

ITA News

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President's Message

It has been a busy time in the life of the Teachers' Society since the May 15 ITA Newsletter. The 99th Annual Provincial Council was held last week punctuated by the Rally for Public Education on the afternoon of May 15th. An estimated 1500 people stood on the steps of the legislature to call for an end to the cuts in public education funding. Teachers returned to the steps of the legislature the following Sunday to support the Manitoba Federation of Labour's Rally for Public Services. They were joined by several hundred of their union colleagues from across the province. Additionally, May 29 and 30 saw union lawyers in court arguing for an injunction against the proclamation of Bill 28, the so-called wage freeze bill. These type of labour actions have not been seen in Manitoba for many years. We have a government that, through words, and actions, seeks to erode the operations of unions. At their core, unions are formed to mitigate the inherent power imbalance that exists between employers and workers. When that employer is the government, there is an even greater imbalance. You can expect to see continued collective action from all Manitoba unions as we work together for the common good of teachers and all public-sector unions. Teacher working conditions are student learning conditions; we all want to see those conditions be the best they can be.

Some Links

If you missed the rally, here is some video.

Education Rally: [City News](#), from [a local videographer](#),

and [CBC news](#).



Short Term Disability Approved

The members of the Interlake Teachers' Association have overwhelmingly approved joining the Manitoba Teachers' Society Short Term Disability Plan. With over 200 members casting ballots, the vote was 85% in favour. The final step in the process requires the division to agree to administer the plan. In the end it is the division payroll staff who must make the deductions and submit the premiums on our behalf. We have approached the division with that request and we look forward to hearing back from them.

Provincial Council Highlights (aka AGM) – with files from mbteach.org

Here are some items coming out of the recently Annual General Meeting of the MTS Provincial Council.

- Delegates voted unanimously in favour of a resolution which read: “we must reaffirm the position of the Society that principals and vice-principals are first and foremost principal teachers of the school, and that their inclusion in the Society fosters collaborative, collegial, consultative and cooperative working relationships with schools.” In other words, the Society will oppose any attempt to remove principals and vice principals from the union.
- It has been resolved that the Society will investigate the lack of certified substitutes, and the use/misuse of uncertified substitutes, and that further action with the government will be based on the findings.
- Delegates passed a resolution that calls for MTS to lobby the provincial government to allocate revenue from the sale of cannabis for:
 - An education program for students and their parents on the effects of cannabis.
 - A professional development program for public school teachers that would include recognition of addiction, cannabis policy awareness, and an overview of support services for drug use and addictions.
- Delegates approved the budget calling for a \$20 yearly increase in members fees.
 - The 2018/2019 MTS fee will be \$1008.
 - \$300,000 will be transferred from the reserve to offset an even larger fee increase.

Pension Plan Well Funded (from mbteach.org)

The Teachers’ Retirement Allowances Fund (TRAF) is strong, and there will be no need for a contribution increase, said Jeff Norton, chief executive officer of the Teachers’ Retirement Allowances Fund, thanks in part to a healthy investment return in 2017. The plan projects it will stay fully funded for at least the next 20 years, though there are trends that could affect the plan in the future, including investment returns and the increasing longevity of retirees.



On average, TRAF members who retire at age 60 in 2018 will collect a pension for almost 7 years longer than members who retired at age 60 in 1979, and that trend is on the rise.

It also noted that members may make extra contributions to TRAF through the payroll system. Any money invested this way will earn the same returns as the primary TRAF account with services fees that are significantly lower than retail products. If this interests you, you are asked to [contact TRAF](#) directly.