



President's Message – And the review begins...

As we near the end of January, which to me has seemed like a blur, some of you may have noticed this is the first and only newsletter this month. I've been waiting for the release of new information to share with you. As slow as the political pace surrounding education had gone in 2018, there has been a flurry of announcements and information in recent days.

Province Announces Commission on Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education

On Wednesday, January 23rd, Education Minister Kelvin Goertzen announced the appointment of the nine-member commission to guide the comprehensive, independent review of Manitoba's Education System. Included in the commission's sweeping mandate will be to develop a long-term vision for public education in the province, as well as recommendations that **"inspire excellence in teaching and learning," with the view of meeting future labour market needs as part of an "integrated lifelong learning approach."** Isn't this, indeed..... the definition of a teacher?

The commission has stated that all stakeholders will have the opportunity to contribute. All Manitobans are encouraged to participate in the consultation process, which will run from February to May 2019, by attending a public meeting, a submission in writing, or filling out the online survey.

Click here for - [MB Government News Release](#) – Re-visit this web page often. It indicates that *"additional information on upcoming consultations, online survey and in-person meetings will be added to this website as they become available."*

The Manitoba Teachers' Society will participate as a stakeholder but they stress it is especially important that teachers from across the province take the time to add their voice to this review.

Click here for - [MTS LINK](#) introducing the commissioners, the consultation process and timeline.

- [LINK to January 23 CBC Article on Education Review Announcement](#)

Education Funding Announcement – [MB Government LINK](#)

On Thursday, January 24th, the Province announced it is increasing funding to public schools next year by 0.5%, or \$6.6 million, bringing its total budget to \$1.329 billion. School funding in Manitoba is calculated using the Funding of Schools Program formula, guaranteeing divisions at least 98% of the previous year's total. Half of all divisions will get less funding in 2019-20 than they did for the current year. Locally, ISD will get the equivalent of a -0.1% change based on an increase in equalization support and a 2.0% increase in enrolment. If you are interested in more budget details, the **ISD Public Budget Meeting is February 21, 5:30 – 7:30 pm at Ecole Stonewall Centennial School**, and will provide an informational walk-through of how we fared.

- [LINK to January 24 CBC Article on Education Funding Announcement](#)

Other News Items

ITA Budget Presentation to the Board of the Interlake School Division

On Monday, January 14th, Dan Gregovski (ITA Education Finance Chair) and I presented on member support for in-staff help with technology navigation for teachers. What I heard during a first round of school visits, is that the top member concern was the lack of support in the roll out of Power Teacher Pro. The consensus among our colleagues to help reduce workload, is to have someone in each of our buildings that members can go to for timely tech help, (such as the old tech mentorship program that became unfunded). Many teachers mentioned they still struggle with using the program, and that while the divisional technology team is helpful with technical and computer fixes, they do not know the teacher side of weighting terms and categories, copying classes and assignments, creating comments and banks, etc. Member feedback also indicated teachers would use more and new technology if they knew they had efficient access to support. We stressed that teachers speak teacher language, and having a Tech Navigator in each school would help reduce member trepidation and increase their capacity with technology.

MTS General Secretary Resigns

The Manitoba Teachers' Society General Secretary Bobbi Taillefer announced her resignation after 21 years of service to Manitoba teachers. During her tenure, Bobbi had been an inspiration to MTS members, staff, and colleagues in Manitoba's education community and across Canada. The Society will miss her service and her leadership. Her last day at MTS was January 16, 2019. She has taken on a new roll but with a familiar union feel, as she will be working with the ETFO (Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario). Our colleagues to the east are also working with a government who wants to remove the cap on class sizes for Kindergarten to Grade 3 as well as increase the average class size for all grades. Roland Stankevicius, previously the Assistant General Secretary, is now Acting General Secretary.

Semesters in the future for SCI and WCI

The Board and Administration are looking at moving both Stonewall Collegiate and Warren Collegiate to the semester system for the 2019-2020 school year. Teulon Collegiate already uses semesters for their high school students. Principals in all schools in the division will soon be entering staffing season. In consultation with the Superintendent, the move to semesters and cuts to staffing are not being equated. Discussion has included increasing time for students in the core areas such as Math and ELA, time incorporated into the schedules for collaboration and Project Based Learning, as well as helping students with the skills they will need in the work place. So ... **Future labour market needs as part of an "integrated lifelong learning approach".**


Upcoming Dates:

- Monday, January 28 – Regular ISD Board Meeting
- Thursday, January 31- 8th Annual ITA Quiz Night - We still have room for teams or individuals. Open to all ISD staff and significant others. Parochial Hall, 310 1st St. W. in Stonewall, doors open at 6:30pm, quizzes begin at 7 pm.

- Friday, February 1 – Teacher-Directed Professional Development afternoon – Choose a topic or point of interest and get together with peers. Learn about a tool or method you’ve been meaning to add to your teaching prowess but just never found the time.
- Sunday, February 17 at 2:00 pm - Join the Manitoba Teachers’ Society & the Manitoba Moose as the Moose take on the Milwaukee Admirals in support of the MTS Young Humanitarian Awards! See the ad below.

Special ticket price for teachers: <http://moosehockey.com/offers/> Promo code: Teachers

See more Young Humanitarian Awards information here. Nominate a student today!





**THE MANITOBA
TEACHERS' SOCIETY
& THE MANITOBA MOOSE**

Sunday, February 17, 2019 2:00 p.m.
as the Moose take on the Milwaukee Admirals in support of the MTS Young Humanitarian Awards!

Organize a group buy for your Local, or bring the family for some long weekend fun!

Special ticket price for teachers at:
<http://moosehockey.com/offers/>
Promo code: Teachers

**Questions? Contact Anne Bennett, MTS Public Affairs
Facilitator at 204-831-3072 / abennett@mbteach.org**



**NOMINATE YOUR
YOUNG HUMANITARIAN
STUDENTS
TODAY!** **FOUR
\$1000
PRIZES**

<http://www.mbteach.org/mtscms/2016/07/05/young-humanitarian-awards/>

If you have any specific questions about the YHA, you can email MTS at yha@mbteach.org. Also check out their Facebook fan page or sign up for their [Twitter Feed](#).

As a Family we are stronger...

The Interlake Teachers’ Association executive, representing our family of members, wish to express our heartfelt sympathies to two of our teaching colleagues and their families. We send our thoughts to Ryan and Amanda Margetts, as they mourn the passing of their young daughter, Abby Lee Anne. They value the support of their staffs at Warren Collegiate and Warren Elementary, and send their thank you to the community and staff of Stonewall Collegiate for graciously hosting a reception for the family and community. Donations may be made on Abby’s behalf to Discovery Owls, Box 253, Balmoral, MB, R0C 0H0.

YOUR BENEFITS NEWS

December 2018

Welcome to your winter benefits news

This newsletter keeps you up-to-date with your main plan features, provides plan changes, and reminds you of the various benefits, resources and programs available to you as a member to help support your health and well-being.

Travel Health benefit changes for members age 65 and older and retired members

Enhancements

Are you age 65 or older and still working? Are you retired? If so, and you're taking off on a winter getaway to escape the cold, your trip just got more satisfying!

Effective January 1, 2019, the enhancements being introduced to the Travel Health benefit will keep you feeling worry free and safe longer abroad. Your Travel Health coverage will now be:

- **Longer** – with coverage for 90 days (previously 60 days), starting from the first day that you're away.

With this enhancement, Travel Health coverage will be the same for everyone in the Manitoba Public School Employees Benefit Plans. There aren't any other changes to Travel Health coverage for 2019.

Remember to pack your benefit card for your trips or visit the Blue Cross site at www.mb.bluecross.ca to access a copy of your card, so that you have your plan number handy if you require assistance while travelling.

Change in premium rates

Plan members age 65 or older and retired plan members will see a slight rise in monthly premium rates as a result of this increased coverage. Monthly rates will increase by **\$2.75** for single coverage and **\$5.50** for family coverage starting in January 2019.

Legalization of recreational cannabis

On October 17, 2018, the federal government legalized recreational (non-medicinal) cannabis in Canada. With this legalization, provincial governments are required to take action to regulate, permit or prohibit aspects of recreational cannabis use as appropriate, as well as promote public education and safety. To learn more about cannabis laws in Manitoba, visit www.gov.mb.ca/cannabis.

Cannabis and the workplace

- The legalization of cannabis doesn't change or affect the use of medicinal cannabis.
- **Neither recreational nor medical cannabis is covered under your Health plan.**

The Express Scripts Canada (ESC) Pharmacy® and Costco Pharmacy in Winnipeg make up your preferred pharmacy network. When you use these two pharmacies for your prescription needs, you'll:

- Only pay 10% of the drug cost instead of 20% (if your current reimbursement level is 80%),
- Experience lower dispensing fees, and
- Be able to have prescription drugs conveniently delivered to your home. You can use these two pharmacies for different prescription drug needs:
- For long-term prescriptions, such as maintenance drugs used to treat chronic conditions (e.g., asthma, cholesterol, and high blood pressure), you can use **ESC**. ESC also manages refills and prescription transfers.
- For your short-term prescriptions (e.g., antibiotics), you can use the **Costco Pharmacy**, even without a membership.

You'll need to sign up online for ESC at www.express-scripts.ca/mpse by clicking on "Join" at the bottom of the page, and following the three easy steps. You'll need your VIP code "MPSE", your health benefits card, and your maintenance medications to get set up with ESC.

Dispensing fee update

A portion of what you pay for your prescriptions is the dispensing fee – so it's important you understand how it works.

A prescription is made up of two costs: the cost of the medication and the cost for the pharmacist to dispense it, known as the dispensing fee. As dispensing fees vary between pharmacies, you can pay less or more for your prescriptions based on where you fill them.

Your Health plan has a \$7 cap on dispensing fees and you pay for any amount above this out of your own pocket. The following table provides you with the average dispensing fees for pharmacies in Manitoba from lowest to highest. As you can see, it's worth your while to shop around and minimize your out-of-pocket expenses.

Pharmacy	Fee
Costco	\$4.47
Express Scripts Canada	\$9.00
Walmart	\$9.34
London Drugs	\$9.34
Superstore	\$10.23
Safeway	\$12.29
Medicine Shoppe	\$12.29
Pharmasave	\$12.58
Shoppers Drug Mart	\$12.69
Sobeys	\$12.82
Rexall	\$13.66
Red River Co-op	\$13.84
Super Thrifty	\$15.52

Quick tip:

You don't require a Costco membership to purchase drugs at the pharmacy.

Online resources

Manitoba Public School Employees Benefit Plans Website www.mpsebp.ca

Blue Cross Plan Member Site www.mb.bluecross.ca