

President's Message

Much has been said and written about student engagement in recent years. To quote the third priority of the ISD Strategic Plan: "Students are intellectually engaged when they feel personally invested in learning and experience an optimal degree of challenge. This personal investment motivates students to experience, to learn, to question, and to achieve. Teachers can nurture engagement by deliberately planning for student interests, learning preferences, and readiness levels." But what of teacher engagement? It is not equally true that teachers become engaged when "personal investment" informs their work? Much research exists to support what most of us would deem self evident: when teachers are engaged in their work, student achievement improves. Additionally, positive teacher engagement also improves teacher wellness which translates to increased achievement. In his recent article for the MTS magazine, *Balance*, Stephen DeGroot writes, "Research and practice-wisdom demonstrate an inextricable link between educator performance and student outcomes. Simply put, when educators are doing better so too are the children and youth they are responsible for." Which begs the question, what can you, the teacher, principal, coordinator, or clinician do to increase engagement in your work. One simple answer is to bring into your work items, issues, and themes that interest you. If poverty is of concern to you, a simple lesson on budgeting can become a much richer experience for you and your students when the plight of the working poor is brought into your classroom. The fact that you cheer for a certain sports team can be germane in a history class as you study other cultures. How did sport play out in ancient Egypt, anyway? I could go on with examples, but my point is this: as we construct lessons to address student interests, learning styles and readiness levels, we might do well by being intentional about teacher interests also. Most of us naturally and, inevitably, bring something of ourselves into the classroom, but the research shows that if we do so with intention and purpose, not only do we feel better about our day's work, our students perform better as well.

CMHR Teacher Appreciation Day (from mbteach.org)

The Canadian Museum for Human rights is holding a special event for Manitoba teachers. Teacher Appreciation Days will run October 22 and 23, (10 a.m. to 5 p.m.) offering complimentary admission for teachers and up to four guests. There will also be educator-themed tours, special membership offers and a prize package that includes a free school trip to the museum. For more information, visit humanrights.ca or phone 204-289-2000.



Got your sub folder ready?

It's that time of year again. If you made it through September without getting a September cold, congratulations; for many of us, it's just a matter of time. Teachers are notorious for coming in to work when they are sick. Unfortunately, this practice prolongs and propagates the colds and sniffles to which we are all prone. We all know that if we simply would stay home for the first day or two of a cold, we would recover more quickly and certainly feel better when teaching. In addition, our colleagues would be less likely to pick up a cold and our students would have the benefit of a healthy, rested, and mindful teacher to guide their day. The number one reason teachers come to work sick is because they feel it is less work to teach sick, than to plan for a sub. And, no doubt, planning for a sub does take work, but why not do that when we are healthy? I have written about this topic before, but it is likely time to remind us all again that we all should consider creating a sub folder. In that folder, put in a day's worth of work for your students, work that is engaging and can be done at any time of the year. Personally, I think we stress too much about having our sub plans fit exactly with the flow of what we are doing right then in our classes. Let's face it, a sub in the classroom is already disrupting the flow, why not have the students simply do a day of different with the sub; you can pick up the flow when you return.

If this idea appeals to you, put it in your day book for an upcoming prep period to create two, stand-alone, day-long, sub plans. That way you can be sick for two days without worry. Go to the web, ask your colleagues, find resources, and construct a folder full of activities that are educational and that will keep your students busy for the day no matter where you are in the school year. Include seating plans, class lists, instruction about students with special needs, health concerns, and the like. Once you are done one, make another one and put them in a logical, easy to find place – colour coding is good. Now, when you are sick, all you need to do is phone the principal and tell him or her to take the green folder out of the filing cabinet (or wherever) and give it to the sub, then tuck yourself back into bed and get better. Upon your return, one of your first priorities should be to restock the sick-day, sub-plan folder(s) – don't get caught without them. Don't throw them out either. The beauty of this is you can keep them to use again next year. Look after yourselves, so you can look after your students.

Maternity/Parental Leave Seminar – Final Reminder

The Interlake Regional Maternity/Parental Leave Seminar will take place from 5:00 to 7:00 pm in the Divisional Conference Room (aka room 107 SCI) on October 27, 2016. Significant others are welcome. Please email John Bock (interlaketeachers@live.ca) to register – indicate the number of people attending and any dietary restrictions. A supper will be provided.

