



# SEINE RIVER TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

May

2015

Volume 10.4



## President's Message

**Dear valued members of the Association,**

Since the last newsletter went out shortly before Spring Break, it's been a pretty typical April and May in Manitoba. The snow has gone... and come back... and gone again. Students have been toiling away at their studies as the end of the year fast approaches. Teachers have been hard at work making sure the final few weeks are productive, engaging and memorable for students moving on to another grade, or out of school altogether.

In Ontario, however, some of our neighbors to the East have found themselves embroiled in a fight for their rights as teachers. Negotiations between high school teachers and some school divisions are at a standstill and teachers have been working without a contract since August 31. Even more troubling is that the last round of agreements were not bargained, but legislated and mandated by the Ontario government in 2012. The labour action these teachers are taking part in serves as a stark reminder that we all need to do what we can to protect our profession, and protect our livelihood.

While I am considered a 'peace-time' teacher and have not been part of any significant labour strife during my career, I'm neither oblivious nor ignorant of the historical plight of the Manitoban teacher. As such, I feel it is my duty, and my privilege, to do everything in my power to ensure our collective rights are respected, whether those be part of our local Collective Agreement or provincial legislation. At the same time, I feel it is the duty and responsibility of every member of the Society to support each other as professionals.

To this end, I was so proud of the actions of our fellow teachers at the recent Manitoba Teachers' Society Annual General Meeting. This was my third AGM and never have I felt more connected to, and empowered by, the teachers, MTS staff and MTS executive members at the meeting. In three days time, the typical business of passing budgets, setting member fees, hearing reports and engaging in policy debate was interspersed with inspiring and amazing acts by fellow teachers.

Three resolutions stand out for me:

- A resolution was **carried** that MTS review existing health education curricula for outcomes related to sexual consent,

due to the widespread misconceptions regarding what constitutes sexual consent.

- A resolution was **carried unanimously** that the Society continue to lobby the government to increase the credit for service for periods of maternity and/or parental leaves to reflect the amount of time available under the Employment Standards Code.
- A resolution was **carried unanimously** where the Society let it be known that the teachers of Manitoba support, in the strongest possible terms, our Ontario colleagues in their fight for rights and respect from the Ontario government, and further, that we applaud their professionalism and tenacity in resisting contract stripping in the face of threats of back-to-work legislation.

If you'd like to see the video from AGM that captures the moment that last resolution was proposed and carried, it's available at [youtube.com/watch?v=Whe0HAsxCGw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Whe0HAsxCGw). It was a powerful moment that will resonate with me for the rest of my life.

There was one more special moment from this year's AGM, and that was when I was voted in as a Member-at-Large of the MTS Provincial Executive for 2015-2017. I am excited to get to work on behalf of all of the members of the Society in just a few days, and I owe a great deal of gratitude to all of you in the SRTA who supported my nomination.

The Association was also fortunate to have a second candidate in the election, and that was Sandy Turcotte, principal at EIDCS. Sandy delivered some of the more memorable quotes of the election forum, including, "We are only able to be best for others if we are at our best ourselves." Although Sandy was not elected, I am so proud of her and how she conducted herself as an SRTA member throughout AGM, and I know she will continue to do great work for our members.

Finally, I would like to thank SRTA's other delegates Dawn McDonald, Eric Lindquist, Natalia Bontey, and Rebecca Brown, as well as alternates Jason Sparling, Leslie Buffie and Dan Lagacé for their tireless efforts before, during and after AGM on behalf of SRTA members. Please thank them yourselves if you cross paths with these exceptional professionals.

**In solidarity, for each of you and for each other.**

*Jonathan Waite, President*



## Your Events

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# SRTA 1st Annual Colleen Kachur-Reico Golf Tournament

Date: Thurs, June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Location: Southside Golf Course (2226 Southside Rd.)

Time: 4:30 pm

Cost: Members FREE, Spouses - \$25.00

Possible Shotgun start

Roast beef dinner included (after golf)

**BEST BALL = MOST FUN!**

Prizes for: Best dressed team, closest to the hole, lowest team score



### Manitoba Teacher's Society AGM

by Rebecca Brown, Public Relations Chair

This month I had the opportunity to attend the Manitoba Teacher's Society's Annual General Meeting, finally a Delegate. In the past few years I have attended as an Alternate sitting at the kids' tables on the side, available to sub in when a delegate was not able to participate. I also have had past experience



attending as a child showing up in the evenings to see my dad, also a teacher, and all of his "teacher friends". Having the opportunity to sit at the adult table was very exciting. To be amongst the buzz of teacher and political talk and have two SRTA members run for a Provincial Executive

position was so inspiring and, at times, a very nervous experience. Sitting and rubbing elbows with the fantastic people that are passionate about Teachers' Equity reminded me of how lucky I am to be part of such an AWESOME profession and local executive. Throughout these three days I have gained so many friendships and learned so much about the all of the wonderful work that our association does for teachers. And if you know me I also had some time to have some fun and have many laughs. Thank you for the opportunity to attend these three day and I strongly encourage you to attend next year's MTS AGM.





## Collective Bargaining

by Dan Lagacé, Collective Bargaining Chair

This past year has been interesting and enjoyable. As your resolutions chair, my activities have involved reading, reading and more reading, as the by-laws, procedures and policies of The Society (MTS) were re-organized at last year's AGM and were enacted for this school year. I'm still learning and hoping to have a better understanding of the by-laws, procedures, and policies of the Society and also of our Teacher's Association.

I was also involved in the negotiations of our new collective agreement. This was an experience in itself. This was the first time I have been part of the process of negotiating our agreement and I will admit, it was a very good experience. I was able to have a first-hand experience with the give, the take and the compromise of negotiations. Although we were ready for a long haul like many divisions in the province, we were

able to complete the process in a very short period of time. I truly have no regrets having sat on the table team. I've been serving as your collective bargaining chair since taking over the role in December, and as chair, I've had the opportunity to attend a CB seminar in March.

I can say with confidence that we in Seine River are very fortunate to have such a positive relationship with the division and our board, compared to some other associations.

I will continue to work as your resolutions and collective bargaining chair in the next school year. I will also continue to inform your school representatives on any information within the Society.

Thank you and have a great summer!! All of us deserve it!!



## Local President Release Time Subsidy

by Eric Lindquist, Treasurer

For emergency purposes, the SRTA maintains a reserve fund separate from the general operating expenses. At the recommendation of MTS, we strive to keep this reserve at 75% of operating expenses. According to the MTS Handbook:

### 5.2 Local President Release Time

- (a) Beginning in the 2015-2016 school year, every Local President shall have available the following minimum of release time to conduct Local and/or Society business:
- (b) (i) all Locals with fewer than one hundred fifty (150) Members shall have available a minimum of one-third presidential release time;
- (c) (ii) all Locals with one hundred fifty (150) Members or more shall have available a minimum of one-half presidential release time;

When there has been a change in membership that reduces the subsidy from (ii) to (i) above, the Local shall continue to receive the subsidy in (ii) for one additional year.

(b) The Society shall subsidize the cost of the above presidents' release time over seventy-five dollars (\$75) per Member of the respective Local subject to the Local fee being a minimum of ten percent (10%) of the provincial MTS fee. The per Member rate shall be as follows:

\$45 2014-2015

\$75 2015-2016 and after

(c) The Presidents' Release time subsidy shall be reduced by the amount the Local reserve exceeds seventy-five percent (75%) of the operating budget based on the previous year's financial audit or review.

The reserve fund for the 2013-2014 school year was 81% of our operating expenses in 2012-2013. This means that while the SRTA is eligible for a subsidy from MTS to cover a portion of the

President's Release Time, that subsidy will be reduced by 6% of our previous year's operating expenses, or about \$4,000. We are exploring options to reduce our reserve fund as soon as possible to be respectful of the 75% threshold suggested by MTS and we will inform members before taking any actions.





# Your Executive

## Message from the SRTA Vice-President by Dawn McDonald



I can't believe the end of the school year is almost upon us! It's been a busy year, but I hope for all of you it has been a productive one. Since starting as your Vice President this January, I've been involved in Liaison Meetings, Executive Meetings, Council Meetings and been able to attend President's Council. It's been a whirlwind few months, but I've enjoyed the opportunity to help the executive, the council and all of the SRTA members in whatever ways I could. I thank you all for the opportunity that has been given me this past year.

## Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) by Wendy Chase, ESJ Chair

The role of the ESJ has expanded in the last year. Who are we talking about when we talk about Equity & Social Justice – teachers or students? The answer is both! This has the executive and council members discussing equity as we approach association business. Aboriginal Voice and Action representative has been

added to the ESJ role. An ESJ committee was formed this year to look at the SRSD Human Diversity policy. In 2015-2016 ESJ Standing Committee may be struck to bring forward suggestions to SRSD as the policy must be updated by June 2016.



## Workplace Safety & Health Highlights by Kathy Dubesky, WSH Chair

This school year has seen a lot activity regarding Workplace Health and Safety in our division

1. Seine River School Division went from having a Variance in place to a site-based model. This means that a WSH Committee will be established in all workplaces in the division.
2. Each school WSH team was trained in how to inspect their workplace. These inspections are to take place three times a year. Results of each inspection should be posted in your staffroom.
3. New Provincial Legislation was passed early in 2014, stating that all new workers, visitors, etc. must have an orientation to the building regarding WSH procedures, policies and programs.
4. Teaching staff are encouraged to submit Violence Incident Reports.
5. Divisional Harassment and Violence Policies will be re-visited in 2015.
6. Teachers are encouraged to visit the Divisions Sharepoint Site regarding any new policies and changes to the WSH Act.



The Manitoba Teachers' Society

## Fee increase of 1.78% Approved! By Eric Lindquist, Treasurer

MTS members will see at \$17 a year increase in fees next year as delegates to the MTS Annual General Meeting approved the proposed budget. The hike represents at 1.78 per cent increase over last year, bringing the annual fee to \$956 from \$939.

In the past six years the fee has increased only \$51. Adjusted for inflation, it is actually lower than it was in 1998.

As they have in the past couple of years, AGM delegates approved putting money from the Society's Operations Stabilization Fund into the budget to ease the fee increase. Without the \$400,000 transfer the fee would have been \$985.



# Professional Development Opportunities

## **Interpreting Educational Research (07:751) Winter Term Course January – March 2015 By Melinda Roy, Teacher, CSNC**

In this course, we critically analyzed research in education. The course looked at the approach of research design and data analysis from a “consumer perspective.” We also worked on developing critical thinking and reflection abilities to recognize the qualities of well-designed research. Topics in the course included observation and measurement, ethical considerations, research design strategies, and the development and communication of research ideas. Some of areas the course touched on were to develop an awareness of the elements of valid research and good research reporting, to become adept at searching for relevant research for one’s topic area, to collect and analyse research in one’s topic area, and to develop the ability to address the research writing process.

This was an extremely difficult course. The professor had exceptionally high expectations. The workload was like no other course I have ever taken. I added up the hours I spent and they averaged to 20 – 30 a week. And they were intense hours where I had to be fully engaged. At times I wondered what I got myself into! But, of course, now that it is over, I’m realizing there were several benefits to the learning experiences of this course. One of the biggest learning opportunities



I gained from this course was to gather articles on social and emotional issues that students experience. Within my studies, I also researched interventions and strategies that apply to students who experience social and emotional difficulties. Through this research, I gained more knowledge about how alternative programs benefit students with mental health issues. Because I am putting together an alternative program this year, the information and strategies researched has been very beneficial.

Another learning opportunity that was helpful was going through the different parts of a research article. Dissecting the parts of a research study taught me what the important areas to are to look for and how to interpret the information from a study. It also taught me how to determine the validity of what I am reading and the angle from which it is written. The resources presented helped me become more familiar with the methods used to conduct reliable research in education and to better recognize quality standards. I also learned to distinguish between independent, peer-reviewed, unbiased research, and the advocacy research that misinforms and is prevalent in educational research.

The material I learned in this course will carry forward to all upcoming courses in my program as all courses that have some form of research attached. Educational research will be helpful in planning new programming for off-site alternative education.

## **Introduction to Educational Administration/Legal and Administrative Aspects of Schools for Clinicians by Lisa Ramsden, SAC**

This year, my post baccalaureate in Education at the University of Manitoba came to an end with the completion of two courses: Introduction to Educational Administration and Legal and Administrative Aspects of Schools for Clinicians. My



understanding of education was broadened by sharing ideas in class discussions and benefitting from the coursework.

The Introduction to Educational Administration course is a study of the basic concepts, tasks and processes of administration as they apply to education. As I began my seventh year of teaching, I felt the need to

become more aware of my role as a classroom teacher in the larger setting of the school environment. Though the course was populated by mostly administrators, the course information helped me to understand the duality and sometimes conflicting role of the administrator’s role as both an educational leader and a systems manager.

The Legal and Administrative Aspects course involved an examination of the form, functioning and organizational aspects of schooling through the lenses of legislation, policy, and public expectations. I gained a greater understanding of the Public Schools Act and the multiple (and again, often conflicting) roles that educators embody as agents of the State, agents of the police, Advocates for Human Rights and Parental Agents. In particular, I studied the shifting trends of Parental Harassment of Educators and learned more about the Canadian Centre for Child Protection.

Both courses gave me a greater appreciation of the legal aspects of our profession as well as the complexity of our role as educators.



# Professional Development Opportunities

## Graduate Scholarly Writing Fall Term Course Sept - Dec 2014 by Melinda Roy, Teacher, CSNC

In this course, we analysed and practiced a variety of forms of written communication, including recovery of meaning (through analysis, synthesis and evaluation), conceptualization, categorical frameworks, exposition, autobiography, editing, and bibliographic notation, modeled on current practices in research and scholarly publication in education. We took part in developing advanced writing and self-editing skills within the context of our academic specialization, which was Alternative Education. Another goal of the course was to become adept at using the APA manual. This became a tool that was continually used throughout the course and I will also use in other courses. We also conducted electronic searches for library materials, distinguished between scholarly and non-scholarly publications, and synthesized information from electronic and print sources.

The academic writing in this course was very technical. This was to develop skills for technical writing of funding proposals and reports. In this course, there were several opportunities to practice writing skills and also get feedback from the professor



that helped us move forward more effectively. It set us up to master the writing skills necessary to perform well in other graduate courses.

This course assisted in my professional position in a variety of ways. It was a required course for my Master's program, which I am completing in Special Education. In my professional position, I am required to complete several different documents that include funding proposals, individual education plans, program outlines and objectives as they relate to Alternative Education, and assessment documents. This course helped me to sharpen my writing skills in this area. I am also starting a new off-site alternative program which requires a

great deal of writing with regards to putting the program together. I am using many curriculum documents and also developing new program formats. This course has helped me to effectively work through this development.

The principles I learned in this course will transfer to any future papers I work on in my Master's program. APA formatting is used in many professional writing documents. Having a good foundation in this writing style will benefit any further academic and professional writing I have. I can also use elements of this writing in assisting students with essay writing. I can also help them with technical writing documents such as resume writing, cover pages, applications, and proposals.

## Universal Design for Learning Presented by Jennifer Katz by Rebecca Brown, EIDCS Grades Two, Three, and Four Teacher

At the end of April I attended with colleagues from EIDC The Three Block Model of UDL, a Manitoba Teacher's Society workshop presented by Jennifer Katz. The Three Block Model of UDL speaks at great length about how school administrators and support teams can collaborate to support inclusive classrooms.

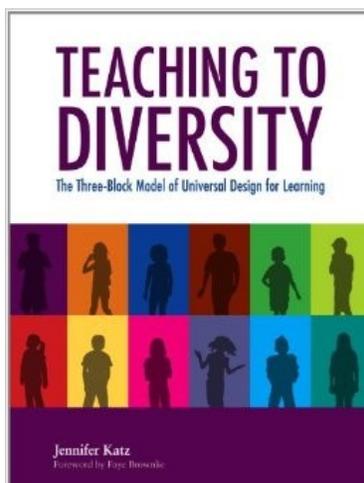
This workshop helped to promote and support today's classroom diversity. During the intense two days I had time to

reflect and was reminded of why teachers do need to take time to developing students' self-esteem, and respect for diversity.

As part of my professional growth plan I

have been working to develop UDL strategies and plan for diversity. These two days helped to clarify some questions that I had for implementation and also gave more of an in-depth perspective on the research behind the program's success.

Attending the workshop with my colleagues also presented another level of learning and collaboration. During the two days I had opportunity to share what had worked within my class and what activities and ideas I needed to develop and take to another level to promote higher level thinking in my classroom. I also had the opportunity to talk to experts that have been working with UDL in their classrooms a number of years.



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# Professional Development Opportunities

## **Council for Exceptional Children Convention San Diego California April 7 -11, 2015 by Georgina Dyck-Hacault, LBC**



I had the pleasure of attending, along with more than 4,000 other participants, the fast-paced Council for Exceptional Children Convention geared towards teaching children with exceptionalities. These sessions were delivered by noted educational researchers from across the United States, covered a plethora of topics and were presented in one hour blocks – a lot to take in over 4 days! I have chosen to highlight two of the sessions.

Ken Dickson, from the Educational Support and Consulting Network, Maryland, presented strategies for teaching twice-exceptional learners (think, Robin Williams, Walt Disney, Stevie Wonder, Albert Einstein); that is, students who have co-existing conditions where they experience difficulties in some areas of learning while being gifted in others. He began the session by asking us to choose a road sign that described our thoughts and feelings about professional development for those of us that work with twice exceptional learners. Although different signs were chosen, there appeared to be a consensus that learning about and working with twice-exceptional children was slow going, always surprising, but nevertheless rewarding. He cautioned the audience to be careful when labelling twice-exceptional students (high functioning autism, gifted handicapped, asynchronous learners, etc.) as it creates unreasonable expectations, locks in their life choices too early, and often encourages them to hide their talents in order to fit in or lower other's expectations. Mr. Dickson stressed that school-systems tend to focus on below-grade-level students at the risk of students who are twice-exceptional as well as students who are at grade level who may require some interventions. Therefore, creating a suitable learning

environment for all students is important, recognizing that many of learners who are twice exceptional also cope with bewildering, inescapable, sensory overload which is often out-of-step with the way that their family, peers and school are wired. The YouTube video, Walking the Path with Twice Exceptional Learners, offers a brief overview, as well as further resources for effective teaching practices.

Sally Helton and Lisa Bates from Oregon presented a multi-year research project which demonstrated that flexible skill groupings across classrooms, while using a Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI) approach, increased reading outcomes for students in all groups. Four Oregon school districts (10 schools and 1,012 students) participated in this study, placing students in similar ability groupings based on results of 3 different assessment tools, as well as teacher input. Groups were flexible with adjustments being made every 6 weeks after student assessment. There appeared to be a positive reception to this approach as students received instruction at their level, had more direct instruction/ opportunities to respond, and demonstrated an increased level of engagement. The study also demonstrated that there was a disproportionate racial/ethnic makeup of the lowest reading groups at the start of the study but that, a year later following RTI implementation, a higher percentage were at level. Findings also suggest that improvement was also made on state used assessment tools. Teachers were initially critical of the RTI approach, fearing that there would be no homeroom

*(cont'd on page 8)*

*(cont'd from page 6 - Universal Design for Learning Presented by Jennifer Katz)*

I was so inspired by Jennifer's passion for inclusion and her desire to embrace a variety of learning styles and strengths and a love for life-long learning. Jennifer's passion is contagious and really made me excited to plan with my colleagues for next year to have UDL in our school.

This workshop has been a great addition to my pedagogical learning and helped me to develop ideas that I have also connected in my studies in a variety of post baccalaureate courses that have taken this year. The ideas assisted me in helping to continue to develop individualized and small-group instruction, multi-model assessment, and create a community-based atmosphere that develops students' self-esteem and social responsibility.

This workshop occurred at a great time as it is the precursor to our schools planning for the up and coming school year!





# Professional Development Opportunities

## 2015 CAHPERD Conference by Graham Bodnar, Richer School

In March, with the help of our SRTA PD fund, I had the amazing opportunity to attend one of the biggest Physical Education conferences in North America. From March 5-8, I traveled to Los Angeles, California for the 2015 CAHPERD (California Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance) Conference. The theme of the conference was "Step Up, Speak Out, and Move". Not only were there teachers from all over the state of California and the country as a whole, the conference offered over one hundred different sessions, workshops, and meetings for teachers to choose from. True to the name of the organization, there was an incredible variety of options in regards to health, physical education, recreation, and dance.

This conference was without question one of the most beneficial professional development opportunities I have had to date in my teaching career. Not only were there endless options in terms subject matter, but the opportunity to experience a completely different curriculum was extremely valuable. Although the outcomes might be worded differently or appear in a different format altogether, I found that the delivery styles and overall goals remain the same. Teachers are aiming to provide an engaging and encouraging environment for students to experience both successes and failures as they aim to build knowledge, skills, and healthy lifestyle practices. I also had the opportunity to focus on one of my objectives from my professional growth model, which was to learn more in the area of dance instruction. The conference offered sessions of varying degrees of difficulty within this area, which was perfect for my level of experience.

Without question, this is a conference that I would absolutely suggest for other Physical Education teachers to attend in the future. The opportunity to network with teachers of such diverse backgrounds, along with the endless options in terms of session topics, make this an experience that we simply cannot get here in Manitoba. The diversity of session topics from what we have available each year at SAGE was a major highlight of the conference for me. Perhaps the greatest strength of this conference was that each session had an open door policy. If for some reason there was a session that was not

*(cont'd from page 7 Council for Exceptional Children Convention)*

community, it would involve A LOT more communication between teachers, there would be little student benefit, and that it was a segregation model. What was learned from using a flexible skill groups approach was that 1) teachers knew more students and students knew more adults in the building which created a greater sense of community and collaboration building wide, 2) teaming quickly became the norm when meeting structures were in place and times were set aside for teachers to collaborate, 3) the lowest performing students benefitted from direct instruction at their level, and 4) scores increased on the assessment tools used.

Many of the sessions that I attended focused on either reading or math. I found that the session material/research in these areas can be directly applied to classroom teaching in a guided reading or math setting, using either one teacher or co-teachers. This conference was also a fabulous opportunity to connect with educators from Canada and the United States and to dialogue about our teaching practice. I thank the SRTA and the SRSD Board for making this possible.

quite what teachers were hoping for, the option was there to leave and join another session allowing participants not to be limited to minimal choices and able to seek a variety of different subjects and activities.

Once again, I would like to thank our school division and the SRTA PD Fund Committee in particular for allowing me to have this incredible PD opportunity.





# Professional Development Opportunities

## Introduction to Exceptional Children (University of Winnipeg) by Leah Borenstein, CLC

In fall, 2014 I took a course towards my post baccalaureate at the University of Winnipeg. The course was called Introduction to Exceptional Children and was designed for teachers working towards a special education certification. The course offered an overview of exceptional children within a school and classroom setting. The purpose of this course was to explore how to meet the difference and unique needs of our learners. The term exceptional, in education, refers to any student that has needs that are different from regular learners. This can range from students requiring adaptations or modifications to students that are gifted and talented. This course was instructed by a series of guest speakers with areas of expertise in a variety of topics.

Through guest speakers and personal reflections we explored the field of special education by examining programming for students with special needs. We were encouraged to share personal experiences from our own schools and discuss struggles or frustrations we felt in our own classroom. This led to an environment of open dialogue as we were able to ask other professionals for



advice and share our own successes. We discussed learning disabilities, inclusion, and behavioral problems.

The course work for this class was reflective in nature.

We were required to do a case study that asked us to examine a particular exceptional situation that we had experienced in our own teaching careers. The process of writing a case study allowed us to focus on what particular aspects of the situation we felt we would do differently in the future. The focus of this assignment was not to discuss a situation we believed we handled perfectly, but to choose one that we felt helped us grow as a professional.

This course did an excellent job of providing an overview of -understanding the needs of children and youth in our school system. It presented a different perspective to the individuality of all our learners and reminded us that we, as educators, are responsible to meet the needs of all these learners whether they are special needs or gifted. Our learners do not fit into one perfect mold and we must be prepared to be flexible in our teaching so we can grow with our learners.

## EDUC 6023: Proposal Writing in Education By Shannon Keith, CLC

EDUC 6023 is the final course in my Masters program before I begin my thesis. This course is designed to help students learn how to prepare a thesis proposal. The big bonus to taking this course is that at the end, you have a finished proposal that is ready to be submitted to the thesis committee for their consideration.

If you are doing a Masters, or are thinking about it, here is a brief summary of some of the key points I have learned about the process of preparing a proposal for a thesis.



Methodology. In a Masters program, research is crucial, and learning about the different types of research methodologies is first on the list. In plain terminology, "methodology" refers to

the type of research best employed in order to properly study and analyze your subject(s). It seems like there are a million and one different types of methodologies, but once you get into the study of research, you'll quickly learn that although there are many types, most fall into generalized categories, and these categories will help you to determine the proper focus for your research.

In preparing your thesis proposal, your methodology must be chosen carefully. You'll need to vet the methodology very carefully to ensure that what you have chosen is the best method for your study, and will help you to provide the results you anticipate.

Ethics. Research, particularly when using human subjects, must be ethically sound. Research done without consideration to ethics is doomed from the outset, and makes your results invalid. Even if your research contains only a simple

*(cont'd on page 10)*



*(cont'd from page 9 EDUC 6023: Proposal Writing in Education)*

questionnaire or observing a particular group of people, you owe it to your subject(s) to be very clear about what you are doing, what you hope to accomplish, and how you will be using the information you gather. You must also ensure anonymity (if applicable), and always respect the rights of your subject(s). You must present your findings in a non-judgmental fashion, and never abuse the trust between yourself and your subject(s). Ethics is of paramount consideration, reflection, and protection when you consider using human subjects in your research.

**Timelines.** Although you may have a research project that you are passionate about, it is very important that you sit down and figure out your timeline for your project. By determining exactly what you need to do on a daily or weekly basis, you may discover that your project is either lacking or is too ambitious. Be realistic about how much time you can devote to a research project, and don't forget to include the things we sometimes forget to schedule, e.g., spending time with your kids, having some free time for yourself, etc. By plotting out your time and research accordingly, you'll end up with a project that is manageable and realistic, and therefore much more likely to succeed (without you burning out!).

A Masters program is not for the faint of heart, and it requires a good deal of your personal time and energy; however, it is an amazing journey and you will realize that you were capable of so much more than you thought you could do. If you're interested in doing a Masters, do your homework about the variety of Masters programs out there, and figure out which one meets your needs best. Also, before you apply anywhere, I would recommend that you check with the certification board to ensure that your Masters program will be acceptable to change your classification once you are done- better safe than sorry! Best of luck to everyone out there working on improving their skills by going back to school.



## **Brandon Jazz Festival by Andrea Kuhl, Music Teacher, La Salle School**

Jazz music programs have been growing in popularity in school music programs over the past twenty years. However, when I was in school twenty years ago there were no opportunities for vocal jazz or jazz band. As a result I graduated from high school with a good knowledge of traditional band and choir music, but no knowledge of jazz music or improvisation. I was first introduced to jazz music while in the music education program at the University of Manitoba. During my practicums I had the opportunity to work with some of the best vocal jazz instructors in the province and this sparked my interest in vocal jazz.

Fast forward another ten years into my career and I feel like the music program at La Salle School might be ready for a vocal jazz program. Vocal jazz varies from regular choir programs in several ways. The groups tend to be smaller; 20 people would be a very large group. The singers are expected to sing in at least three different parts, typically soprano, alto and baritone to start. In addition, students are taught to scat or improvise nonsense syllables on the spot. Finally in a traditional vocal jazz setting each student would have their own microphone to sing into, and this creates the need for an extensive sound system.

With my interest to start a vocal jazz program, the need to learn more about the genre became apparent and I took the opportunity to attend the Brandon Jazz Festival on March 19 and 20. At the festival I was able to listen to several middle and senior years' vocal jazz ensembles, as well as a few jazz bands. I was interested in gaining more knowledge as to what type of repertoire was being performed and what the adjudicators at the festival were looking for in terms of performance.



In addition to watching groups perform at the festival I was able to attend a variety of workshops including two sessions on learning to improvise, both instrumentally and vocally. Both workshops provided me with a good basis for teaching students to improvise on a basic twelve bar blues scale. The clinicians encouraged students to start small, with one or two notes only per solo. Rather than singing or playing lots of notes students were coached to use those one or two notes to make the solo rhythmically appealing. The vocal jazz improve session was particularly interesting as we discussed the purpose of a scat solo is often to sound like another instrument. For example, to sound like a trumpet you might use syllables such as doo, bah and doot, while you might change to duhm, dum, and chk in order to sound like a drum kit.

I thoroughly enjoyed my two days at the Brandon Jazz Festival and I was able to gain a lot of new knowledge which I look forward to using with my choir next year. I look forward to attending again in the next year or two with a vocal jazz ensemble of my own.



# Professional Development Opportunities

## **Math for K-8 Teachers: Numbers and Operations 1 (University of Winnipeg) Exceptional Children 1 (Brandon University) by Sandy Turcotte, EIDCS**

University of Winnipeg is offering a PBDE in Math Enhancement. This new program's goal is to help educators who want to improve their math skills so that they can develop and expand their numeracy practice in their classrooms. The course first course in this program was Math for K-8 Teachers: Numbers and Operations 1.

Numbers and Operations 1 is the first course in a series of mathematics courses for Grade 3- 8 classroom teachers. The focus is on elementary and middle years school mathematics from the perspective of teaching the concepts to elementary school students and provides classroom teachers with a thorough understanding of the math in the K-8 curriculum and to link those concepts to concepts that students will learn in later years. It also ensures that teachers acquire a solid knowledge of the numeracy material.

The first course explored ways to present material accurately and clearly. It helped us understand why computational algorithms work through exploring the proofs and putting them into practice and practice/improve our own skill level using the algorithms. We learned how to recognize the appropriate sequential order for developing mathematical skills. We explored the ways to determine how to identify and alleviate difficulties that students are likely to have and errors they are likely to make. We also learned to recognize how concepts at the grade level taught develop important skills for learning in the later years and how topics in the math curriculum are related to one another. Finally we learned how to create appropriate word problems and application for various mathematical concepts and relevant connections to our students lives.

The specific topics covered included place value, use of symbolic notation and other number systems. We learned about the basic laws of operation: associativity and commutativity of addition and multiplication, distributive law, applications of associativity, commutativity and distributivity. We explored standard algorithms in base 10 and explanations of all four algorithms. We learned about rational numbers and decimals with explanations of why arithmetic rules work, comparing rational numbers, theorem on equivalent fractions, cross-multiplication algorithm, explanation of "Invert-and-multiply", and fraction inequalities. We explored and practiced ratios, rates and percentages as well as divisibility rules which are extremely helpful. We did extensive problem solving.

We were encouraged to develop our basic mathematical skills by using practice drills for all four operations. It was amazing how quickly my skill level improved with this consistent practice. It didn't take long before I started looking and seeing numbers in a new way. This course has challenged me and has improved my mathematical skills dramatically. It has confirmed for me that we

as educators of numeracy must work and practice our own numeracy skill so that we can better understand the difficulties our students have and how to help them.

We need to remind our students that mathematics is difficult and that all of us have to work hard to learn numeracy skills, how to use them, and when to use what skills when solving word problems. As educators, we need to work hard at making relevant really world connections to the mathematics they learn. We have to find a balance between basic math fact memorization and route learning, deep understanding of how mathematical algorithms work and verbalizing their understanding.

The second course that I completed this fall was an online course through Brandon University: Exceptional Children 1. This course introduces participants to exceptionalities in children with an emphasis on the examination of the etiology, characteristics and needs of a wide range of children with exceptionalities. We examined the issues of race, class and gender and how they affect children with exceptionalities and how to identify considerations in the assessment of children from diverse backgrounds.

We explored the understanding of inclusion and supports for exceptional learners in the 21st century and the expectations for teachers working with these students. We learned to recognize approaches to human diversity and being able to identify an array of services for children with disabilities. Through our studies we learned to comprehend the special education referral and placement processes that are required for supporting students with exceptionalities and to gain an understanding of low-incidence and high-incidence disabilities that we encounter as educators in our inclusive classrooms.

We discovered what constitutes evidence-based special education practices and how to implement them in our inclusive classrooms. We explored how legislation has shaped services for people with disabilities across North America. We learned to recognize the importance of transition to the community for students with exceptional learning needs and how we can support our children with exceptionalities through these major transitions. We learned to recognize the impact of an exceptional learning needs have on the families.

This course really gave us as students an appreciation of the role of the special education teacher in providing services to children who are gifted, talented, and creative. It confirmed for me that we under support our gifted, talented, and creative students especially in our own division when we are one of the leaders in the province for supporting our students with special needs. With twenty years as an educator much of what I learned confirmed what I have already experienced and the strategies that I have used to support children with exceptionalities. I would recommend this course be taken by all pre-service teachers or teachers in their first five years of teaching so that they would have an understanding of what they might encounter and strategies for supporting children with exceptionalities.



# MTS Annual General Meeting

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## MTS AGM by Dan Lagacé

As my first experience at AGM, I must admit I was quite impressed in how the meetings took place. I attended the morning and afternoon "sittings" on Friday at the table and was an alternate (an observer) and Saturday afternoon during elections. Although these were very professional meetings, there was still room for some casual questions and humor. I unfortunately didn't have the opportunity to attend Thursday's sittings but those that were there have informed me of how well those meetings went. It was good to see that not all delegates were content with some of the 'business' at hand. This was truly a sight to see how democracy within our society is done on a professional basis.

As far as a summary, the highlights that can be conveyed to your locals would be the following:

- As of now the ratio between active teachers and retired teachers is 1.1:1. This means that there is nearly one active teacher to every retired teacher. The experts have predicted that by the year 2032, the ratio may be 0.77:1. In addition, the life expectancy of teachers will go from 82 in 1979 to 87 in 2009. This means that teachers are living longer hence collecting more pension... To this point, the TRAF (Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund) is not recommending any new rate increases but begin looking at long-term planning. Finally I want to point out the there are 26 members still collecting a pension over the age of 100 with the oldest being 108! Finally as of now, there are 2500 teachers eligible to retire and almost 5000 within the next 5 years.
- Our MTS fees will increase 1.78% next year which will be roughly a \$17 increase for most members. The annual fee will be \$956 from \$939.

The final order of business was the election of our new Provincial Executive for 2015-2016:

President:	Norm Gould (St. James-Assiniboia)
Vice-President:	James Bedford (Louis Riel)
Members at Large:	Ray Desautels (St. James-Assiniboia) Frank Reeves (River East Transcona) Richard Alarie (AEFM) Mary Chalmers (Borderland) Jeff Cieszcecki (Seven Oaks) Ashleigh Deeley (Pembina Trails) Darren Hardy (Brandon) Kristin Insull (Winnipeg) Bob Kriski (Portage la Prairie) Jonathan Waite (Seine River) Bea Walker (Flin Flon)

### Resolutions highlights:

- Jack Fraser and Henry Shyka made Life Members
- Changes to nomination and campaign procedures
- Changes to Rights of Membership bylaw (1.3.9)
- Changes to vote on appeals of G.S. decisions on service
- Aboriginal training to be provided to association presidents annually
- Revamped Bylaw V (Disability Benefits Plan)
- Increased funding for SAGE groups
- 75% surplus threshold clarified and implemented for all grants and subsidies, including AEFM and FTA grants
- Ad-hoc committee established for studying the effectiveness of computer technology
- Clarity on member reimbursement
- Support of colleagues currently in labour action in Ontario
- Action moving forward of increasing top-up amount and/or duration for maternity and parental leaves, as well as crediting teachers with experience when on leave
- Action moving forward to ensure curriculum deals with the definition of sexual consent
- SAGE Conference Day is now Manitoba Teachers' Society Professional Development Day



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# For Your Information



## The Manitoba Teachers' Society – Online Clothing Store

<http://www.unionproud.com/mts-online/>



The Manitoba Teachers' Society

# GOLF TOURNAMENT

JUNE 13, 2015  
PORTAGE GOLF CLUB  
ISLAND PARK, PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE

For more information contact Pam Stinson, PTA, at [ptgteachers@gmail.com](mailto:ptgteachers@gmail.com) or watch for more details on [mbteach.org](http://mbteach.org)



THE WORLD IS BRIGHTER WHEN WE INCLUDE EVERYONE

PRIDE WINNIPEG  
JUNE 5 – 14, 2015

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# For Your Information

## Upcoming Dates



### **SRTA Council Meeting**

Tuesday, June 9, 2015

Room 23 Dawson Trail School, Lorette

### **SRTA Executive Training**

Thursday, June 11, 2015

Southside Golf Course, Grande Pointe

### **SRSD Board Meetings**

June 9 & 23, 2015

Division Office

### **Provincial Executive Meeting**

June 4-5, 2015

McMaster House

### **1st Annual Colleen Kachur Reico Memorial Golf Tournament**

Thursday, June 11, 2015

Southside Golf Course, Grande Pointe

### **MTS Golf Tournament**

Saturday, June 11

Portage Golf Club, Portage la Prairie

## Questions and Answers

**Q: I have been employed under a term contract for two consecutive years. Can I apply for term positions next year?**

A: According to the Public Schools Act, if a teacher has taught for two consecutive full years for a school board under a Limited Term Teacher — General Contract (known as a term contract), and accepts employment as a teacher with that school board for a third consecutive year, the school board must sign the teacher to a permanent contract (Teacher — General Contract). For the purpose of this clause, a teacher is considered to have completed a full year of service if he or she has taught full-time or part-time under a single Limited Term Teacher — General Contract from the first teaching day of a fall term to the last teaching day of the next following spring term. Furthermore, the preceding two-year period under term contracts is deemed to have been completed under a permanent contract for the purpose of accumulating sick leave and determining length of service.

Nothing prevents a teacher for applying for a term position when they are in this situation, but if deemed the successful candidate for the position, the teacher must be signed to a Teacher—General Contract. If the term expires — for example, if the term was created to fill a leave and the teacher returns to their position — then the Division has an obligation to find a placement for that teacher somewhere in the division. We encourage teachers to contact us when they have questions about hiring and the transfer process.

**Q: Can I be asked to cover another teacher's class during my scheduled prep time?**

A: Emergency situations may arise where teachers are asked to cover during their preps. However, in each of these cases, it would be unreasonable not to make arrangements to give that prep time back to the teacher asked to cover the class. Prep time is well-defined in Article 18 of our collective agreement.



**If you ever have questions, concerns, comments or suggestions, please contact us!**

**info@seineriverteachers.com or 204-270-0215**