



RIELITY CHECK

A publication of the Louis Riel Teachers' Association (www.lrta.ca)

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

President – Frank Restall

Bonne et Heureuse Année

Happy New Year

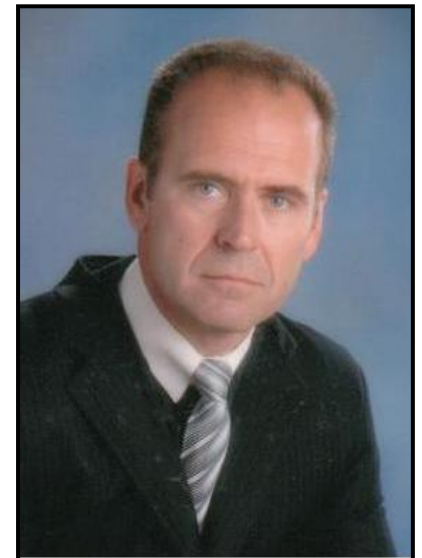
Welcome back! I hope that everyone had a wonderful break and enjoyed the special time with family and friends. As well, I trust that you were able to take time for yourself and to reflect upon the year that just passed and the one upon which we are now embarking. The LRTA completed a very busy year of working on behalf of members and we look forward to building upon our member advocacy in 2012.

Late in 2011, the Association and the Division signed a new collective agreement that is effective until June, 2014. We are fortunate to live in a country where the right to bargain collectively has constitutional protection. Given current events around the world, we should also be appreciative of living in a country that guarantees fundamental freedoms through the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The Louis Riel Teachers' Association and the Society as a whole are protected under the Charter. This ensures that the Association may strive to advance the rights and working conditions of members while representing all administrators, clinicians, coordinators, substitutes and teachers as a collective.

The Constitution of the LRTA states that an objective of the Association is "to exercise all powers as may be within its competence in order to achieve and protect terms and conditions of employment..." The ramifications of ignoring articles in the collective agreement are dire! If members ignore a negotiated benefit it may establish a precedent that could eventually undermine the benefit. On a day to day basis, all members (administrators, clinicians, coordinators, substitutes and teachers) can demonstrate commitment to the collective by ensuring that the articles of the Collective Agreement are honoured. Member rights and working conditions must be protected and it is the responsibility of every member to safeguard these rights and conditions.

One of the primary functions of the Rielity Check is to provide important and relevant information to LRTA members regarding rights and working conditions. Thus, we have included many articles on wellness, duty free lunch, prep time, PPDF, bargaining and teacher rights as outlined in the Labour Relations Act and the Collective Agreement. Articles often focus on issues that have been shared with the Association and are of significant concern to members.





...PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (continued from page 1)

With the start of a new year, it is important to once again remind members that the Association exists to serve you. As a member of LRTA, please remember that whenever the need arises, we should be your first call (929-5782). From general enquiries to issues surrounding bargaining to questions about PPDF, contact the LRTA office by phone or email. Ensure that any sensitive inquiries/questions are made from a personal email account on a personal computer. All matters will be dealt with in confidence. As well, members can call the Manitoba Teachers' Society (888-7961) and request Staff Officer assistance.

While some things evolve with time, some things do not. The major responsibility of the Association is, and always will be, to advocate teacher concerns and help members resolve issues. But the Louis Riel Teachers' Association also exists to support local Association activities, to explain to members changes that affect them, to develop networks with other teacher Associations, to liaise with the Division and to nurture a sustainable local organization.

Finally, I wish each of you the very best in the year to come. Hopefully your resolutions will only grow stronger as the days lengthen.

Take care of yourself and take care of each other!

Frank Restall

President, Louis Riel Teachers' Association



YOUR LRTA EXECUTIVE...

President

Frank Restall (LRTA Office)

VP Collective Bargaining

Barry Wittevrongel (Dakota Collegiate)

VP Professional Development

Bob Gaudes (Samuel Burland School)

Secretary-Treasurer

Deb Barry (Darwin School)

Employee Benefits

Carl Antymniuk (Samuel Burland School)

Public Relations

Sean Fitzmaurice (Highbury School)

Past President

James Bedford (Dakota Collegiate)

Equity and Social Justice

Dallas Crawford (Victor Wyatt School)

Social

Alison Ward (Frontenac School)

LRASA

Jack Fraser (Archwood School)

ÉFM

Bernard Mazerolle (École Julie-Riel)

Members-at-Large

Tara Law (École Julie-Riel)

Jodi Samms (Glenlawn Collegiate)

Rob Wood (Shamrock School)



EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Collective Bargaining – Barry Wittevrongel

Article 6.12 – Recognition of Extra-Curricular Activities

In the promotion of wellness, our LRTA members now have an additional right that can be used to give improved balance between work-life and home-life. The statement, “teacher participation in extra-curricular activities is voluntary,” has been negotiated into our current Collective Agreement.

In developing the application of this clause in 2007, the Association and Division agreed to the following statement. “Extra-curricular activities means student-related athletic, social, recreational and cultural activities occurring outside the normal school day, but does not include activities related to academic or instructional matters or curriculum subjects outside the normal school day, whether such occur alone or with students, parents or administrative staff, such as (without limitations) staff meetings, parent/teacher meetings, committee work, in-service sessions, marking and setting examinations, or marking school assignments.”

What are the implications of the new wording in the Collective Agreement?

The Association’s position is, in terms of a:

- right in the Collective Agreement; the statement places the control of volunteering in the hands of each individual teacher with no obligation to provide an explanation;
- component of an evaluation; extra-curricular activities should not form part of an evaluation. The proviso would be that both parties agree to include it as part of the individual teacher’s evaluation;
- condition of employment; if a commitment is made to participate in an extra-curricular activity, the teacher hired would be obligated to fulfill his/her commitment for that term or year only.

It has taken the Association nearly 25 years to achieve this right. It is an issue that is important to our members. If you have any questions regarding this clause please contact the Association Office.

DATES TO REMEMBER



April 18, 2012	LRTA Annual General Assembly
May 3, 2012	LRTA Appreciation Dinner
May 24-26, 2012	MTS Annual General Meeting
June 14, 2012	LRTA Retirement Reception

LRTA Council meetings are held the third Wednesday of every month at 4:30pm at the Arts and Technology Centre.



**ASSOCIATION'S RESPONSE
TO
DRAFT POLICY GBEB—DIVISIONAL STANDARDS FOR EMPLOYEE CONDUCT**

At the November Council Meeting, an Adhoc committee was established to respond to draft Policy GBEB. Committee members included: James Bedford, Luanne Mounk, Corinna Muzyka, Valerie Remillard, Sue Wilton, Frank Restall and Chair, Barry Wittevrongel. The committee met and decided on a process and format to respond to the Division's request for feedback on the policy. At the December Council Meeting, the committee reported back to Council. Council accepted the Committee's report which included sending the letter to the Division prior to winter break and publishing the letter in the January Rielity Check to inform the general membership. The content of the letter follows.

At the request of the Board of Trustees, the Louis Riel Teachers' Association is responding to draft Policy GBEB—Divisional Standards for Employee Conduct.

In both the Policy section and Procedures section the expression "including but not limited to", are used.

- Does the open-endedness of the expression in both sections create ambiguity and uncertainty?

In the Policy section:

- Why aren't all purposes listed? Can purposes be created at any time? If so, who can create purposes and how would these be communicated to teachers? Would there be a process for feedback from the Association?

In the Procedures section:

- Can the Superintendent of Schools & CEO add provisos in any particular circumstance? How would these be communicated to teachers? Where would one find the new provisos? Would there be a process for Association feedback?

In the Guidelines section:

Why are the bullets under the Guidelines necessary? Aren't the bullets covered in various pieces of legislation including: the Education Administration Act; Public Schools Act; MTS Code of Professional Practice; Code of Conduct—Safe Schools; Divisional Policy; LRTA Collective Agreement; Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act; and Personal Health Information Act?



...ASSOCIATION'S RESPONSE (continued from page 4)

With respect to the bullet, “complying with and publicly supporting divisional policy and administrative protocols and municipal, provincial and federal legislation”;

- Can a teacher be compelled to publically support divisional policy? Can a teacher be compelled to publically support municipal, provincial and federal legislation? Is the intent for teachers to absolutely support all legislation? If not, how is one to know which legislation one has to publically support? Would not a complete list of appropriate legislation be necessary?

In the Procedures section:

The opening sentence states:

“The School Board delegates, to the Superintendent of Schools & CEO, the definitive authority and responsibility to recommend, develop and direct procedures and practices that”;

- Has the Board abrogated its fiduciary responsibility to its employees by giving this “definitive authority” to the Superintendent of Schools and CEO? Are there provisions for an appeal process or due process? Are the provisions implied in the expression “definitive authority” and therefore no appeal process is to occur?
- The descriptors used in the policy: “exemplary employee”, “divisional values” and “appropriate consideration” require a definitive explanation and context. Should not all policies be transparent? Is it the policy’s intent that individual interpretation occur?

The Association will be advising our members of our response to the draft Policy GBEB— Divisional Standards for Employee Conduct. The contents of this letter will be printed in the January Rielity Check.

The Association reminds the Division that participating in the process and the provision of feedback does not limit the Association’s right to grieve this policy.

The committee would like to thank the many LRTA members who provided feedback to this policy. Many of the responses echoed similar concerns of committee members. The Association would also like to acknowledge the Division for inviting the Association to provide feedback to this draft policy.

If members have any questions, please contact the Association Office.

Written on behalf of the LRTA Policy GBEB Committee



CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2012-2013 LRTA EXECUTIVE



The Past President is calling for nominations to the Louis Riel Teachers' Association Executive for 2012-2013. Nominations will be accepted beginning March 1, 2012. Nomination papers must be accompanied by the signatures of two members and forwarded to Past President James Bedford at the LRTA Office at École Varennes.

What is the LRTA? The Louis Riel Teachers' Association represents all administrators, clinicians, coordinators, substitutes and teachers in the Louis Riel School Division. The LRTA actively supports the well being of its members through various committees such as Collective Bargaining, Professional Development, Social and Public Relations. In addition, the LRTA provides assistance and guidance to individual members upon request.

Who can be an Executive member? Any member who indicates their willingness to run for election to the Executive (when the call for nominations goes out) can be elected. Candidates may be asked to speak at the Annual General Assembly on April 18th where the election takes place. The Executive for 2012-2013 assumes office on August 1, 2012.

What will I do if elected? All Executive members attend monthly Executive and Council meetings. A one day planning workshop is held in October. All Executive members must familiarize themselves with current issues and be willing to serve on committees. Some Executive positions require less of a time commitment than others and may be ideal entry points.

What is the time commitment for an Executive member? The Executive and Council meet monthly. Meetings last from one to two hours and supper is served. Committees meet according to their mandate and therefore the number of meetings varies from committee to committee.

Will I find the experience rewarding? You will find the experience to be very rewarding! Rewards are both extrinsic and intrinsic. Members of the Executive are reimbursed for dependent care, and the opportunities for Professional Development and networking are many. Also members of the Executive play a pivotal role in achieving improved working conditions for their colleagues and gain an insider's view of the political arena. Executive members know they have helped all of their colleagues by serving their Professional Association.

And there is more! You will get to work with a group of dedicated, supportive and industrious leaders who will also become trusted friends.