance to work with the people who come through my door, 'cause there's just so many great young people," Kula says.

"The award is wonderful, but I'm not doing anything different than any other band director in this province. There are

people working really, really hard, I'm just kinda lucky to have this thrown my way.

"It takes a lot of time to work with kids and you want to give them the best you've got."

The award will help Kula do that, because it came with a \$10,000 financial boost to the school's music program. Money is always welcome because there's a constant need for more instruments, but it's especially needed this year when the school welcomed Grade 9 students through its doors, something it hasn't done in many years.

Kathy Andersson, the former chairperson of the school's band parent association, spearheaded Kula's nomination and says she knew he would win, long before it became official. And she told the folks at MusiCounts as much when she submitted her nomination.

"He's just so dedicated, it just boggles my mind how much energy he puts into every student that he has there, and he has so many of them," Andersson says. "He just lives, breathes and eats music. I think he wakes up in the morning with music going through his head, and ideas, and it just never stops."

The fact there's kids just hanging out in Kula's classroom when there's clearly no class in session, is testament enough that his doors are always open and the space can be a sanctuary for those who seek it.

But the sheer number of kids enrolled in the music program at River East—there's 280, which Kula calls "a good number"—probably speaks more directly to his reputation as a teacher and his relationship with his students.

Kula's been at River East for about 16 years and along with another half-time director and a choral instructor, they oversee various music programs, like jazz band and orchestra and wind ensembles at the high school.

Two-hundred-and-eighty is a lot of kids—the largest music program in the River East Transcona School Division—and Kula says he's teaching many students now whose older siblings have already gone through the school.

He admits he's familiar with a lot of families in the area.

"After a while if you've had a brother or sister or two come through...if one child had a good experience then hopefully the rest will want to follow through," he says. "There's a lot of great kids in the area. There's a lot of great kids period."

Kula works hard at his job, and loves every minute of it, even if his normal day starts at 7:15 a.m. and ends around 6 p.m.

The long days are required so every kid that wants to take part in the music program can. River East is an Advanced Placement school, so a lot of students have heavy academic courses and they're dedicated to achieving top marks, so fitting in band can be difficult. They have concert bands for all grades, so some juggling was required to make sure the 30 students who had conflicting schedules could be accommodated.

Kula says they run a lot of their band programs outside the school day. Students in the wind ensemble show up twice a week before regular classes, which begin at 8:20 a.m.

"It's an early start," he admits. "These

kids are pretty dedicated to come twice a week at 7:15 a.m.”

The jazz band and jazz orchestra are run after school. Jazz orchestra is an 18-piece big band that’s for more advanced players, Kula says, and they practice four times a week.

But jazz band is for anyone who wants to play. Kula calls it a “no-cut” program, so if you play a jazz instrument, you’re in.

“We have a lot of kids that want to play and I want to give everybody experience to play.”

The music programs at River East are inclusive in that Kula and his teaching partners do all they can to accommodate students struggling in other areas of their academic lives.

Special needs students are welcome as well, and Kula says it’s all about finding the right role for everybody.

Former student Haley Rempel, who in June became the first Manitoban to perform solo at New York’s Carnegie Hall, says Kula’s bands over the years have had numerous accolades heaped upon them, and deservedly so, but the most memorable moments of her high school band years involve her instructor’s determination to find a place in the band for a special needs student.

“Although the student’s parents were hesitant about their child’s ability to function in the music program, Mr. Kula found a role for him—being cued and led by another student, thus giving him an experience and a high that cannot be

missed when watching him perform. Witnessing this student being able to participate brought such joy to him and also to me, simply for being able to see it,” Rempel wrote in her letter of support for Kula’s Teacher of the Year Award.

Kula says his more advanced students often take on the role of mentor to other students and he’ll see them helping someone who’s struggling with a piece of music. They’ll give pointers, or simply offer encouragement.

He never gets in the way of learning, even if it comes from a fellow student.

“In some cases they’re better than me because they’re closer in age. The kids can relate more when somebody of their peer group is encouraging and motivating, rather than some old man who’s doing his thing,” he laughed.

He’s aware that there’s a sense of community in his classroom and students spending their spare time there—not just playing, but nurturing friendships through music. He says you never know where it might lead.

“I always like to joke about how many band marriages we’ve had here. Since I started here there’s been 15 or 20 students who met in this room and been married after and there’s several still together and they’re planning. I always tell my beginner students, ‘look around the room, you never know’.”

Many former students have also gone on to become music teachers, professional

musicians or recording engineers—one was working on Michael Jackson’s album when the pop icon passed away.

“There’s been quite a few, I don’t want to single out one because there’s been so many great kids that have come through here,” he says.

Robyn Sneath was in Grade 12 at River East when Kula began teaching there, but the single year she spent as his student had an indelible impact on her.

“Teaching music is not his job; it’s his calling,” Sneath wrote in her letter of support for Kula’s nomination.

Sneath, who has worked as a high school teacher and is a PhD candidate in education at Oxford University, played music after high school but says the experience there paled when compared to her time with Kula.

“I was first chair in Provincial Honour Band (alto sax) in high school and went on to play with the university school of music, but never did I experience the same synergy. We were a band of co-conspirators, learning to speak another language; it was hard and it was fun,” Sneath says.

“We dragged ourselves bleary-eyed out of bed at 6:30 in the morning to get to school for 7:30 a.m. wind ensemble rehearsal and stayed until 5 p.m. for jazz band because we were convinced of the value of what we were doing. We weren’t just making music; we were making magic. Mr. Kula was the magician.”

“We weren’t just making music; we were making magic.”

Mr. Kula was the magician.”



Photo by Donna Maxwell

EMBRACING THE



BY JENNIFER MCFEE

Respect. Love. Humility. Courage. Wisdom. Honesty. Truth. This set of seven values forms the basis for a traditional Aboriginal lifestyle—and for a more inclusive and accepting school environment.

For more than a decade, the Louis Riel School Division has offered the Seven Teachings within its schools and they're drawing the interest of schools across Manitoba.

Corey Kapilik, divisional co-ordinator of Aboriginal education, oversees planning and works with staff on how to support students' learning.

"These are the Teachings that have been around for a long time. It's very regional to Manitoba. The ones that we use have been taught to us by elders in Manitoba,"

Kapilik says.

"In a school, we look at traditional Aboriginal culture and we look at oral tradition as well. We talk about how First Nations people learned a lot from watching animals to learn about ourselves and how we should act."

Each of the Seven Teachings is connected to an animal that is viewed as the teacher of that virtue. The bison teaches respect; the eagle, love; the wolf, humility; the bear, courage; the beaver, wisdom; the sage (or Sasquatch), honesty; and the turtle, truth.

"I think that bringing the Seven Teachings into our schools is a great way to teach the kids about Aboriginal culture, but also the lessons are for everyone and the Teachings apply to everyone," Kapilik says.

"They're not just for Aboriginal students.

All students benefit from learning about the Teachings and talking about them and incorporating them into classroom learning."

As the district's cultural integration specialists, Darlene Tomsic and Andrea Leach have witnessed those benefits firsthand.

The possibilities are vast, since the Teachings can play a part in a wide platform of subject areas, Tomsic says. These areas include, but are not limited to, English as an additional language, social studies, art, math and music.

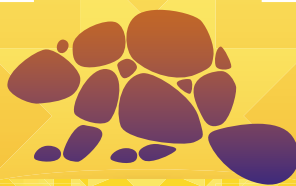
"Integrating the Seven Teachings allows students to learn and understand indigenous culture and beliefs. It also teaches the children to build relationships with their peers and school staff," Tomsic says. "By including the Teachings into their



BEAR SPIRIT

Soongatziwin: *Courage*

It takes courage to face problems with integrity and a fearless heart. The Bear spirit teaches us that we must be brave to do the right thing.



BEAVER SPIRIT

Amik: *Wisdom*

The Beaver spirit teaches us that wisdom is when we embrace learning and understanding, and apply sacred knowledge into everything we do each day.



EAGLE SPIRIT

Zhawenjigewin: *Love*

The Eagle spirit tells us that love comes with peace and is unconditional. When people are at their lowest is when they need love the most.



BUFFALO SPIRIT

Kichi'inendam

The Buffalo spirit teaches us that respect is when we are treated with respect. When we are at our lowest is when we need respect the most.

Seven TEACHINGS

daily routines, students are able to develop a stronger sense of school community.”

In addition, all age levels can reap rewards from learning the concepts, she adds.

“We have provided teachings to students from kindergarten to Grade 12, as well as in some of our preschool programming and even parent groups,” Tomsic says.

“We have also incorporated the Teachings into a variety of smaller groups, such as girls or boys groups, after-school clubs and breakfast clubs.”

Teachers can integrate the principles by presenting them to students in a way that honours each virtue and demonstrates its importance.

To do this, Tomsic suggests including the language of the Teachings within the classroom and school environment.

“The lessons and language become a part of the school culture and a reference point for discussions with students,” Tomsic explains. “The culture of the First People

can be celebrated by learning the traditions, inviting in parents, grandparents and elders. We have also had celebrations that include feasts and assemblies, which allow students and classrooms to showcase the work they have done and their understanding of the Teachings.”

When bringing the Seven Teachings into a school, Leach and Tomsic first determine the needs of the class to discover the best way to incorporate the knowledge.

“Working with the teacher is a great way to integrate the Teachings as well as build teacher capacity. Once we have met with staff to develop a plan, we go into the classes to provide the Teachings,” Leach says.

“Often, we use stories to demonstrate the Teachings. This may be through oral storytelling or through books. We usually will also use a Sharing Circle during these times. This gives everyone an opportunity to voice their thoughts or questions.”

In early years classrooms, they provide

In a school, we look at traditional Aboriginal culture and we look at oral tradition as well. We talk about how First Nations people learned a lot from watching animals to learn about ourselves and how we should act.



BEAR SPIRIT
Tepwewin: Respect

SASQUATCH SPIRIT
Tepwewin: Honesty

TURTLE SPIRIT
Kawakaatiziwin: Truth

WOLF SPIRIT
Tabasenimowin: Humility

lo spirit
s that all
should
ed with
When
to show
we also
ceive
ect.

The Sasquatch spirit teaches us that honesty requires courage and when we are honest with ourselves, it is easier to be honest with others.

The Turtle spirit teaches us that to speak the truth is to not deceive ourselves or others.

The Wolf spirit teaches us that to be humble we need to be compassionate, understand that we are all equal, acknowledge we are just one part of Creation.



Integrating the Seven Teachings allows students to learn and understand indigenous culture and beliefs.

tools such as activity sheets, memory games and stuffed animals to help reinforce each Teaching and its connection to the corresponding animal teacher.

“It is also important to allow enough time for students to learn and honour the teachings. In many of our schools, learning the Seven Teachings has been a one- or two-year plan,” Leach says.

“At Dr. D.W. Penner School, we have worked with the staff and students over two years. This was a wonderful experience for us and we have had a lot of positive feedback from the students and community.”

As the school’s principal at the time, Ken Bartel agrees that the experience was positive for all involved.

“We decided within our school plan that we wanted to further study the Aboriginal Seven Teachings, so it was something that came from the teachers’ desire to explore that. We had been working on virtues, so when you look at the Seven Teachings, they are pretty common virtues,” says Bartel, who is now the principal at Windsor School.

“The teachers and staff wanted to get involved with that, so we started some conversations with the Aboriginal support team from the Louis Riel School Division.”

They decided to delve into three Teachings the first year, followed by four more the next year. Tomsic and Leach introduced

the overall ideas and returned to the school with classroom activities to help promote a better understanding of each theme.

“When the Teaching was introduced, we tried very hard to refer to it in our language and in other aspects of our teaching as well so that it wasn’t just a one time type of thing,” Bartel says.

“The first one we looked at was respect. We tried to incorporate it in the language that was happening in classes and in the hall. Teachers were deliberate in looking at books that they were studying that would highlight respect. They would usually take a good month and a half to get a better understanding of what the Teaching was so that it would not be done in isolation.”

At the end of the first year, the school hosted an Aboriginal activity day with stations that included drumming, hoop dancing, Inuit games, language learning, beading and more.

During the second year of the initiative, they focused on the remaining Teachings and sculpted out opportunities to apply them in a broader context. In one example, the theme of courage coincided with Remembrance Day, creating a natural connection of concepts.

The students were also inspired to move beyond the Teachings to participate in a Métis dance group. They began to

practise during lunch hours and took their performances public, including at the SAGE national physical education conference.

Overall, Bartel received positive feedback from parents, teachers and students about integrating the Seven Teachings at Dr. D.W. Penner School.

“It was very worthwhile. Lots of really, really positive things came from it,” he says. “When you’re looking at qualities like respect, honesty, truthfulness, wisdom and love, those are all things that we want our kids to have. Those are all important things for any child to have in their repertoire of skills as they go along.”

As an added advantage, the Teachings helped to bridge a cultural gap for newcomers as they adjusted to a new school and a new country.


“We had several students from other countries who moved to Canada and moved into our school, and they also loved it because those were good values that they thought were important. It helped our new students by being open and thinking about inclusion,” Bartel says.

“The biggest thing was the whole sense of belonging. You want everyone to feel like they are part of our school. It was a great experience.”



The CAEL Assessment is available at Heartland International English School in Winnipeg. Check our website for details.

cael.ca



Are you considering retiring from the teaching profession? That is a huge step in your life's career. The members of the Retired Teachers' Association of Manitoba have all been where you are now, considering the choices that have to be made. These retired teachers would like to make their experiences available to you. There will be an opportunity to talk about retirement issues in Brandon on April 11, 2015 and in Winnipeg on April 18, 2015.

To get more information on the meetings and to register, phone 1-204-889-3660 or 1-888-393-8082 by April 2, 2015, the earlier, the better. The office is open Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.; messages can be left at other hours.



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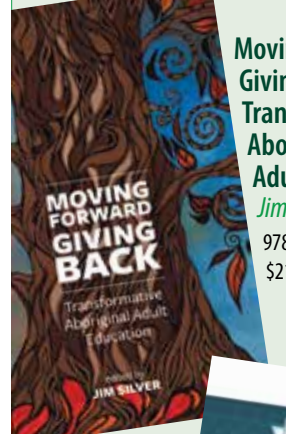
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5 Reasons **NOT** To Get (BUT WHY YOU SHOULD, ANYWAY)

BY PATRICK PARKES

In the labour movement, employer attacks, the end of contract terms, and strikes are what we call ‘capacity building’ events. When on strike, a union rolls out its command structures, and all hands must be on deck, so to speak. Strikes build awareness of both the issues and the union, and members start getting more deeply involved—many for the first time.

However, when the strike (or other critical event) is over, newly engaged members often drift away, and the union moves back to its steady state of die-hards only. This is too bad, because I would argue it’s far more important for union members to be engaged between contract terms, doing outreach work that could possibly mitigate strikes.

So why do new activists fade away? Here are five common objections I’ve heard union members raise when explaining why they don’t stay involved:



1 Union involvement is time-consuming.

2 To influence decisions, you need to be with the ‘in crowd.’

3 Political work can make one a target of personal attacks.

4 Being labelled an ‘activist’ can hinder your career.

5 Unions are ineffective and impossible to change.

Are these objections reasonable?

A union die-hard might say all of the above objections are merely excuses, based on misinformation. Perhaps that’s true on some level. But these objections are nevertheless worth examining because, if there is some truth to them, it might lead us to solutions. Let’s take a look:

Is union work time-consuming?

It can be, and this is probably the biggest reason union members fail to remain engaged. At the apex of my union involvement (as table officer for a BC Teachers’ Federation local, and editor of a professional journal) I attended plenty of late-night meetings, and often worked on weekends and holidays. But one can always ration one’s involvement by not getting

involved in too many things at once, and many activists have managed to balance their lives this way.

Do you need to be in the ‘in crowd?’

The answer depends on the health of one’s union. In healthy unions, leaders encourage new members to get involved, embrace open debate and new ideas, and are not obsessed with protecting their positions. But other unions—perhaps most unions—are cliquey and factional. As an example, my union local has what you might call an old guard, focused largely on the past, and a new guard who formed because they got tired of new ideas being blocked. Sometimes new guards become old guards, old guards become really old guards, even newer guards get started, and so on. In any event, yes, there can be ‘in-groups’ in unions, and most unions seem to have them. But not all such groups are necessarily hostile to new people.

As a union activist, could you be the target of internal political attacks?

In short, yes. Although many union politicians are exemplary in their respect for fair play, I can confirm that negative campaigns and vicious tactical maneuvers are just as common in unions as they are in the larger political sphere. Some unions are worse than others, and it all depends on the personalities involved. So yes, standing up in your union could make you a target—but not necessarily.

Will being a union activist hinder your career?

In my workplace, I am aware of some in management who negatively target

Involved With Your Union

shop stewards, but that seems to be the exception. In many cases union volunteers are respected by management, and I see no systemic evidence that union involvement hinders one's chances for advancement. In fact, some of the skills you gain through union involvement may be transferable to the workplace, and smart managers understand this.

Are unions ineffective and impossible to change?

To be sure, a small union local can't change the world—so get over it. But we can make incremental improvements, if not to the outside world, then certainly to the internal structures of our unions.

Ignore the objections and get involved.

Following from this last point, I will admit that during my years as a union activist I often thought I was wasting my time: that as an 'agent of change', I might have done better to join the Republican Tea Party to convert them to the ideology of Karl Marx. By this I mean that many unions are deeply resistant to change, and in some cases even reactionary.

As an example, I once brought forward a motion for our local to make a public statement in support of WikiLeaks. Needless to say, the motion was defeated, and one of the main arguments put forward was that because unions are secretive and should remain so, we should respect government secrecy! And this point was made without even a hint of irony.

Sadly, where unions should be providing a good example and an antidote to the irrationality and arbitrary power we find in the larger political system, sometimes they are merely a microcosm of that system. Nevertheless, while this may at times be disheartening, it is no reason to stay out of the fray. As a union activist I've seen positive change happen—of the two-steps-forward-one-step-back variety. Which is a pretty good record, if you think about it.

As an example of such progress, in recent years a determined group of BCTF activists (of which I am part) advocated successfully



Just as we advocate for improvements to be made by our national and provincial governments, we should advocate for improvements to be made within our labour unions—especially so that they can have a more effective, positive role in those larger political structures.

to build support, within our union, for divestment of weapons stocks from our pension. We saw it as incompatible with our role as teachers to benefit from the sale of armaments. This might sound like an easy sell, but it wasn't: there was opposition within the BCTF to such considerations.

But after years of campaigning (yes, it did take years—I estimate five years of the most organized phase of our campaign) and fine-tuning our strategy, we succeeded in changing the culture, to such an extent that 'ethical investing' is now viewed as common sense among BCTF activists. The 'one step back' here is that we still haven't divested weapons stocks from our pension. That will take cooperation from other public sector unions, which haven't come around to our way of thinking.

Just as we advocate for improvements to be made by our national and provincial governments, we should advocate for improvements to be made within our labour unions—especially so that they can have a more effective, positive role in

those larger political structures. The thing to emphasize here is that we probably can have some influence in improving our unions, despite the many barriers we face. That's because unions have smaller overall populations, and are therefore easier to be influenced by a small group of activists.

To be sure, workload, in-group/out-group dynamics, political retribution, and conservatism are serious barriers to involvement. But they won't go away if we don't get involved. Many hands make light work, and when we invite rational actors to our union table, they can help change the culture. So despite the barriers, there really is every reason to get involved in your union—and you should. To borrow the slogan of talk show host Thom Hartmann: "Tag, you're it."

Patrick Parkes, shown in photos, is a former vice-president of the Burnaby, B.C., Teachers' Association and blogs at politicalsei.wordpress.com.

Educator pens teaching book

BY DONNA MAXWELL

After 17 years teaching at the University of Winnipeg in the education program, Gary Hunter decided it was time to write a book. The year was 1999, and Hunter knew he wanted to write about education and said his first thought was to write about great teachers and great teaching.

It was a good idea but Hunter said he struggled with the writing and found he couldn't find a real focus for the book. Then in 2004 he read Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning* and things suddenly became clear.

Frankl was a survivor of Auschwitz and his book talked about how even under those most dire circumstances there were people who somehow found it within themselves to not give up. Hunter said Frankl asserted that they were able to forge on because they weren't expecting anything from life,

but were focused on what life, even in those darkest days, expected from them.

"One of the important passages I came across, was, (Frankl) was talking about the circumstances, they were really, really difficult, and he was talking about how you could tell when a prisoner was ready to give up. You'd look at a person and say, 'well, within a couple of days he's not gonna be here anymore,'" Hunter said.

"He started to realize that people gave up because there was no longer anything they could expect from life, that, whatever their God, whatever they believed in, it wasn't gonna turn around.

"He realized that what his peers needed to recognize was that it didn't matter what you expect—if you want to survive in the camps, then the only way you can survive is by asking the question 'what's expected of me?'"

That notion became not only the basis for Hunter's book, *Life Expects—Educating Students to Lead Fulfilling Lives*, but also a completely new way that he looked at life.

"When I read that I stopped and I thought to myself, 'that applies to life,'" he said.

"Life either acts upon us or we choose to act upon it."

He said the basis of the *Life Expects* teaching model is that we all have a purpose in life, a gift so to speak, that we're expected to deliver to the world. Teachers can help students realize what their gifts are and help nurture them to ensure the student pursues that gift, and, through good times and bad, continues to strive for success.

"One of my chapters in my book I think I give a pretty good appreciation of how we find our gifts, that's the easy part, but it's very, very easy to become discouraged about our gifts," Hunter said.

"We live in a society where failure is considered by most people to be something to be ashamed of. That's a big problem."

Hunter's book tells teachers to be on the lookout, throughout their teaching day, for students' strengths, and operate under the assumption that every student has at least one gift to offer.

The teachers should also demonstrate four character traits that students can model that will help bring their gifts out. The traits are: idealism, authenticity, generosity and self-determination.

He also gives ways for teachers to "build a foundation of trust-affiliated needs", which are safety, belonging and actual trust, which will help make the classroom inclusive and more open for students to feel safe.

When students feel safe in their classroom, they'll be more willing to try to not only discover their gifts, but pursue them as well.

"Once that trust foundation is in place the kids are in a better position because they trust, to take chances, to take risks."

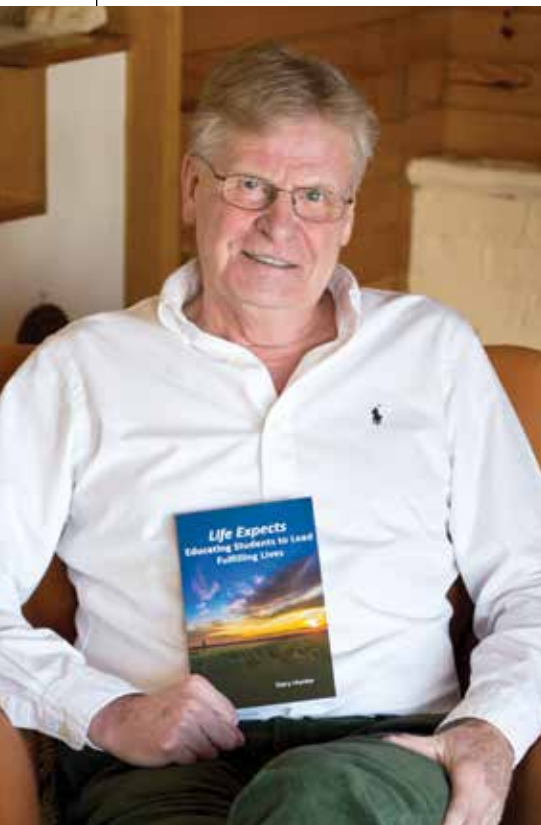
Hunter also promotes experiential learning for students and in the book reminds teachers, and students, that success is a process, and failure shouldn't be something we fear, but something we learn from.

He said it's a paradigm shift and we need to look at failure differently. He cites many examples of dedication to pursuing your gift in *Life Expects*, and said that the story of Abraham Lincoln is one of his favourites.

"Everyone talks about him as president," Hunter said.

"If I was teaching history, I think I would focus more on what people who were great, what they had to do to become great. We always talk about, OK, (Lincoln) became president and this is what he did. The real story...is what he had to go through to get there."

Hunter is available for speaking engagements to talk about *Life Expects*. He can be reached by email at gmunter47@shaw.ca.





U of M program redesigned

**BY JEROME CRANSTON, ASSOCIATE DEAN (UNDERGRADUATE),
FACULTY OF EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA**

Very few teachers are truly ready for that first day of school. No course or practicum or program can simulate the vividness, intensity or staying power that comes with teaching for real in real time. Looking out at all those faces—waiting expectantly as you prepare to start the journey with them—can be overwhelming, scary and exhilarating all at once. As someone who’s taught various grades, I’ve been there.

And anyone involved in teacher education who thinks she or he can create the conditions that mimic the experience of real teaching in the university setting is doing a disservice to what teachers do, day in and day out, over the duration of a school year.

Let’s face it. Teaching any age group—early, middle or senior years—these days is not an easy job. Actually, I’m not sure it ever was easy. In order to support students’ opportunities to succeed in and out of school, teachers must, at minimum, possess an appropriate level of knowledge of the variety of subjects they teach. Plus, they must have the ability to turn that knowledge into teachable moments, as well as an understanding of teaching itself. And more than ever before, they also need to have a sophisticated understanding of who their students

are and where they’ve come from.

That’s why we have created a new after-degree bachelor of education program at the University of Manitoba. The new program, which will be introduced this September, has been designed to try to address these realities by providing beginning teachers with a solid foundation—one made up of classroom and practicum-based experiences, so they will not only feel confident in their abilities as beginning teachers and find a level of success that will carry into their first year of teaching, but also will be prepared to stay in the classroom in the future to effect positive change in the lives of their students.

We have done this by redesigning the program while maintaining the uniqueness that is required to differentiate among early, middle and senior years learners. We have created new courses targeted at developing the competencies required to teach at each specific stream. And we have also increased the overall program coherence by introducing ‘cross-stream’ courses and ‘cross-stream’ electives so that our teacher candidates can gain a broader perspective of the entire K–12 system. These ‘cross-stream’ elements offer a level of student choice that our old program did not. As well, we still maintain a course focused

on Aboriginal perspectives, but are working to integrate these perspectives throughout the program.

In this new program, we have also revised our practicum. It is now made up of four stand-alone courses based on a developmental arc in which our teacher candidates assume very little teaching responsibility in the first term of the first year to taking on almost 100 per cent teaching by the end of their program. They do this with mentoring from their co-operating teachers and supervision by faculty advisors—many of whom are experienced, retired teachers.

Teaching is no small feat, and it is not a profession for those seeking an effortless career. The pressures that are part of the job make the teaching of prospective teachers tricky. Teacher preparation programs have to try to balance theory and practice, be responsive to the needs of the field and take seriously the responsibilities required by Manitoba Education for certification.

Based on what our faculty knows about how teachers learn and develop professionally, we believe our new after-degree bachelor of education will enable beginning teachers to acquire and refine the knowledge, skills and dispositions to allow their students to succeed along with them.

PORT FOLIO MAINSTREAM

Radical rattles

The British government was considering anti-terror policy that would require nursery staff to report any children who might be at risk of sympathizing with terrorists. According to the *Independent*, child care staff would be ordered to “identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism.” Sentiments expressed by young children against non-Muslims or anti-Semitic comments would have to be reported to the government.

Quick Quiz

Why do many of the media broadcast horrifying pictures and video released by ISIS, yet don't show idiots who run onto fields during sports events because it might encourage others to do it?

Selma must have been horrifying for her

Fox News anchor and Supreme Court correspondent Shannon Bream checked in on how difficult it would be to spot terrorists like the ones in France. “That’s my question about these guys. If...they had ski masks on, do we even know what colour they were, what the tone of their skin was? I mean, what if they didn’t look like typical bad guys?”

No wonder university tuition is so high

The *Globe and Mail* column on investment advice helped out a poor, downtrodden couple with five kids who were having trouble making ends meet on their \$450,000-a-year salary. He claimed to earn \$100,000 a year working one day a week teaching at a university and another \$200,000 working at a medical clinic. Once his wife is off mat leave, their income will go up to \$450,000. The credulous *Globe* apparently thinks that \$100,000 is normal pay for working one day a week. The sad couple bought a building lot for \$1.1 million on which they hope to build a home big enough for their family and live-in nanny. They claim to be living rent-free in a relative’s house, but appear to be looking at a future in a cardboard box. Said the husband: “we can’t get the numbers to work and would appreciate some help.” The *Globe’s* advice amounted to suggesting hubbie work another day a week. While claiming the couple are legit, the *Globe* said a few errors were made along the way: first it said the doctor clarified that he worked 100 hours a week (at seven days a week that would be 14 hours a day) at his two jobs, then that was clarified to 80 hours on some weeks. The *Globe*, champion of the overdog.

Another believable Facebook profile

Facebook claims that it created 82,000 indirect jobs in Canada and added \$5 billion to the country’s economy in 2014. A report commissioned by Facebook takes credit for everything from advertising generated to putting a dollar value on every ‘like’. Worldwide it claims to have created 4.5 million jobs and added \$227 billion to the global economy. Back on this planet, Facebook employs 8,000 people and has revenues of \$12 billion a year.

FICTION



Stop! Taxes aren't evil

BY GEORGE STEPHENSON

How odd that the leader of the federal NDP seems to have been entranced by the hypnotic glare of an anti-tax idea traditionally championed by more conservative politicians.

Thomas Mulcair has promised that an NDP government would cut the Small Business tax rate from 11 per cent to 9 per cent.

He says the tax cut would “provide immediate and permanent help for Canada’s hard working small business people” and promote job creation.

Beyond the fact economists from the right and left criticized the idea, it just adds fuel to the tiring refrain heard over the past half dozen years that taxes and government are a drag on economic activity and job creation.

Last month CBC Radio interviewed a businessperson about pension plans who went off on a tangent about how it is a proven fact government cannot run anything as efficiently as private enterprise. This followed by a few months another businessperson on air who said government provides nothing for the amount of taxes people pay. In neither case did the host challenge the statements.

Right.

Businessperson No. 2 was on morning radio, so we can assume he woke up in a house made safe by government fire

and safety regulations, ate a breakfast made safe by government regulators, maybe checked the weather on the government-created Internet. Then he perhaps saw his kids off to taxpayer-supported schools, drove to the CBC on roads built with tax revenue in a car that met government-imposed safety and efficiency standards and then, irony of ironies, had his views broadcast by a taxpayer-supported institution.

And now the NDP seems to agree at least in some form that owners of small businesses are overtaxed and in need of some relief.

Locally we have Conservative Leader Brian Pallister claiming that the provincial government has taken a bazillion or so dollars out of the provincial economy through taxes. The NDP government responded that it has cut a bazillion or so dollars’ worth of taxes and fees.

When is someone going to defend taxes as revenue that actually goes to things we want and need?

One might have thought that would be the role for the federal leader of the NDP, but guess not. And apparently not our local politicians nor the media, even those whose salaries depend on the generosity of taxpayers.

In general, most people understand that taxation is necessary if only to provide the most obvious services, such

as pushing snow off the roads. Indeed, some polls have shown that the public is even willing to pay more in taxes to improve certain services.

Those views, however, are drowned out by those who have a financial interest in doing whatever they want without having to worry about regulations, rules or laws that protect taxpayers as citizens, consumers and workers.

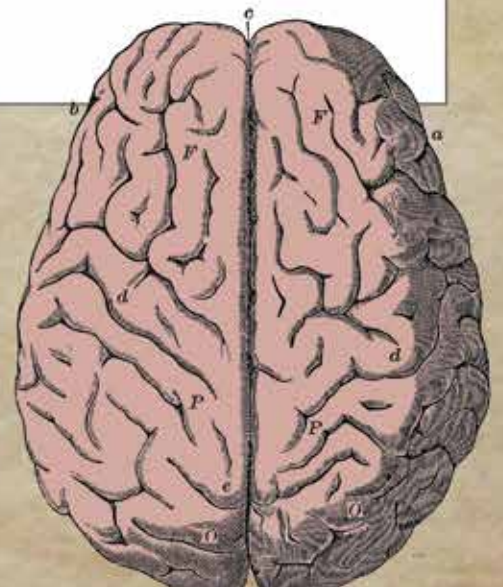
The media don’t help much in pointing out what our taxes pay for. In fact, they spend far more time on minor misspending: hockey tickets, golf shoes and lunch. Some might be outrageous and worthy of being revealed, but they are not likely indicative of all public spending.

The small-change items are usually dug up and cited by business-supported, self-proclaimed taxpayers’ federations which are not made up of average taxpayers or representative of their interests. But the media do love to amplify their attacks on government and taxation.

Unfortunately, there are so few voices on the other side willing to champion proper and necessary government spending and defend the necessity of taxation. And it seems with the NDP’s policies, there is at least one fewer.

A zone where brains won't go

Fox News in the U.S. fell all over itself apologizing for a lie it carried through many of its supposed news shows in January. It had allowed endless discussion of an assertion by an ‘expert’ on terrorism that there were more than 700 zones—they called them no-go zones—in France where non-Muslims and even police wouldn’t venture. This followed the claim that Birmingham, England, is populated totally by Muslims (22 per cent, actually). Fox faced the ridicule of a whole continent. One French TV show put together clips of all the times Fox hosts and guests mentioned ‘no-go zones.’ They counted 56 instances and British Prime Minister David Cameron called the Fox expert “an idiot.” The same might be said for all the hosts and guests who, apparently Google-impaired, actually (or pretended to) believed it.



REFRESH

BY RAMAN JOB, PUBLIC RELATIONS FACILITATOR

Wunderlist

This smooth and handy list-making app boasts millions of downloads. But you can also use it as a basic blogging platform simply by publishing lists. Let's say you want to write a post on "Top 5 Reasons to Participate in #MbEdChat". Create a new list, add your five reasons, and enter descriptions in the note field for each. Hit 'publish' and you'll be asked to upload a cover photo and title for the post. Hit publish a second time and you'll get a link to share on your social. Other Wunderlist users can leave comments and even subscribe to your public lists. Your unpublished lists remain for your eyes only. #prettyslick

SwiftKey

This superb Android app is now available for your iPhone and iPad with iOS 8. I'm using it on my Dell tablet and it's bliss. SwiftKey lets you customize the size and style of your keyboard—in more ways than you can imagine—to fit you perfectly. You can even undock your keyboard and move it up and down the screen for maximum comfort. It has predictive text capability and a dazzling array of free and paid themes. Read their privacy policy, though.

Twitter Video and Group DMs

My favourite social platform recently made big waves with two brand new features. The first is group DMs for up to 20 of your friends or colleagues—a great way to simplify the collaboration which many teachers do over Twitter anyway. The second is Twitter Video. Yes, you now have a video camera available to you every time you tweet. And it will record not just a Vine-like six seconds, not an Instagramy 15 seconds, but a full 30 seconds of Twitter Video. With all that elbow room you can capture more classroom and sports activity (with the proper parental releases of course), challenge your media literacy students to create full 30-second video spots, and make substantial PSAs for your causes and projects. All without the trouble of uploading to YouTube.

Canva

You're likely going to spend some money on in-app purchases with this text-on-photo and graphic creator, but it's worth it. I love the ability to create high-quality posts and headers for just about every social platform imaginable. There is no charge if you're using your

own pics. But if you want to choose from their massive library of stock photos, it will cost you \$2.99 a pop. Canva gives you more than enough design eye-candy and pure practicality to fall in love with. The app is bright, colourful, and fun to explore and use on your iPad. Also available on the web.

Mix

A clever Android app that lets you express yourself while experimenting with a novel range of filters, effects and controls for photo-editing. Play with it and you can create your own favourite go-to filters. I took an overcast pic of a parking lot at dusk and turned the sky into a night sky fairly breathing stars. Too much fun.

Text timestamps

Did you notice most of the timestamps on your individual iPhone text messages are hidden? To uncover them, just plant your thumb firmly anywhere on your screen and slide to the left. You're welcome.

Comments or questions?
rjob@mbteach.org

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WORKPLACE

HARASSMENT

it's **NOT**
OK

Harassment is **NOT** acceptable
at any time, to any teacher,
from any one.



gossip * exclusion
coercion intimidation
threats ridicule bullying .abuse
humiliation slurs % innuendos @ @



The
Manitoba
Teachers'
Society

Stand up even if you stand alone.
Report harassment to your local teachers' association.