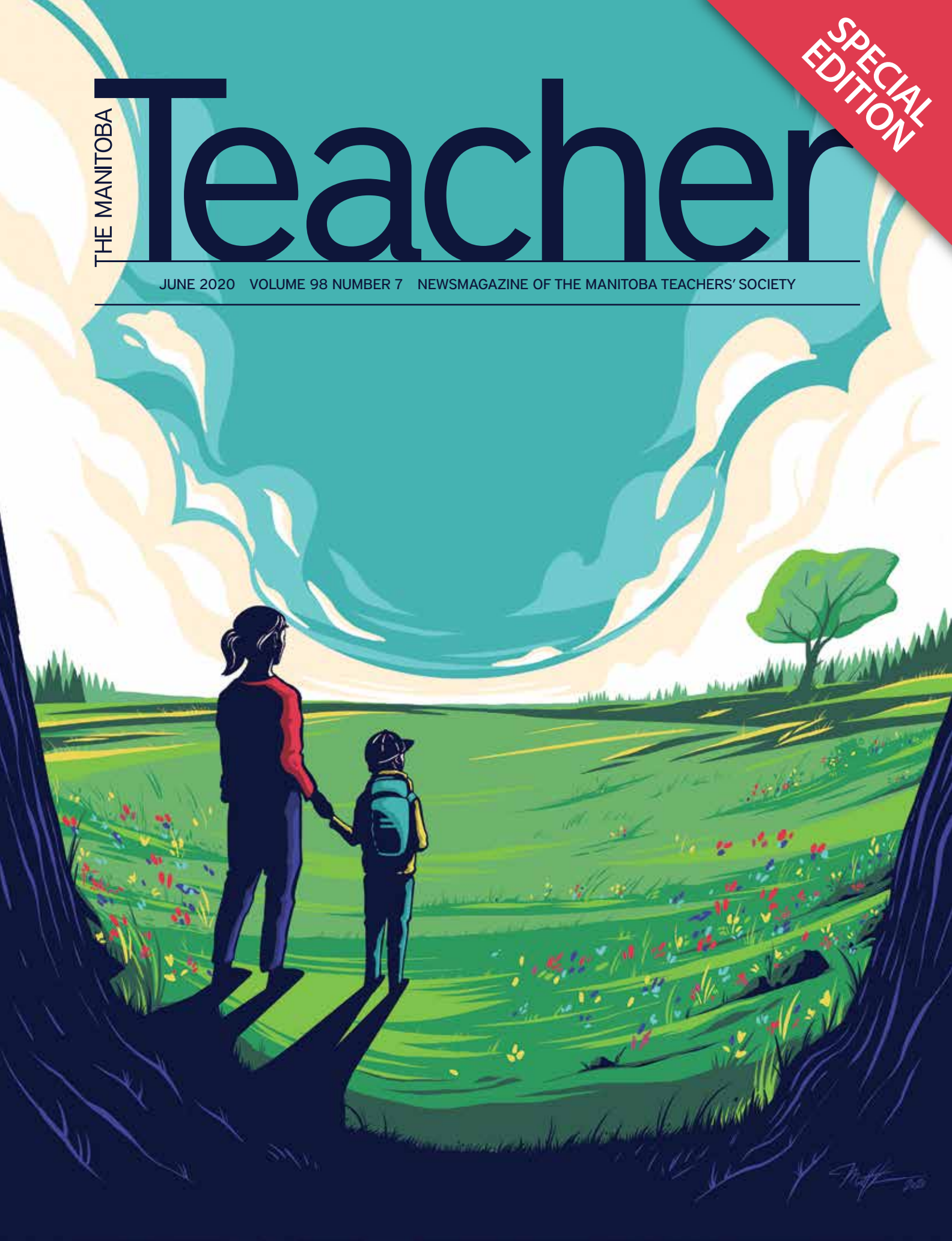


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THE MANITOBA

Teacher

JUNE 2020 VOLUME 98 NUMBER 7 NEWSMAGAZINE OF THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY



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Our recent poll conducted by Viewpoints Research shows respondents have favourable view of public school teachers



FROM THE PRESIDENT

JAMES BEDFORD

Teachers are used to having the answers. We're the ones students turn to when they "don't get it," the ones families turn to when their kids are struggling. Teachers explain things.

These days, though, explanations are in short supply. Teachers, like everyone else, have a lot more questions than answers. We are searching for certainty at a most uncertain time, and it isn't comfortable or easy for anyone.

The June column from the MTS president is typically one of congratulations on another school year soon complete, and well wishes for a safe and enjoyable summer. That message, however, seems entirely lacking given the past few months.

We will not soon forget 2020, the year in which teachers, with days' notice, moved their practices from classroom to living room, employing whatever resources were at hand to continue the work of teaching and learning. It was a herculean effort and not a day went by that I was not awestruck and inspired by the tenacity, commitment and unbridled creativity of MTS members, many of whom had unreliable—or nonexistent—access to the internet. Stories filled our MTS website and social media channels highlighting the extraordinary means by which you met challenges never before experienced by educators. Your dedication is evidenced in everything from lesson delivery to the planning of celebrations for the highly resilient graduating class of 2020.

Truly, the ingenuity of teachers knows no bounds. I've watched you use humour, like **Will Penner**, pop-culture, like **Joanne Kosheluk**, mindfulness, like **Robyn Eidse**, and TikTok, like **Brendan Edie**. And teachers like **Goldie Hennebury** in remote communities hand-delivered homework packages to families, keeping social distancing in mind.

I know you're tired. I know you've experienced highs and lows, laughter and tears. Under circumstances where traditional professional supports were no longer there, it was more than a bit difficult to balance "giving your all" to students with setting boundaries beneficial to your own mental and physical health. Yet that balance is essential; you cannot be there for your school family—or your own family—without taking care of yourself. Not to do so risks seismic consequences for our schools and communities. Rest assured that MTS will continue to advocate on your behalf to ensure that teacher working conditions are conducive to the well-being of all.

It's true, we have few answers to the many questions on our minds, but one thing we know for sure is that we are in a marathon, not a sprint. June has been a time of reflection, evaluation, and planning for a September that will also be like no other. And so we look to the summer, this year more than most, to provide restorative time for you and those closest to you.

Please take this time to reflect on all you've accomplished, and be kind when it comes to things you might have done, or might have done differently. You have done all you could, and it was incredible. From my family to yours, have a wonderful, restful summer.



This special edition of The Teacher and online Coronavirus coverage created by the MTS communications department:

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INSIDE MTS

TEACHERS' INSPIRING WORK A SIGN OF HOPE

ROLAND STANKEVICIUS, GENERAL SECRETARY

Our new tag-line says it all, The Manitoba Teachers' Society, We are a Union of Teaching and Learning!

A fresh new look and a clear message of our essential duty as an organization that continues to lead public education in Manitoba through our professionalism, competence and vigorous commitment to social justice and democracy.

The Manitoba Teachers' Society is a vital pillar in supporting and advocating for high quality teaching and learning in all schools in Manitoba. It is a thoroughly documented fact that all of society and culture is enriched and enhanced through investments in the vital enterprise of public education. It is through a commitment to public education that life gets better for all persons. Better health outcomes, better employment opportunities, a stronger and more diverse economy that is inclusive of all people without barriers or discrimination. Our 16,000 members see these positive returns every day with student success and growth in our diverse classrooms, both in person or in our new virtual and remote realities. In these most recent two months, teachers once again have shown the creative leadership and innovation in keeping close and in contact with students and families as we keep our physical distance during this time of COVID-19 health emergency. It is the remarkable and inspiring work of teachers, in many parts of the world, during this dreadful pandemic that has been an important foundation of so much inspiration, hope and faith in better days ahead and a slight sliver of a silver lining in spite of all of the upheaval and uncertainty. COVID-19 in 2020 has certainly shocked our systems and sensibilities and there are still many unknowns and inconsistencies that continue to test everyone and challenge so many of our practices.

A major modification to our 2020 MTS Provincial Council meeting, due to the virus, redefined the operations and functioning of our annual meeting. Our 101st Annual General Meeting of the MTS Provincial Council was a first

ever 'virtual' gathering of more than 350 delegates and staff who experienced a unique and sharply condensed/efficient meeting. Our usual three day meeting was carried out in three hours. By only considering the essential elements of our governance and fiduciary responsibilities as they pertain to our plans, programs and mandate for the upcoming school year the meeting was an event unprecedented in our history. Although the meeting was effective and was successful, the webinar format is a far less satisfying arrangement when compared to our vigorous in person debates, dialogues and deliberations on the floor and meeting rooms of the Fairmont. It is our utmost hope that 2021 can deliver a return to the practices and traditions that give the opportunity for a strong voice and expression to our members on their issues. An important priority for the annual meeting is the election of the upcoming Provincial Executive. Six Members-at-Large were elected to the Provincial Executive May 22nd, as 331 delegates/voters cast electronic ballots for the nine candidates (89 per cent voter turnout) to elect: **Joel Swaan, Catherine Hart, Kristen Fallis, Cathy Pellizzaro, Chris Darazsi and Kerry Enns**. This group of newly and re-elected will join **Cynthia Taylor, Sonja Blank, Jeff Cieszecki, Carla Bouchard, Kent McPherson, Nathan Martindale** (Vice President), and **James Bedford** (President), as the governing board for the next year. It is very gratifying, for our union, to hold vigorous elections with an ample and excellent field of candidates. A very heartfelt "Thank You" to all of the candidates and to your demonstration and commitment to our profession, our mission and our goals. The challenges we will all face going forward will be many and varied but as we have done for the past century, the years and decades ahead these will be met with the competence, integrity and dedication of those who are willing to serve. Our new provincial executive team is very well positioned to continue the strong advocacy and activism that has resulted in progress and improvement for

our membership, our students and their achievements and for a profession that is highly regarded and envied throughout the world.

June 2020 is a bittersweet time period for me as it brings to a close my last school year where my professional role is directly attached to the wonderful, challenging and gruelling vocation of teaching and learning. My son Calvin was born in 1986, the same year that I also started my teaching career. The ensuing years have proven to be an exhilarating and rewarding profession with so many experiences that I find it hard to believe so much time has elapsed. My career as a teacher has always been augmented and enriched through the many deep and challenging opportunities of working with our members through the Society. I will always treasure and deeply value the rich human experiences and interactions that the work of the Society provides and supports. As I now prepare to move on to a new stage and chapter in my life journey I am extremely gratified and so very proud to have had some part in the successes and accomplishments of the Society with the help and support of a wonderful team of staff and other colleagues. I am truly thankful to have been of service to this cause and part of a great team of dedicated professionals. I know that the MTS leadership team that is in place for the new school year will continue to support the interests of teachers and public education and I have every confidence that the leadership of **General Secretary Danielle Fullan Kolton** will be steadfast and successful in the pursuit of the mission and goals of the Society.

Very Best Wishes to all.

Roland Stankevicius
General Secretary
The Manitoba Teachers' Society

*"I pressed on, taking fresh troubles
for granted."*

- Captain Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra,
1775 Pacific North West Coast Spanish
Explorations Journal

LEARNING CONTINUES

AMID COVID-19

Learning hasn't stopped following the closure of schools due to COVID-19 in late March. Instead, teachers across Manitoba have been rising to this challenge in more ways than one while adjusting to working from home, learning new technology and ways to keep their students engaged in learning.

But it should come as no surprise that this has amped up stress levels for both educators and students. School social workers, the heroes of mental health delivery in Manitoba's roughly 800 schools, have had a front row seat to how this is affecting children's lives.

"Calls to kids' crisis lines are up 350 per cent," says Amber Zetaruk, president of the Manitoba Association of School Social Workers (MASSW) and Social Work Supervisor in the Louis Riel School Division.

Zetaruk and Kim Mackey, vice-president, head the two-year-old, 140-member special area group. Like other school social workers, they would normally be travelling between schools to support students and teachers, but the pandemic hasn't put the brakes on their work at all. They're in constant virtual contact with their schools and get dozens of emails daily.

"Some are really affected by food shortages. Some by losing their connections to friends and adults. Others worry about whether they can succeed in this new form of virtual schooling," says Mackey.

The pandemic has also made caseloads far more intense, says Jessica Askin, MASSW's secretary who works in the Garden Valley School Division. Basic needs like getting food, staying safe and

preserving mental health, even getting respite to exhausted parents, are at the forefront in a way they never were before. That's the major difference between pre-pandemic and now, she says.

"There's a scale and level of immediacy to the lockdown challenges that you just can't ignore," Askin says. "It adds another layer of complexity to the lives of people already struggling and definitely increases our caseloads."



TEACHING IN THE NORTH

The pandemic has also added an entirely new layer of stress for those teaching in remote Northern Manitoba.

"It's a stressful time," said Goldie Hennebury, a teaching principal at Stevenson Island School, which is part of the Frontier School Division. "We'd love to be able to get up in the morning and see our kids but we can't do that right now."

With their school being closed and access to internet unreliable, they've been creating homework packages for their nearly 20 students. Goldie is one of two teachers at the small school on Stevenson Island that has been delivering these packages to students over the past few weeks.

Since their students and families live on neighbouring islands to the school, Goldie travels along the ice road to hand deliver the homework packages. Once the ice melts, she'll have to travel by hovercraft or boat to get her students school supplies.

"We just give them everything they would need," she said. "It's so they have something to do but they're still staying engaged in learning."

When it comes to teaching in a remote community, she says access to the internet and the location of their students are among some of the biggest challenges they face. Despite all of this, they are learning new ways to teach their students to the best of their ability while managing being in isolation.

"We are coping and we know all of the families well so that gives us an advantage," she added. "The main thing is that we're doing the best we can for everybody."

Robyn Eidse, an early year's guidance counsellor at Kent Road School, has had to quickly adapt her approach to ensure students and families continue to receive the support they need.

"I need to preface with the fact that I came into this online teaching world with zero experience," she said. "As a former

classroom teacher, I dabbled into the world of Edmodo and Google Classroom, but only on a surface level.”

Eidse decided that the easiest way to stay in touch with her 301 students and their families was by email and phone. With the staying in touch issue solved, she set her sights on looking for an effective way to continue to share resources.

After a few days of looking at other websites to determine what worked, what did not, what would be the best fit for her students, and their families, Eidse took the plunge and launched her own website.

“Many of my blog posts are ways to stay positive and keep busy during the school closures,” she said. “I have recently added a mindfulness component as well where I talk about the importance of mindful practice. Then I recorded some guided practices for students and their families.”

Her **website** has a comprehensive parent area that has resources specifically geared towards parents and includes free webinars supporting mental health learning. There is also a resource page filled with resources to support families, caregivers and students.



READING AT HOME

When it comes to reading recovery, face-to-face interaction is part of the program, which is why Melissa Carter knew she had to get creative during school closures.

The reading recovery and literacy support teacher at École Dugald School is used to seeing her small group of students for around 30 minutes daily during the school year.

“Reading recovery is a daily intervention,” Carter explains. “These are already struggling learners that have been chosen to be in this program due to

their learning needs.”

In an effort to keep some normalcy in her student’s lives, Carter is continuing her daily lessons with each of her students via video chat. She’s offered several options to her student’s families in terms of how they can stay connected during this time, but so far almost all of them have been finding the popular video app, Zoom, very helpful.

“Nothing really replaces being in person but to my surprise it’s been working wonderfully,” Carter said.

Although exploring online resources and learning how to use Zoom from scratch was originally out of her comfort zone, Carter admits it’s been beneficial in many ways. This time has also given her a chance to connect with her student’s parents more than she ever has before.

“We’ve both been able to see another side of one another, they get a peek into my life at home and I get a peek into theirs. I think in a way it strengthens our connection even though we’re apart.”

In an effort to keep story time alive for kindergarten students at École James Nisbet Community School, teacher Anthony Greco arranged for 15 teachers to record themselves reading their favourite stories. He then used the recordings to create a live program on Instagram called “James Nisbet Story Time.”

Now that Greco and his colleagues are working from home, he has invited them to continue to record videos so that he can keep adding new content to the program.

“Parents are commenting on posts and emailing how much their children are enjoying hearing their teachers’ voices,” he said. “This is providing students with a sense of comfort and joy and is an experience they can look forward to every day.”

While the story time programing is new, Greco has been using Instagram as a way to stay connected with students and families since the beginning of the school year.

“I do my best to get kids counting, communicating, writing, moving, and of course, playing,” he said. “Although, it may sound a bit strange given our current circumstance, I try to keep parts of our day as familiar as possible.”

James Nisbet Story Time can be accessed on Instagram via “@instagartens.”



STAYING CONNECTED ON IG

What started out as a way to keep teachers connected during class suspensions, has landed the “@pegcityteachers” Instagram account a following of more than 1,470 users.

The account, started by Jennifer Scott and Colleen Heuchert-Hammell, Early Years Support Teachers with the Winnipeg School Division, is now being used by teachers and parents to help with remote learning.

“We were looking for an effective and efficient way to provide continued support to our teachers virtually,” said Scott. “But then our friends, who are parents, started to come to us looking for advice on how to set routines and homeschool their children during the school closure.”

Scott and Heuchert-Hammell are both experienced in teaching many grade levels and were former Special Education Resource Teachers. Through @pegcityteachers, parents and teachers, were invited to participate in a 20-day learn at home challenge, geared towards students in kindergarten to Grade 8.

Some of the challenges have included learning about angles and then using that knowledge to build a fort to use as a reading nook, to having students create their own animals on the Switchzoo website and watch Assiniboine Zoo’s livestream Creature Feature.

“It has been such an exciting and rewarding experience for both of us,” said Heuchert-Hammell. “We’ve seen consistent engagement from both teachers and parents which tells us how needed a resource like this really is.”

One of the biggest challenges for

the duo has been choosing from the numerous virtual learning platforms, which have seemingly tripled since the COVID-19 pandemic forced worldwide school closures.

“Both professionally as teachers, and personally as moms, we’ve noticed that while effective virtual online learning is possible, it’s a unique challenge when we’re bombarded with a variety of ways to connect virtually,” said Scott. “Staying connected with students is critical right now but equally important is finding an effective online platform which allows for meaningful contact, connection, and interactive learning.”

Louise Waldman is one of the parents who has been using the challenges on @pegcityteachers to keep her daughter engaged and learning over the school closure.

“My daughter told me that she’d never before started spring break wishing she could be in school,” said Waldman. “Checking in with Peg City Teachers on Insta every day has been a great way to add some routine and normalcy to our ways. And a way for her to feel connected.”



THE MOST MAGNIFICENT THING

Christi Benoît, a multi-age grades 1 and 2 teacher, has made staying connected with her learners and their families her No. 1 priority.

“I am currently connecting with my students on a daily basis via SeeSaw” she said. “The app allows me, as well as the students’ specialist teachers from phys-ed, music and even guidance to post daily learning invitations and activities.”

Recognizing the importance of mental health and overall well-being in these

uncertain times, Benoît has made a point of calling her students and their families every Monday to do a wellness check-in.

“During these phone calls, I ask how their day is going, anything on their mind, things like that,” she said. “It is a great way to still share those special moments and continue to build and maintain those relationships.”

With the classroom element removed, Benoît is committed to showing her students that learning, creating and thinking can and will still occur beyond the walls of a classroom.

In preparation for learning at home, she assembled take-home activity bags for each student, filled with school supplies, paper, STEAM based and creative learning invitations, practice work books that the students were already are familiar with, as well as creative tools such as Play-Doh, scissors, and arts and crafts supplies. The supplies came in handy for the students’ first at-home assignment.

“I posted a read-aloud of myself reading ‘The Most Magnificent Thing,’ a book by Ashley Spires,” she said. “After reading the story, I invited my learners to engage in the STEAM process by encouraging them to design and create their own most magnificent thing.”

The criteria for creating “the most magnificent thing” was actually quite simple. Students could use any household item, arts and craft supplies, Lego, or even Play-Doh to design a plan and create their masterpiece. Then, they recorded themselves explaining what they created and why it was magnificent.

“This activity was great because it had the kids creating, communicating their thinking, and many collaborated with a sibling,” said Benoît.

Although the school closures were unexpected, Benoît said it has taught her a lot about the importance of her role as an educator in the lives of her students. And, while she is no longer standing in front of a classroom teaching her students, she is confident that the relationships formed in classrooms are in no way tarnished.

“If we can all learn one thing through this process, it is to never take what we do in our classrooms, and the relationships that we build with our students, for granted,” she said. “This experience has taught me that learning together is something so much bigger than anything that could ever be confined to the walls of a classroom.”



TURN ON THE TUBE

For Rich Palka, a multi-age Grades 1 and 2 teacher at General Byng School, thinking outside the box resulted in him teaching from inside the box – the TV box that is.

“I wanted to keep some semblance of our normal day and to keep kids engaged and comfortably challenged, and to make sure they are having a lot of fun,” he said. “I thought an interactive TV show was the best way to do this.”

Palka’s students are used to him teaching in character in the classroom, so he decided to bring these characters to the TV show. He also added some new characters for the TV show.

“Writers’ workshops are now being delivered by a strange wizard looking for wisdom in odd places, or a greedy newspaper editor hiring new reporters to write stories for his newspaper,” he said. “My daughters made cameo appearances as the fast-typing, news-hungry reporters.”

Math concepts are also included in the show, courtesy of “a very confident, but not overly impressive magician” who shares magical math strategies or a “desperate detective” trying to figure out secret number cases.

When creating the show’s characters, Palka said it was important to include the two classroom guinea pigs to help provide a sense of comfort and normalcy for the students.

“The guinea pigs are the funniest characters on our TV show. My wife and I do the voices,” he said. “The rule is if it makes us laugh then it should go on the show. We’ve been laughing into the wee hours recording these silly segments.”

The guinea pigs have become characters who talk and sing about their days away

from the class and then set up academic challenges for the students. There are also frequent check-ins by two puppets the students are familiar with from their time in the classroom.

"I try to provide routine, a predictable pattern and stability by starting the day in the tv show in a way we normally would in class," he said. "I use similar language and start by doing a yoga activity, just like always. We end the day with our end of the day song."

Palka said that this is such an uncertain time, making it extremely important to recognize that there might be challenges that each family is facing, which he might not be aware of, but it still affects the student's learning.

"I wanted to give my students and their families flexibility so that they can access the TV Show when it works for them," he said. "I know some families are sharing devices, some have parents who are still working and many other challenges at this time."



MASTER CHEF CHALLENGE

With "quarantine cooking" all the rage, foods and nutrition teacher, Penny Wilson decided there was no time like the present to launch a cooking challenge for students at MacGregor Collegiate.

"The suspension of classes has forced our students into a unique opportunity," she said. "They now have the capacity to dedicate more time to building on an excellent asset – food skills."

For the month of May, Wilson ran a cooking competition for students in Grades 8 -12, based on the popular TV show Master Chef.

"It's not a competition to be judged,"

she said. "It's a community pursuit for great food."

On May 1, students picked up "surprise boxes," filled with ingredients and two recipe cards. Their task is to create the recipes and post the finished product on the school's food and nutrition Instagram account.

"I'm offering a delicious diversion from our current abrasive restrictions," Wilson said. "Food brings joy."



TEACHERS 'DOING A REMARKABLE JOB'

Manitoba's education minister and premier are commending the efforts teachers are making to keep their students engaged in distance learning.

"Teachers have been doing a remarkable job," Education Minister Kelvin Goertzen said on March 31 following the announcement that Manitoba was suspending K-12 classroom learning indefinitely for this school year. "Our teachers and the staff within our school system, they have taken on the challenge of ensuring that students continue to learn and progress and they've done it with professionalism and passion and we are tremendously proud of them."

Premier Brian Pallister echoed that same sentiment and spoke about the importance of a quality education in Manitoba.

"Resiliency matters, education matters, both are essential to us bouncing back as we will from this pandemic's challenges," Pallister said. "Quality education will be vital in our economic recovery long after this pandemic passes."

To read the full versions of these stories and more, visit the [Teachers' Home Work](#) section of our website.

Make sure our news follows you – by following us on social media. You'll find fun, inspiration and collaboration with colleagues who'd love to share with you.

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Stay on top of it all by checking the MTS website for the latest in education and COVID-19 information.

mbteach.org

Honouring the class of COVID-19

STORY BY ANNE BENNETT

To say that high school graduation looks differently this year is an epic understatement.

Gone are the convocations packed with parents and extended family, celebratory banquets and formalwear parades, not to mention the camaraderie that makes senior year so special.

COVID-19 has had an indelible impact on our Grade 12 students, and while there is understandable disappointment and a feeling of loss, Manitoba teachers have refused to let the occasion slip away. In addition to teaching from home, they're creating extraordinary, heartfelt ways to honour the Class of 2020.

Back in May, Grade 12 students from Steinbach Regional Secondary in Hanover School Division woke up to their teachers delivering cheerful lawn signs that read, "Congratulations: a Class of 2020 Grad Lives Here".

Twins Tyson and Paxton Koop were among the first students visited.

"It's a super kind gesture by the school, it's awesome," said Payton.

Tyson agreed. "It just shows...what great staff we have at our school and I'm just so proud to be a Sabre for life."

Approximately 30 teachers each visited about a dozen students' homes, covering 410 graduates in locations from Steinbach to Falcon Lake.

Sherry Bestvater, co-principal at SRSC, said the event provided much-needed connection for students and staff alike.

"It's been tough for everyone being separated. We miss our students and they miss their routines and sharing this special time with friends."

Many other schools are jumping on the yard-card bandwagon, making socially-distant home visits to give students and families a lift.

In Winkler, students from Garden Valley and Northlands Parkway Collegiates will convocate COVID-style, in a live-streamed event resembling a traditional grad ceremony. Complete with all the trimmings, the event will include speeches, valedictory address, award recipients, and an opportunity for



grads to pose for pictures in their caps and gowns with family. Presentation of diplomas will take place by appointment from Tuesday, June 23rd to Thursday, June 25th, 2020, with care taken to abide by Manitoba Health's social distancing regulations.

COVID-conscious celebrations are also planned at Collège Pierre Elliott Trudeau in River East Transcona and Carman Collegiate in Prairie Rose. Details are under wraps, however, to surprise the grads.

Schools looking for a little inspiration are turning to social media platforms like Pinterest for creative ways to celebrate. And the website xqsuperschool.org has posted a virtual graduation toolkit that provides a step-by-step guide

to everything from selecting a tech platform to how to make the experience interactive.

At 103.1 Virgin Radio Winnipeg, morning show hosts Ace Burpee and Chrissy Troy are building a virtual "yearbook" to honour Manitoba graduates. They're encouraging all students, families and schools across the province to contribute photos using the hashtag #CLASSOF2020MB.

"We can't let this just slide by," Burpee told MTS president James Bedford. "High school graduation is a big deal. We want our grads to know that we see them and we're proud of them. We're working with our friends at The Manitoba Teachers' Society to make that happen."



Support for teachers: in these times and always

Whether you're planning lessons for now or next school year, let us help. Virtual tours, online programs and resources available for all grade levels.



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HOME TEACHERS IMPRESS PUBLIC



BY SAMANTHA TURENNE

Over the past couple of months, Manitoba teachers have stepped up to the challenge of teaching remotely. They have found creative and novel ways to stay connected with their students, and the public has taken notice.

In a recent public poll, conducted by Viewpoints Research, on behalf of The Manitoba Teachers' Society, 86 per cent of respondents said they have a favourable view of public school teachers (47 per cent very favourable). Manitobans also found teachers to be the most trustworthy and reliable when it comes to speaking on education issues (73 per cent).

With such a high level of public trust and confidence, it makes sense that 80 per cent of parents have contacted their child's teacher since schools have closed looking for help and guidance as they navigate the new learning environment. Unsurprisingly, parents report that the teacher was able to address their questions and concerns more than nine times out of 10 (93 per cent).

Thanks to social media, mainstream media and of course, The Teachers' Home Work section of the MTS website, teachers' efforts to connect with students

have been highlighted far and wide. While not every teacher-student contact made the news, our polling results shows that there is no question that, the majority of teachers have connected frequently with students during remote learning.

With such a high level of public trust and confidence, it makes sense that 80 per cent of parents have contacted their child's teacher since schools have closed looking for help and guidance as they navigate the new learning environment. Unsurprisingly, parents report that the teacher was able to address their questions and concerns more than nine times out of 10 (93 per cent).

Seven in 10 respondents (71 per cent) reported that their child's teacher has connected with their child by phone or internet on a weekly basis. A staggering 40 per cent of teachers have checked in

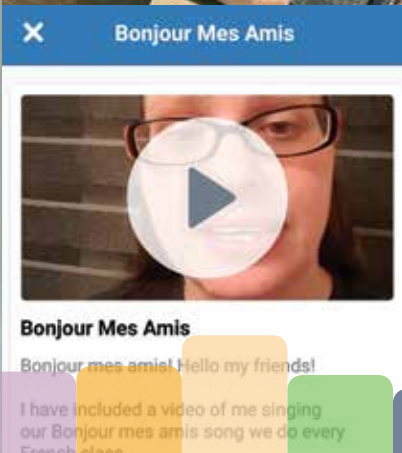
individually with students more than once a week. Only four per cent said that there has been no contact from their child's teacher.

Teachers are also routinely assigning work, marking assignments and providing feedback. Ninety-four per cent of respondents said that teachers assigned work to be completed at home and almost eight times out of 10 (77 per cent), the teacher marked the assignments and provided helpful and relevant comments.

Parents were heavily involved in learning at home, with the majority (44 per cent) spending one to three hours per day helping their child with homework. Twelve per cent said that they had not helped their child with homework.

There have been concerns raised over the access to internet and devices needed to participate in remote learning. When asked about their child's access to remote learning tools, the majority of respondents (95 per cent) said that their child has access to internet and appropriate technological devices necessary for learning at home and

Welcome to another day of learning!



staying in contact with their teacher.

When comparing those in the City of Winnipeg with those in outside of the city limits, there was no significant difference when it came to accessing online learning (96 per cent and 94 per cent, respectively). Further comparison, used postal codes to break into inner city Winnipeg neighbourhoods, suburban areas and rural Manitoba yielded similar results (93 per cent, 99 per cent and 94 per cent, respectively), indicating that for the majority of students, internet connectivity and access to devices was not a barrier to participating in remote learning.

With the heavy reliance on internet and technological devices during this period of remote learning, it is interesting to note that respondents were split on the future role of technology in their child's learning. Forty-three per cent of respondents believe that technology should play a greater role in the future of education, while 40 per cent said the role of technology should stay the same as now.

Looking ahead to the next school year, 52 per cent of respondents are confident that their child's learning has

progressed during the school closures, while almost four in ten (36 per cent) are concerned that their child will not be ready to move on to the next grade because of the time spent outside of the classroom.

There have been concerns raised over the access to internet and devices needed to participate in remote learning. When asked about their child's access to remote learning tools, the majority of respondents (95 per cent) said that their child has access to internet and appropriate technological devices necessary for learning at home and staying in contact with their teacher.

There was consensus that a qualified classroom teacher is very important in ensuring student success (81 per cent), and six in 10 agreed that the teacher and student should be in the

same classroom for optimal outcomes. Furthermore, almost two in 10 Manitobans believe that teachers are underpaid (18 per cent), while the majority (58 per cent) said that teachers are paid the right amount based on their level of education and expertise.

On a larger scale, the majority of Manitobans believe that the government is providing a sound educational system, classified as excellent or good (32 per cent), an increase from 27 per cent in 2019. Thirty per cent said that the quality of the current education system is fair. Interestingly, while the public's opinion is that education is heading in the right direction, their level of trust in the minister has decreased seven points to 45 per cent.

For the first time, in more than 25 years, due to COVID-19 restrictions, this poll was conducted online. A total of 1,045 Manitobans participated, of which half had children in the public school system. The margin of error for this poll is ± 3.3 per cent and considered accurate 19 times out of 20.

Changing of the guard

STORY BY ANNE BENNETT



Dr. Danielle Fullan Kolton

General Secretary

Dr. Danielle Fullan Kolton takes the reins at MTS on June 1, 2020, in the midst of unprecedented societal and organizational change. The newly appointed general secretary's priority is to assess member needs and ensure that MTS is relevant and ready to meet them.

Fullan Kolton has been a teacher, principal, education consultant, and most recently a staff officer at MTS. Her career had its beginnings very early, though, in a makeshift classroom set up **in her childhood home**. There the seven-year-old recruited her baby brother as a student, and even taught classmates during recess. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, her tenure as GS has also had humble beginnings—this time a makeshift office in her dining room.

"I have literally **always loved to teach**," she says, "no matter what the circumstances. It's the common thread throughout my life."

After joining MTS in 2013 as a research analyst, Fullan Kolton moved to Professional and French Language Services (PFLS) as a staff officer, designing and delivering workshops for members. In 2017, she became department head for PFLS, and in 2019, assistant general secretary.

"I'm energized when collaborating with people, cultivating a sense of shared purpose that has us rowing in the same direction but with our own unique paddles," she says. "We all bring something to the work. Our staff and Local leadership are positioned well to respond to challenges, and now more than ever we need to be efficient."

Along with recently appointed assistant general secretaries Dan Turner (labour relations), Cheryl Chuckry (professional status), and chief financial officer Kim Kummen, the GS will oversee development and implementation of systems and teams designed to identify and respond to member needs—clearly, nimbly and effectively.

Anticipated moves to central table bargaining and school division amalgamations, as well as the release of Province's long-awaited K-12 education

commission recommendations all come with the potential for substantial change.

"A lot of change is coming our way, and a lot of details are unknown. It's critically important that MTS engage and collaborate both internally and externally to build and safeguard infrastructure that supports teachers."

She adds that equipping members and staff to realize their potential is key to thriving in uncertain times.

"I see a need to enhance member and staff agency, and to build processes laser-focused on service delivery and advocacy. Our members need to know that while they're navigating the realities of their work, we've got their backs."

For Fullan Kolton, success as GS looks like an organization tuned into and advancing the interests of teachers while preparing for what lies ahead. A tall order, but one filled with potential.

"I'm a teacher and a learner to my core. It's what I love. It's what I've always loved. Working for teachers is the ultimate privilege."



Dan Turner

**Assistant General Secretary
Labour Relations**

As a teacher, vice-principal, president of the River East Transcona Teachers' Association, MTS provincial executive member and, most recently, staff officer, Dan Turner has worked for the advancement and support of teachers in both the political and operational spheres, and in both official languages.

Involved with MTS since 2001, Turner became a staff officer in 2012, providing collective bargaining support to multiple Locals and teacher welfare guidance to teachers and principals across Manitoba. As part of the PFLS team, he delivered professional development training and provided staff support to les Éducatrices et éducateurs francophones du Manitoba (EFM). Now, as AGS responsible for labour relations, Turner's breadth of experience informs a valuable perspective on the circumstances teachers navigate each day.

"I've had this extraordinary opportunity to observe and participate in the organization on so many fronts. It gives me a sense of the scope

and how our teams fit together."

Turner is acutely aware of the mounting responsibilities public school teachers are juggling, while a rapidly evolving labour relations landscape takes shape.

"Because teachers are so well-respected, society puts more and more on their plate. At MTS it's our duty to represent our members and advocate for their best interests—we are their chief proponents and their best defense."



Cheryl Chuckry
**Assistant General Secretary
Professional Status**

Having served as a bilingual public school teacher and principal with a background in support services and curriculum development during her 25-year career, Cheryl Chuckry cites work with struggling learners as the catalyst for her greatest professional growth.

"Those were the times that I learned how to support teachers, school leaders, students, families, and school communities. It laid the foundation for the collaborative work that I value as a leader."

Chuckry came to MTS in 2018 as a staff officer in PFLS, spearheading work with the **Collaborative Learning Facilitator Team** and its **grants program**. She credits her former colleagues and mentors for the unconditional support that shaped her practice.

"I'm grateful for the leadership networks that were there for me, such as les Éducatrices et éducateurs francophones du Manitoba (ÉFM), The Council of School Leaders (COSL), The Pembina Trails Teachers' Association (PTTA), Pembina Trails Council of Educational Leaders (PTCEL), and the Pembina Trails School Division."

For Chuckry, expanding the professional development toolkit in a time of change is of paramount importance. She sees her role as one of exploring new platforms for service delivery with greater flexibility built in.

"A service-driven approach to PD," she says, "means building on programs and professional learning designed to respond quickly to emerging needs in ways that are convenient and accessible. It's a very exciting time."



Kim Kummen

Chief Financial Officer

A Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA) with over 20 years in a variety of financial roles, Kim

Kummen has worked in the private, not-for-profit and public sectors. She spent the last 12 years in healthcare, most recently as chief administrative officer (CAO) at Winnipeg's Grace Hospital. She sees her role as chief financial officer at MTS as two-fold:

"As CFO, my role is to facilitate an accountable and sustainable financial structure that meets the needs, goals, and aspirations of the organization. My primary responsibility is the planning, implementation, and managing of all finance-related activities."

For Kummen, success is derived from an environment that permits the achievement of shared organizational objectives, rooted in financial stability and accountability.

"I get the greatest sense of accomplishment and satisfaction from working with a highly engaged and motivated team in an organization that focuses on continuous improvement. I love to learn, and I'm very happy to be part of the MTS team."

Rob Fisher

Chairperson, Council of School Leaders (COSL)

Rob Fisher began his teaching career on the Nisichiwayasihk Cree Nation in Nelson House, where he taught for 19 years. While there, the physical education and technology teacher also served as vice-principal, principal, and director of education. He moved on to R.D. Parker Collegiate in Thompson before becoming the curriculum coordinator for the School District of Mystery Lake. Fisher spent the next two years seconded to Manitoba Education as manager of the learning support and technology unit. He returned to Thompson as principal of École Riverside school and is currently principal of R.D. Parker Collegiate. Fisher has served as both a COSL leadership team member and director over the past 10 years.

"As COSL chairperson, I look forward to working collaboratively with the Manitoba Teachers' Society, the teachers of Manitoba, our COSL leadership team, directors, and the principal teachers of Manitoba to share our varied concerns and realities and to protect our collective rights."

Lillian Klausen

Présidente Éducatrices et éducateurs francophones du Manitoba

Born and raised in Somerset, a small rural community in southwest Manitoba, newly-elected EFM president Lillian Klausen lives in Winnipeg with her husband and two children, ages 10 and 11. A teacher for over 25 years, Klausen's career has spanned work in rural, urban and northern regions, in both the Français and French Immersion programs. She has worked in elementary and middle schools as a teacher, guidance counsellor and assessment consultant.

"My involvement with EFM began in the early years of my teaching career," Klausen says. "As president, it will be an honour for me to meet, understand and serve the members of our organization. I promise to listen and to make our voice heard."



RTAM – WHO WE ARE

Upon retirement, teachers are no longer members of the MTS but are eligible to join RTAM. We are the umbrella group that advocates for retired certified public and private school teachers.

RTAM – WHAT WE DO

We advocate for the needs of retired teachers to the Manitoba government, the MTS and the general public.

We partner with the Manitoba Seniors Coalition whose nine member-organizations advocate for older adults on issues including social participation, healthy aging, income security, housing, transportation and health care. manitobaseniorscoalition.ca

We partner with ACER-CART. Our national bilingual association represents over 160,000 retired teachers from Canada's ten provinces and Yukon Territory. acer-cart.org

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- RTAM endorses Trip Merchant to provide members with exclusive travel savings and additional benefits, including their Loyalty Program. rtammb.ca/travel-trip-merchant
- **Need Something To Do?** We offer resources to help you stay active and discover new opportunities through fun, lifestyle and wellness seminars. rtam.mb.ca/rtamcommittees/235-wellness-advocacy
- Look inside our quarterly publication called Keep In Touch (KIT). rtam.mb.ca/rtam-media/kit-magazine

There is connection and support near you through 21 Chapters: 18 within MB with 2 chapters in B.C. and 1 in Calgary. Local chapter organizations make it possible to meet and communicate with new friends and rekindle with colleagues who have similar interests and concerns.

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- a bursary for a deserving student who attends University College of the North in the Pas, Manitoba. rtam.mb.ca/rtamcommittees/233-student-awards
- a scholarship through Johnson's Insurance if the RTAM member has a child or grandchild graduating from Grade 12. www.johnson.ca/scholarship

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Rusty Barton

MORE THAN A MELODY

BY LINDSEY ENNS

Before COVID-19 closed schools, when you stepped into Stacey Natrass Brown's classroom, it was evident that it's a welcoming space for Garden City Collegiate students.

A large black piano sat near the front of the classroom with an open binder of sheet music and plenty of chairs nearby. Class isn't in session yet, but students were already gathering in the space to study, relax or simply visit with classmates.

Brown, who teaches choir and vocal jazz at the high school, says her classes aren't just about the music.

"This is a real safe haven for a lot of students where they can truly be themselves and feel accepted and the community in here is so warm and special," she said while sitting inside her office in early February. "It's a nice place to be."

Brown says she's at a place in her life where she's still living her dream. Along with being a music teacher and a mother of three, she's also the NHL anthem singer for the Winnipeg Jets.

"I auditioned in the old Winnipeg arena in 1997 ... so I've been part of the True North family for a while now," she said, adding she started out as the anthem singer for the Manitoba Moose. "As somebody who always wanted to be a performer, it's fulfilling that part of me."

"I'm literally living what my dream was so it's exhilarating and fulfilling to be able to do that."

Over the past year, Brown has scaled back singing the anthem during Jets home games, which has opened up the opportunity for other singers to experience the excitement.

"So many people want the opportunity to sing there so they're letting other people

have a shot and that's great."

Brown has been surrounded by music for most of her life. Her aunt is opera singer, Tracey Doll, her uncle and aunt were also music teachers, and her parents sang in the church choir.

"Growing up I always knew our family does music," she said. "Basically from the age of 11 I knew that I wanted to be a singer or a music teacher so that was just my track."

Brown, who has been at Garden City Collegiate for more than 20 years, was a major driving force behind starting a choir program at the school.

"It's been really amazing to watch it evolve and change," she said. "It's just a wonderful fit here."

Choir was originally held over the lunch hour but it has since grown to include nearly 180 students.

"That's a pretty healthy size," she explained. "Not everybody will choose choir over the other classes they are trying to get. But enough people did that it stayed rather healthy."

Studies have shown some of the benefits of music education for students include increased self-esteem, listening skills, creativity and stress relief.

"In this day in age with all the focus on wellness and mental health, I think a class like this is just amazingly beneficial for students," she said, adding music can be a great escape for all students. "We focus a lot on body awareness and breath awareness ... and there's a real sense of community in here."

Grade 12 student Clark Gonzales says when he joined choir, he was looking for something to feel apart of at his school.

"This community that I've found in

performing arts is just such a strong community," Gonzales said. "Mrs. Brown can really make any group of kids that she's teaching into a real community."

"With every class that she has, she really pushes for them to all feel welcome."

Grade 11 student Emma Wasylowski says she discovered her love for singing in middle school.

"It's brought this like fire inside of me and it just felt so great to be yourself and sing so I knew I wanted to choose choir as an elective," she said. "This is such a safe, homey environment."

The arts wing at the school is where dance, drama, choir and band classes are held. It also includes a theatre, which can be used by the entire school division and the community. The hub for performing arts is a really special part of the school, Brown said.

"I know that the grass is really green here and I'm watering it," she said with a smile. "To have that there is amazing. It elevates what the kids do, it shows them that it's important."

Brown teaches students in grades 9 to 12 and her three vocal jazz groups perform together more than 12 times per year, including at the Brandon Jazz Festival. She says being able to watch her students grow is very fulfilling.

"Their singing abilities, their commitment to the group, to their work ethic you just see progress," she said.

She said she hopes her own life journey inspires her students to chase their dreams.

"That's how teachers are immensely powerful ... we show our students what to maybe aspire to or how to be your best self and rise to the challenge."



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It wasn't long ago that a pandemic was something from the pages of history, and "physical distancing" was a new concept. Yet, within a short time, we have adapted, and we continue to adapt.

The disruption to our lives caused by the current pandemic is dramatic, but it is also a great reminder that there is really no way to predict the future. Change happens. It is the only constant in life. In order to move forward in our lives and in our careers, we too must continue to adapt and change.

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As the Acting Dean of Extended Education, David Mandzuk says, "At this time when there is so much uncertainty and the ground beneath us is shifting daily, some people may find themselves out of work or decide that this is time for them to upskill, reskill or even change career direction. Whatever your situation is, Extended Education is here for you and can help you chart a whole new career path or give you the knowledge and skills you will need to adapt to the changing needs of our educational systems at both the K-12 and post-secondary levels, and in the workforce more generally."

It may feel like our worlds have become smaller. Much of life has slowed down. We spend more time in our homes. We worry about health and finances. Yet our experiences are growing. Manitoba school teachers are meeting the challenge of teaching their students from a distance, and parents are meeting the challenge of teaching their children at home. We all keep learning.

Lifelong learning fuels the kid in all of us. It nourishes our dreams and helps us to prepare for a better future. Imagine how flexible education programs and courses might support your dreams and help prepare you to move forward in your career but also in your life.

"Continuing education and lifelong learning is typically associated with job-specific skills delivered through flexible, short-term programs of study," says Paul Jenkins, Manager, Delivery, Extended Education. But professional development, upskilling, or career pivoting is only one part of that story. With this investment, you get so much more.

"Beyond professional motivations, lifelong learners cite a raft of more personal reasons for continuing their educations like increased confidence and preparation for the changes life throws, a sense of responsibility to remain current, and being well-rounded and versatile, or, one might even say, more future-proof."

He adds, "In addition to job-specific skills, the lifelong learning model provides a suite of eminently transferable skills, including language and literacy, numeracy, and critical thinking skills."

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SCHOOL QUIZ

A

She taught primary grades for 45 years. She was elected Secretary-Treasurer of the Neepawa Teachers' Federation (1931), Secretary of the local Business and Women's Professional Club (1948), and Noble Grand of the Rebekah Lodge. She was the teacher in charge of the West Park School when it opened in 1951 and after retirement in 1965, it was renamed in her honour.

B

Born in Nova Scotia in 1881, he moved to St. Vital in 1887 where he resided until 1950. He served as a trustee and Secretary-Treasurer for the Woodlawn School District for 17 years. He moved to Oliver, British Columbia in 1950 where he operated a fruit farm until passing in 1968.

D

He joined the Hudson's Bay Company in 1784 and in 1790 was posted to York Factory. He later joined the North West Company and spent 15 years exploring and mapping in Western Canada. He worked for the boundary commission on the border with the United States, and in the 1830s he worked on the surveys in the Eastern Townships for the British American Land Company.

F

Born in 1913, he was employed as a butter maker and later manager of the Moosehorn and Ashern Creameries. He was active in the community, serving 28 years on the Moosehorn School Board and 32 years on the board for the Peace Lutheran Church. He died at Ashern in 1970.

H

Born in Winnipeg and educated at King Edward School and Isaac Newton School, he was a gunner aboard a Lancaster bomber who was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for conspicuous bravery while in action. He is commemorated by not only a Winnipeg school but also a park, a plaque, and a statue.

J

In 1961, at the age of 29, he joined the West Kildonan Police Department - later part of the Winnipeg PD. He was put in charge of the School Patrol and Safety Program in 1969, a position he held until his death. He served on the Board of Directors for Marymount School and in 1978, received a Manitoba Good Citizenship Award. He died in 1986.

L

She was born in 1882, a daughter of one of the original Selkirk Settlers. She married a fur trader and though they had no children, she was active in promoting the work of child welfare agencies. She served on the board of the Children's Home of Winnipeg for 12 years, seven as its President. She died at her Winnipeg home in 1919.

C

He was a trustee in the St. James School Division over two decades and played a major role in acquiring special insurance coverage for schools and managing assets during years of declining enrolment. He and his wife were greatly involved in promoting programs for people with disabilities. He has awards and medals of the highest distinction for community service.

E

Born in England in 1875, he came to Brandon in 1905. In 1916, he began 41 years of service on the Brandon School Board, 28 of them as Chair, resigning in 1956. He also served as President of the Manitoba School Trustees Association and, in 1952, President of the Canadian School Trustees Association.

G

Born at Hamiota in 1919, he lived there until enlisting at the start of the Second World War. After military duty, he ran a business at Grand Marais. He served as School Trustee with the Lord Selkirk School Division, was Secretary of St. Michael's Church at Victoria Beach, and Vice-President of the Grand Marais Community Curling Club.

I

Born in Scotland, he came to Canada in 1863 and for twenty years worked for the Grand Trunk Railway, then the CPR. He was an influential business man within the banking and insurance industries and served as President of the Canadian Club of Winnipeg, St. Andrew's Society of Winnipeg, and the St. Charles Country Club. He was knighted in 1911.

K

Born at Winnipeg in 1912, he served with the Royal Canadian Navy during the Second World War. An employee of Winnipeg Hydro for over 30 years, he was active in the community as President and Chairman of the West Kildonan Recreational Commission, and President of the West Kildonan Community Centre. He died in 1972.

SCHOOL NAME

1

George McDowell School
George Samuel McDowell (1881-1968)

5

William Whyte School
William Methven Whyte (1843-1914)

9

Walter Whyte School
Walter Hudson Whyte (1919-1998)

2

George Fitton School
George Arthur Fitton (1875-1956)

6

George Waters Middle School
George Waters (1919-2015)

10

Elwick Community School
Neville Meldrum Elwick (1912-1972)

3

Andrew Mynarski School
Andrew Charles Mynarski (1916-1944)

7

David Thompson School
David Thompson (1770-1857)

11

Julia Clark School
Julia Jane Murray Clark (1857-1919)

4

Hazel M. Kellington School
Hazel M. Kellington (1988 - 1991)

8

Alf Cuthbert School
Alfred Otto "Alf" Cuthbert (1913-1970)

12

Constable Edward Finney School
Edward Finney (1931-1986)

Answers:

4-A, 6-C, 2-E, 9-G, 5-I, 11-L, 1-B, 7-D, 8-F, 3-H, 12-J, 10-K

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MTS holds **historic meeting**

BY GEORGE STEPHENSON

Delegates to this year's meeting voted online on some bylaw amendments, the proposed budget and elected and re-elected members of provincial executive, all without the benefit of back-and-forth debate.



The Manitoba Teachers' Society held an Annual General Meeting for the ages last month.

Normally a three-day event at the Fairmont Hotel in Winnipeg, this year the 300-plus delegates gathered in front of their computers for a three-hour meeting.

The Society decided to go ahead with the meeting to meet the necessity of passing a budget and holding elections for provincial executive.

Many resolutions that would normally have been debated at the meeting were either deferred to next year's meeting or passed to the provincial executive to discuss.

Delegates to this year's meeting voted online on some bylaw amendments, the proposed budget and elected and re-elected members of provincial executive, all without the benefit of back-and-forth debate.

Having been given extensive information before the meeting, including details of the proposed budget, delegates approved a budget with a fee increase of \$30 a year. The annual fee for full members will go to \$1,042 from \$1,012.

New members of provincial executive

There will be three new faces on the MTS provincial executive after a vote by delegates to the 101st Annual General Meeting of the Provincial Council.

There were six positions open for members-at large.

Newly elected were Joel Swaan, Kristen Fallis and Cathy Pellizzaro. Re-elected were Catherine Hart, Chris Darazsi and Kerry Enns.

The complete provincial executive for 2020-2021 is:

- James Bedford, President
Louis Riel Teachers' Association
- Nathan Martindale, Vice-President
Winnipeg Teachers' Association

Members at Large

- Sonja Blank
Mountain View Teachers' Association
- Carla Bouchard
Pembina Trails Teachers' Association
- Jeff Cieszecki
Seven Oaks Teachers' Association
- Chris Darazsi
River East Transcona Teachers' Association
- Kerry Enns
Border Land Teachers' Association
- Kristen Fallis
Winnipeg Teachers' Association
- Catherine Hart
Seven Oaks Teachers' Association
- Kent McPherson
St. James Assiniboia Teachers' Association
- Cathy Pellizzaro
Thompson Teachers' Association

- Joel Swaan
Garden Valley Teachers' Association
- Cynthia Taylor
Louise Riel Teachers' Association

Leaders address meeting

MTS President James Bedford and Education Minister Kelvin Goertzen addressed the historic meeting from their homes.

Bedford said the decision to hold the meeting and the hours of preparation that went into its presentation was not taken lightly.

"The pathway that brought us here today has not been an easy one to travel, but perhaps a few words that will help us understand the decision making process.

"We have been guided throughout by three underlying principles. The first is the observance of the law, the Emergency Measures Act that limits gatherings within the province.

"Secondly, we have tried for the best part to preserve the intent of our Bylaws; not every word, but the spirit of those words, in the actions that we have taken.

"And lastly, but I think first and foremost in our decision making, was to ensure the physical and mental health of you, delegates and members of the Society. None of the work that we do is more important than our health."

He said the meeting was held on the advice of Society lawyers.

Bedford told delegates work of the Society continues through the current crisis, dealing with issues that arose well before the shutdown.

"The essential work of the Society has been going on diligently this past year, and especially these past months. As you are well aware, the Minister has delayed the release of the K-12 Education Review Commission recommendations. The Minister has confirmed that we shall see no implementation of recommendations until next summer at the earliest. The Minister has also stated that legislation to move us to provincial bargaining will come after the release of those recommendations, so we continue to wait.

"Turning now to the past two months, I want to acknowledge the work of staff and leaders throughout the Society," he said. "At the end of March, just as all of you were asked to do something that you have never done before, the General Secretary asked the same of staff.

"Over the course of a week we were able to ensure that technology and training were in place to ensure that members, in what is perhaps one of the most critical times in



public education in our 100 year history, would continue to be supported by their Society."

"Not only has the work continued without interruption, but the scale of much of that work has exceeded by far previous records. Visits to our website, calls to staff, social media postings and requests for interviews have exceeded previous totals. It has been clear to me that in this, an information age, the primary goal must be to inform members, and the public, in the most timely and efficient means possible. Not only do we have the tools to do that, but more importantly we have the people to do that."

Bedford said one benefit of the crisis has been the development of a working

relationship with the minister of education.

"For me, one of the outcomes of this pandemic crisis has been building a positive relationship with the minister of education. Regular phone calls, at times without an established agenda other than an opportunity to check in, have been much appreciated. We have had the opportunity to raise issues of concerns as well as pass along information."

Education Minister Kelvin Goertzen praised teachers for all they have done through the pandemic, citing stories he read and heard of the work teachers have been doing remotely with their students.

He did say that some students have struggled and the province was looking at ways in which those students can be helped, including having more teaching days next year.

"We need to find additional days to help those students who need remedial learning to catch up," he said. "So we are having that dialogue and we're having that discussion and we'll see if there are other suggestions that are better than the ones that have been put forward."

A full report on the minister's speech can be found in the news section of the MTS website.

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PORTFOLIO



THE RIGHT TO BEAR FRIES

In speaking to a group of farmers about the U.S. Second Amendment, allowing citizens to have guns and more guns, Donald Trump explained: "We're going after Virginia with your crazy governor. They want to take your Second Amendment away. You know that right? You'll have nobody guarding your potatoes."

Yup, that "crazy" governor must not realize how many well-armed guards patrol the nation's potato patches. It must work. You never hear about anyone stealing potatoes.



Will lessons be learned?

BY GEORGE STEPHENSON



In the coming months much will be written about the lessons we have learned from the coronavirus crisis.

We can only hope that one of them is that leaders across the globe pay more attention to science.

That could be a faint hope.

Long before the first case of COVID-19 right up until it had killed almost a half million people worldwide, science has been eclipsed by the fact-free pronouncements of some world leaders.

It was no worse than the flu, it was a hoax, it would be gone by April, it's the fault of some guy who ate a bat in China.

The everything's-fine prime minister of Britain bragged that he had shaken hands with COVID-19 patients during a hospital visit. He contracted the disease shortly after. He, and his vast knowledge of epidemiology, ended up in intensive care.

When the number of global infections touched five million, we heard the refrain that nobody could have predicted such a pandemic.

The driver of this crowded clown car was, of course, U.S. President Donald Trump.

"I would view it as something that just surprised the whole world," he said. "It's an unforeseen problem. Came out of nowhere."

Well, it may have been a surprise to Donald Trump and his minions, but it wasn't to the many scientists who have been predicting a

global pandemic for years.

It seems the only ones listening were Hollywood producers and screenwriters, who turned out movies and documentaries based on those warnings. For someone whose work revolves around watching TV, its surprising Trump missed those prescient presentations.

It continued with his (and others) worries that the faltering economy might harm their chances in their next elections. Their answer to that was to force an opening of stores and entertainment venues, most often against the advice of specialists in the field.

The everyday experts rallying for the right to get sick and make others sick were the usual suspects in the U.S., dressed in camouflage and carrying high-powered weapons. At an anti-shutdown rally in Winnipeg, the leader was reportedly a retired chiropractor. Even if the virus were just the flu, would any of those yahoos actually consult a chiropractor for advice?

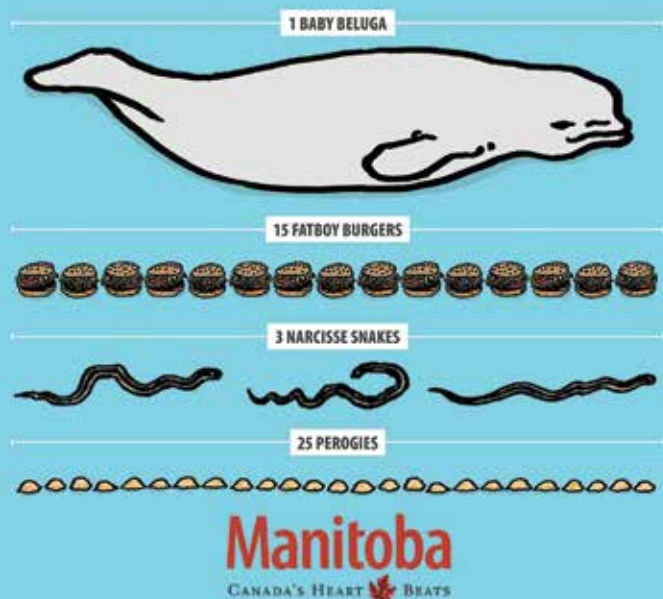
Then again, none of this rejection of knowledge is new.

For the past many years those folks out where the buses don't run have said scientists are promoting the hoax that climate change is a threat to the world. It too has been called a fake problem created by the Chinese.

The dissension has given politicians a fig leaf to cover their inaction. After all, they don't want to deal with something that might be the greatest disaster in the world

MANITOBAN SOCIAL DISTANCING GUIDE

KEEP THESE MANITOBA ICONS IN MIND AS A HANDY GUIDE TO STAYING AT LEAST 6 FEET APART



Just so there's no confusion about social distancing, Tourism Manitoba has posted a helpful, made-in-Manitoba chart.

long after they have left the political stage or, indeed, life's stage. It's probably what some of today's politicians thought if they heard years ago about the inevitability of a global pandemic. Not my drama, mate, good luck!

Preparing for, and mitigating the expected impact, of a pandemic or climate change does cost money. Cutting our reliance on fossil fuels will have an effect on the economy. And so many of today's politicians won't look beyond the next election.

It takes bold leadership to listen to, and act upon, the advice of those who know more than they do. Some listen. Duff Roblin had a floodway built around Winnipeg without any guarantee it would be needed in his lifetime or beyond.

But Roblin didn't have to contend with Loons Online. There were opponents of the floodway back in 1962, but they had no way to make their minority views widely-known. Today they would be online bringing together their fellow travellers and projecting a voice and influence far louder than their actual numbers.

Had anyone listened to them at the time, Winnipeg would have been flooded several times since.

The big difference is we can now see floodwaters diverted around Winnipeg, water that we could visualize flowing toward Main Street instead.

We can't see that potential impact with the coronavirus. If we overreact with limits on movement and gatherings and nothing happens, we don't know whether those were successful. Critics will simply say nothing would have happened anyway. The fact is we may never know how bad the pandemic would have been without the measures that have been put in place.

But that's a better outcome than ignoring scientific advice and tossing the dice on what might happen.

Manitoba has been lucky, or has made its own luck. Cases have trended downward with due credit going to the provincial government for following the advice of health care professionals and implementing aggressive control measures. Critics contend, naturally, that those figures would have been the same no matter what.

But, one could (if one could travel) visit our neighbour, North Dakota, which did not impose the same level of controls as Manitoba. As of May 23, Manitoba registered 292 confirmed cases of COVID-19, with seven deaths. North Dakota, with a population less than the City of Winnipeg registered 2,365 confirmed cases, with 52 deaths.

No doubt there are other factors at play, but overall, science and common sense suggests we'd rather be here than there.



CRINGE!

CASUAL RACISM DAYS OF RAGE

The death of an unarmed black man at the knee of a Minneapolis cop may have been the (latest) final straw that saw American cities awash in protests. But it ignores the everyday indignities few hear about; the numerous other straws, that helped build to the days of rage. Take the Virginia high school that created a banner or graduates and used the faces of African-American students to highlight the dark outline of the school's logo that was superimposed on the banner.

Then there was Health Secretary Alex Azar, who suggested the COVID-19 death toll in the U.S. was high because of minorities because they have "significant underlying disease."

Such things may not be the final inch of the fuse, but they have made up a large part of the overall length.



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

REFRESH

BY RAMAN JOB, PUBLIC RELATIONS FACILITATOR

TECH KUDOS AND CAUTION REPLACING TEACHERS NOT AN OPTION



LEAH OBACH



KIRSTEN THOMPSON

Yes, it was a rad departure from most teachers' normal. Pushed into a situation where they had to make heavy use of technology to teach their students during the COVID lockdown, they adapted – quickly.

Straddling comfort and trepidation, teachers took to platforms and apps such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom, YouTube, Instagram, Kahoot, Quizlet, and Breakout EDU to continue teaching as not-so-usual.

They picked up guitars and ukes, rehearsed dance moves, posted sweet we-miss-you video montages, modelled PE exercises and created brilliantly targeted electronic content for their kids.

They also delivered "Class of 2020" lawn signs, held school parades and, for all of this, garnered much praise from both Manitoba's Premier Brian Pallister and Education Minister Kelvin Goertzen.

We wanted to know how this hurried adaptation to online work and creativity will serve teachers and students as we cautiously return to some kind of normal in the months ahead. We asked two experienced teachers, both experts in educational technology.

Leah Obach is an early-years teacher, ICT Teacher Leader for Park West School Division and President of the Manitoba Association for Computing Educators (ManACE). Kirsten Thompson is a teacher and ICT Coordinator for Mountain View School Division.

Here's a portion of our discussion:

MT: What do you think the benefits will be of having many more teachers familiar with online teaching methods? Do you think it might open doors for them to use edtech more actively in their classrooms?

Leah: Despite the challenges for teachers and students, there's little doubt that remote learning has given teachers an opportunity to stretch and grow in how they use technology. That will be a huge benefit.

Kirsten: I strongly feel digital literacy and digital citizenship are essential skills as technology and social networks become more prevalent. At the most basic level, I hope that this brings an increased awareness to the importance of these skills.

MT: Do you think this new normal has taken away some of the fear around using technology?

Leah: Absolutely, I've seen so many teachers try new and different approaches as they strive to stay connected with students. That new knowledge will definitely be put back to use when we're all back at school.

MT: Can you foresee a bump in ManACE membership?

Leah: We have almost 300 members now and they're pretty diverse. But tech is really a pervasive part of all SAGEs. There will be a definite interest, but I'm not sure if there will be a direct correlation to ManACE membership

because many groups do address that topic.

MT: In practical terms how will this increased familiarity with technology help Manitoba teachers?

Kirsten: The role of the teacher is deeply centered on relationships and connections. If technology alleviates some of teachers' daily tasks, they can have more one-on-one time with their students that need them.

For example, if teachers continue posting their assignments and handouts online then they wouldn't have to worry about lost time when students forget their binder, misplace their copy, or are absent.

MT: Any final observations on increased use of technology?

Kirsten: I hope this will bring about an increased flexibility for our learners who are unable to come into the classroom regularly, regardless of what that reason may be. I really feel that this event will result in teaching styles that will emphasize student relationships and allow us to reach more learners.

Leah: I am a strong technology advocate and I believe technology can enhance learning. But if the past couple of months have highlighted anything, it's the limitations of technology. We've realized many of our activities inside the classroom are absolutely irreplaceable. Tech can enhance teaching, but replacing teachers with tech is not an option.

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Faculty of Education



NEW CENTURY, NEW LOOK!

At the end of the Society's Centennial year, we began a project to update the organization's graphic look. Many months and many ideas later, a new, colourful, modern logo was approved.

The new MTS logo was created internally, by our in-house communications team, so there were no costs associated with its creation. With regard to materials such as letterhead, business cards, etc., existing stock will be used up before new items with the new logo are acquired. The new logo was approved by the MTS Provincial Executive.

Watch our logo reveal video [here!](#)



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