

President's Message: Volunteerism

The teaching profession attracts people who enjoy interacting with others and who believe in working for a better society. We educate future citizens and volunteerism is part of that mindset. The ITA collective agreement states that extra-curricular involvement on the part of teachers is voluntary. Or, to turn that around, one way to volunteer is to take part in extra-curricular activities. Volunteering comes in many forms, from "official" volunteering for a recognized charity, to assisting friends or family in need, to engaging in politics, to helping run the many activities with which our own children are involved. Our collective agreement ensures that all these volunteer activities exist on equal footing; we should feel no more obligation to volunteer at our place of work than we do for our kid's soccer team. Volunteering is about filling a need doing something we enjoy doing. As I have said in previous June newsletters, this is the time of year we should all be reevaluating our volunteer commitments. Some of you are changing jobs, some of you are changing schools, some of you will be experiencing a new phase of life; all of these might be reasons to reduce volunteer activity, or you might find yourself in a position to take on an additional role. Should you wish to change, June is a reasonable time to give fair notice to your school principal that you wish to change your extra-curricular involvement for the coming school year. Because of our collective agreement, the decision rests entirely with you. May you all have a restful and engaging summer; I hope to see you on the 29th as we give our best wishes to the retirees.

Acknowledgments

Speaking of volunteerism, as we end the 2016/2017 school year it is time to acknowledge some of the people who have been working on behalf of ITA members throughout the school year. The members of the ITA Executive deserve thanks for the time, energy, and Saturdays they devote to their tasks. A special and warm salute must go out to retiring ITA Secretary and Quiz Master, Don Horbas. It was Don who initiated and sustained the now popular annual mid-winter tradition – we owe him thanks for that. Many thanks, as well, to outgoing PD chair, Sascha Epp.

Besides meeting monthly for executive meetings, members of the ITA Executive have had occasion to meet with ISD Senior Administration and members of the Board of Trustees. On some occasions, these were formal venues such as the Joint Advisory Group on Workload, the Liaison Committee, and the newly formed Workplace Safety and Health Committees. In addition, numerous informal points of contact occurred throughout the year. In of all these, your executive represented you and your interests with dedication and professionalism. I look forward to working with many of these same people next year and welcome new executive members as we continue to do the work of the Association.



New Rules Around Benefit Changes

One of the topics discussed at our AGM was the rules surrounding changes in benefits. Our past practice has been to require a vote among all members when contemplating a change in benefits. In addition, a 2/3 majority of votes cast was required to effect the change. At its June executive meeting, the ITA Executive approved a change in this practice. Any change in benefits will still require an association-wide vote; however, the margin required to adopt the change is now 50% + 1. Any ITA member wishing more information regarding this change is invited to contact the ITA president, John Bock. There are two benefits enjoyed by many of our colleagues which are not part of the Interlake benefits package: vision care and short-term disability. The ITA executive will be exploring these in the upcoming school year.

#MyTeacherMyStory: Off and Running

The Manitoba Minister of Education, speaking at the MTS AGM, posited that we should think about the children when dealing with the fiscal challenges that lie ahead. Mary Cathryn Riker, the Executive Vice President of the American Federation of Teachers, spoke soon after the Minister, and noted that we teachers think about the children so much, we made it our day job – and, as noted earlier, it is sometimes our evening

and weekend occupation as well. The Manitoba Teachers' Society believes that, once in a while, we should also think about the teacher. We should pause and remember the positive experiences from the time when we were in school, under the supervision of great and caring teachers who made it their day job to think about us. That is what the My Teacher My Story project is about. In the June 6 newsletter, I introduced you to the My Teacher My Story campaign which is now in full swing and accepting submissions. My Teacher My Story celebrates that which is good and excellent about our profession. It celebrates a course we loved because of the teacher, a sport or club that came alive due to its leader, or that one special comment made by a caring teacher at just the right time in our lives. Anyone may make a submission to My Teacher My Story; submissions may be in video or written form. For complete instructions on how to submit your story, or to view what has already been submitted, head over to the [MTS website and check it out.](#)

ITA Retirement and Long Service Celebration

As has been our tradition, the ITA Retirement and Long Service Celebration will be an informal affair starting at roughly 4:00pm on Thursday, June 29 at the Stonewall Legion. Food and beverages will be provided, and we will have a short program at 4:30 to honour those who are retiring. Plan to come out to wish our colleagues well as they start a new chapter in their lives.