



President's Message Marcela Cabezas

Over the past month, I have been privy to two similarly interesting conversations regarding the future of education. Those conversations are not what you think. These conversations have involved adults speaking to youth considering entering the teaching profession. In both situations when asked for advice the adults, who were teachers themselves, advised against it.



In both instances I felt conflicted about the response these teachers provided to these young people. On the one hand, given the current lived experience teaching through a pandemic, the need to get fresh bodies and minds into the classroom is critically important. Who are we to cast their dreams aside?

On the other hand, the provincial government hit us with a tsunami of documents to navigate through on March 15th. Since then, we have been left afloat in the ocean grasping for the wreckage that shall remain of our public education system post Bill 64. How could we in good conscience encourage them to dive into teaching at a time like this?

This is likely the same dilemma that teachers in the 1990s faced, a comparable time in history where political ideology was placed ahead of the children and education workers in the system. And yet, here we are. Many of us entered the profession inspired by those who taught us as children. Others of us entered the profession with the hope that through our work with the young ones in our midst we might endeavour to create a better and more just society.

As teachers, we have been living a shared FFT since the outset of the pandemic. This has taken a lot of the wind out of our sails. Then finally the long-anticipated Commission on K-12 Education Report was released. As MTS General Secretary Danielle Fullan Kolton posited this month in the *Manitoba Teacher*, "The Commission report is not all bad. In fact, there are a number of valid recommendations on which the government has taken a decisive pass, in favour of a cherry-picking process that distorts the Commission's intent into a regressive and deeply troublesome vision for the future." Having read the Commission Report, I must agree that despite having received a clear vision to directly address issues impacting student learning and achievement in this province, the Conservative government has opted to choose items requiring little to no financial investment that fail to address the core issues within the system. The process of the Commission was long and expensive. Many of us naively hoped that our voices would be heard in the consultative process and that the report itself would be a guiding light for the next steps taken by government to effect the changes we know are badly needed in our system. In the end, one of the education review commissioners, J.D. Lees was quoted

as saying, "I had assumed there was some pressure to do what we eventually wound up recommending in our report." In the end, Lees reflected that, "They didn't like the answer we came up with. You can recommend, but ultimately it's the government that decides what to do."

In a recent press conference, Education Minister Cliff Cullen described the Commission report as a document filled with goals without a roadmap to get there. An audacious complaint given that this report sat in the hands of the provincial government for over a year. Ample time was there to draft a thoughtful roadmap. Instead, it seems like they disregarded the goals and whipped up a hasty plan of their own that opted to ignore critical points of interest *en route*. Their action plan has them achieving very few of the primary goals laid out in the Commission report. The children and the frontlines are seemingly absent from their plans and legislation as evidenced in Bill 64 and the offensively titled action plan for Bill 64 entitled *Better Education Starts Today*.

To continue the metaphor, they have chosen the least expensive route possible and seemingly tossed many of us off the bus leaving us feeling lost and abandoned on this road to nowhere. Shame on this government for casting us aside tired and weary from the road we have travelled thus far!

No matter. We are travellers as teachers. We are fixers and problem solvers. We will meet with likeminded folks along the road and chat as we walk together. We will gain volume, knowledge, and new perspectives on the journey. We will amass. We will not be ignored.

Knowledge is power and communication is the key. Our voice is the greatest weapon we have. We have seen education stakeholders pronounce themselves bravely and vociferously on the flaws of Bill 64. So too has MTS. Teachers, principals, parents, community members, school trustees, superintendents, and university professors current and former are all unified in their concerns that this legislation treats children as commodities and dollar signs instead of as learners and the citizens of tomorrow.

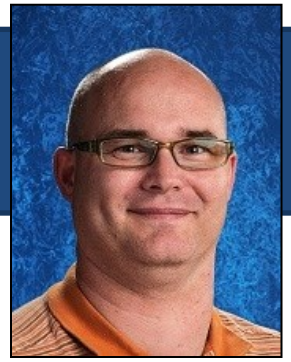
Members have written to newspapers and taken to social media to educate the public. We are grateful for their work amid the many challenges we are already facing. To assist members in the process, MTS has created a [toolkit](#) to help. It is our responsibility to separate the lies from the truth. We will raise our voice and share the truth that exists amidst our school walls. We will continue to fight for the kids presently in our classrooms. We will continue to fight for each other. And we will fight for the teachers and students of the future.

Yours in solidarity,

Marcela

Bargaining Updates from Around The Province

Vice President Bargaining—Scott Wood



As of April 21st, 2021, 26 Associations from around Manitoba have ratified agreements with their Divisions on Collective Agreement terms, joining the Pembina Trails Teachers' Association (PTTA). Except for Pembina Trails Teachers' Association, which received their CA through arbitration, the Associations have been able to sit down and negotiate the agreements directly with their School Boards.

The recent agreements maintain the pattern set out in the PTTA arbitration decision when it comes term and salary. The pattern has been set for salary increases of 1.6% (2018-2019), 1.4% (2019-2020), 0.5% (2020-2021), COLA formula (2021-2022). There is one exception to this pattern: our current agreement only covers the first two years. Beautiful Plains Teachers' Association initially accepted a two-year deal but has since negotiated an extension for the third and fourth years.

In addition to salary, some of the Associations were able to negotiate language changes or the inclusion of letters of agreement and previous Divisional policies into the new Collective Agreement. The consistent gain across Manitoba, however, has been the accomplishment of a four-year deal that, in the 2020-2022 years, protects teacher salaries against inflation.

Congratulations to the following Associations for reaching their deals:

Pembina Trails	Red River Valley	Flin Flon
Beautiful Plains	Thompson	Fort la Bosse
Turtle Mountain	Western	Pine Creek
Southwest Horizon	Garden Valley	Seine River
Frontier	St. James Assiniboia	Prairie Rose
Evergreen	Swan Valley	Mountain View
Lakeshore	Turtle River	Brandon
Portage	Hanover	Park West
Prairie Spirit	Rolling River	Whiteshell

In addition to these Associations, there are several others who have successfully negotiated with their Divisions for similar deals. These deals have not yet been ratified by their membership, and as such are not being reported yet.

Locally, we continue to hold out hope that the LRSD Board of Trustees will engage in discussions with us leading towards an agreement for the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years. Although the negotiations have not been fruitful up until now, we continue to work towards extending our Collective Agreement for an additional two years to match the deals being reached around Manitoba.

IN THIS ISSUE

P.1 President's Message

P.2 Bargaining Updates / In this Issue

P.3 PPDF Update

P.4 LRTA Member Wellness Grants

P.5 LRTA AGA Highlights

P.6 Calendar & Contact Info

Personal Professional Development Fund Update

Vice President Professional Development—Jay McGurran



The financial status of the PPDF remains quite healthy. As such, there are sufficient monies remaining in the fund to support members' autonomous professional development for the remainder of the 2020/21 school year. Below are a few reminders for submitting an application, attending a PD event and seeking reimbursement from the PPDF.

- Please ensure to submit your application for Category A Funding (traditional PD) at least 5 days prior to the event start date.
- Please be reminded that a complete event schedule is needed for the application to be considered.
- Events that occur during school hours and require substitute coverage are being considered.
- Events that can happen outside of school time or asynchronous of the live event are also being considered.

Applications for Category B Funding (Tuition Fees) for courses that occur from May to August will be accepted until Friday, June 25th, 2021. These applications do not need to be submitted 5 days prior to the start of the course.

Upon completion of the event, you will receive an email with instructions outlining the steps for reimbursement. Please note the following.

- All reimbursement requests need to submit the PD Reimbursement Form which can be found at www.lrta.ca/professional-development/
- Receipts in US funds need to be accompanied by a redacted bank or credit card statement showing the exchange rate that was paid.
- PayPal or credit card statements are not considered official receipts.
- Tuition Fee reimbursements need to provide a transcript and account summary.
- All documentation needs to be sent to pdlrta@shaw.ca.

If you have any questions about the Personal Professional Development Fund please do not hesitate to contact me at pdlrta@shaw.ca or 204-929-5782. For the full PPDF Guidelines please visit <https://www.lrta.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/PPDF-Guidelines-2020-21.pdf>.



LRTA

LOUIS RIEL
TEACHERS'
ASSOCIATION



LRTA MEMBER WELLNESS GRANT 2020-2021

As part of our mission to safeguard the welfare of teachers, the LRTA is exploring new ways to promote member wellness during these unique and challenging times.

Given that the nature, needs, and composition of each workplace is distinct, the Association would like to offer the opportunity for members to put forward proposals for LRTA member wellness events that promote stress reduction, physical activity, nutrition, and life management/work-life balance.

To date, fifteen worksites have successfully accessed our member wellness grants. Your worksite could too! **Application deadline is Friday, April 30, 2021.**

Guidelines, grant ideas, and application form can all be found here:
<https://www.lrta.ca/member-wellness-grants/>

Photographs below from the March 19th École Guyot Staff Wellness Event:



Louis Riel Teachers' Association

Annual General Assembly Highlights

The Louis Riel Teachers' Association AGA was held April 21st, 2021 through electronic means.

The proposed budget and membership fee were approved. **Your LRTA fees for 2021-2022 will be set at \$50.** Fees are deducted from your October and November pay cheques.

Thank you to Gisèle Fontaine Lehmann, LRTA's Administrative Assistant, for ensuring the AGA Business Booklet was prepared promptly and professionally for circulation to the membership. And thanks to the LRTA Table Officers who assisted with the many other aspects required in preparing for an online voting process.

And finally, most importantly, thank you to all the LRTA members who participated in our electronic AGA to take care of LRTA business! As an Association is only as strong as its membership, your participation and support is greatly appreciated during these unprecedented times.

SAVE THE DATE:

LRTA AGA – Wednesday, April 20th, 2022.

We sincerely hope to see you in person!

A reminder that the 2021-2022 LRTA Executive will be comprised of:

President – Marcela Cabezas	Collège Jeanne-Sauvé
VP Collective Bargaining – Scott Wood	Glenlawn Collegiate
VP Professional Development – Jay McGurran	Marion School
Secretary-Treasurer – Cynthia Taylor	Glenlawn Collegiate
Employee Benefits – Jaclyn Porteous	Hastings School
Equity and Social Justice – Charlene Sacher	General Vanier School
Public Relations – Karen Myshkowsky	Glenlawn Collegiate
ÉFM – Sharad Srivastava	École Henri-Bergeron
Social – Jaclyn Richard	École Henri-Bergeron
Members-at-Large:	École St. Germain
	Glenlawn Collegiate
	École Provencher
LRASA – Ron Cadez	École St. Germain
Resolutions/Nominations – Charmaine Rudnicki	Shamrock School



Calendar of Events



LRTA Calendar 2020-2021

May

Wednesday, 5th

LRTA Executive Meeting

Thursday, 6th

LRTA Appreciation Dinner

Thursday, 13th through
Saturday, 15th

MTS AGM

Wednesday, 19th

LRTA Council Meeting

June

Wednesday, 2nd

LRTA Executive Meeting

Wednesday, 16th

LRTA Council Meeting

Contact Us

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204-929-5782

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All matters will be dealt with
in confidence.

Call MTS at 204-888-7961 to
request assistance from a
Staff Officer

@preslrta



Reminder: If you have recently changed your name, please contact the LRTA office at 204-929-5782 or seclrta@shaw.ca and have your file updated.