

President's Message: It's time to turn up the volume.

For those in education, the end of May usually brings a sense that the finish line is just weeks away, and we can put ourselves in sprint-to-the-finish mode. This May presents an incredible amount of uncertainty as to where the new finish and start lines are, how long the race will be, and even who will be running beside us. On May 21, the provincial government, who had been saying for months that schools would not reopen before September, surprised EVERYONE in education by proposing that staff (and students to some degree yet to be determined), would be heading back into schools in little over a week. 10 days (6 of them working) in fact, is the lead time divisions, administrators and teachers were given to determine what going back to school would look like, and missing clear purpose other than reference to assessment and recovery learning. Even given until the fall, plans to return safely and effectively may not be fully developed in such fluid times.

Frustration with technology and access to it, no time to train for its effective use, equity and poverty issues, and a general concern for the mental health of yourselves and your students, are just some of the items you have spoken out about. **Turn up your volume, and continue to do so.** In their Phase 2 Plan ([LINK](#)), the Province has created a survey you are encouraged to fill out as a teacher, a parent or both. Speak your thoughts in the open-ended section, and let government decision makers know it is unreasonable to continue to give what feels like 5 minutes to change the game plan every 15.

Survey link is: <https://engagemb.ca/register>

Minister Friesen and Dr. Roussin will host a Telephone Town Hall with Manitobans on Tuesday, May 26th at 7PM. **Please register at** <https://engagemb.ca/restoring-safe-services-phase-two>.

MTS and ITA have heard you loud and clear, and are ensuring the Province and ISD do as well. From your emails and calls, I have shared your concerns, your questions and your emotions. Simply put, I have stressed that ITA teachers are exhausted. Teachers interact daily with students, help frustrated parents and guide our own PD as we adapt to this new way of teaching. At the top of the list is the safety of members as they return to buildings, and close behind is how they get there without sufficient childcare in place. Further, what we are "assessing" needs clarifying, as does the degree we will be asked to work both online and in-school. This can not mean double the work. Above all, we hope to see a defined reason for going back on June 1, and starting before Labour Day. We all want answers to these questions, and I assure you they are coming. Please continue to reach out to me, share questions with your Principal for Senior Admin, and take time to do the provincial survey.

ITA is well aware how hard members are working and that it is unreasonable to ask so much of you again. Having said that, I am grateful that ISD Senior Administration has reached out quickly to say "we are communicating with government and principals to develop a plan and get the message right". In my on-going communication with them, they have relayed that they hear our message. ITA executive will continue to ensure they do so on your behalf. Stay safe, breathe and be well.

Return to School Plan:

Please note the direction for the reopening of schools will come from our employer, ISD. The Province is in on-going communication with ISD, who will communicate with principals over the next few days, and a plan will be sent to ITA staff as soon as possible. Please direct questions and concerns regarding school reopening to your principal or supervisor. You can contact me and voice concerns regarding workload and many teacher welfare issues, and I will continue to bring them to the Superintendent's attention. Email president@interlaketeachers.ca.

MTS Return to School FAQs: ([LINK](#) to Official MTS response document to reopen schools)

Go to this [LINK](#) for MTS responses to member questions. Below are some key ones:

Are schools re-opening? Under Phase 2 of the province's [Restoring Safe Services draft plan](#), schools can reopen for limited use. Because this plan is in draft form, there are no specific dates.

Do I have to return to school June 1? Since schools are proposed to be opened on a limited basis, teachers can be asked to return. However, individual schools divisions determine when teachers will return. Divisions have the discretion to make accommodations, on a case by case basis, for those with issues around child care, living with a high-risk individual, having health concerns and more.

Will I have to wear PPE? As of right now, there is no indication teachers will be required to wear personal protective equipment. This is in line with the PPE requirements for childcare workers.

What if I don't feel safe returning? If you are directed to return to school and feel unsafe doing so, under the Workplace Safety and Health Act you have the right to refuse dangerous work. Please contact an MTS staff officer at 204-888-7961 or 1-800-262-8803 for advice and assistance.

Is this a return to in-class learning? No. Classroom learning will remain suspended for the remainder of the school year. The limited use of schools is for the purpose of student assessments, clinical supports, transition planning and specific programming as outlined in [Limited Use of School Facilities](#). If there are any questions, please contact an MTS staff officer at 204-888-7961 or 1-800-262-8803 for clarification on role and expectations.

Is school starting August 31? The government has **proposed** additional teaching days for the upcoming school year by starting school on August 31, 2020 and re-purposing PD days as instructional days. **This is a proposal.** The government will be consulting with MTS, school divisions and other education stakeholders. **No decision has been made.**

Recent News Articles - Click on each title to read the article.

- [May 21 – MB Gov Back to School Press Release](#)
- [Schools scramble to plan partial reopening](#)
- [Teachers' contract in Louis Riel School Division could be precedent-setting](#)
 - Click [HERE](#) for the full LRTA Interest Arbitration Award
- [Cash-strapped school divisions worry about funding possible wage bumps for teachers](#)

ITA 2020 AGM Results: Thank you all who participated in the online voting for the ITA 2020 AGM. 279 ballots were distributed. 106 votes were cast. I wish to congratulate and welcome the newly elected slate of officers.

President	Cathy Pleskach – Warren Collegiate
Vice President	Susan Hannah – École RW Bobby Bend School
Secretary	Kim Deline – Brant-Argyle School
Treasurer	Rebecca Good – École Stonewall Centennial School
Collective Bargaining	Maria Nickel – École Stonewall Centennial School
Education Finance	Dan Gregovski – Stonewall Collegiate
Employee Benefits	John Kooning – Teulon Collegiate
Equity & Social Justice	Kathy Simcoe – Teulon Collegiate
Indigenous Voice & Action	Cora-Leigh Mazurat – New Haven School
Professional Development	Lindsey Sturgeon – Stonewall Collegiate
Public Relations	Sheila Anderson – Rosser School
Workplace Safety & Health	Christie Crow – Grosse Ilse School
Member at Large	Ross Ledochowski – Teulon Collegiate
Member at Large	Myles Blahut – Teulon Collegiate

All motions passed as follows:

1. Approval of the Agenda: **Motion** – Moved by C. Crow, seconded by J. Kooning that the agenda be accepted as presented. **104 votes for, 0 against, 2 abstained. Carried**
2. Acceptance of Minutes of the 2019 ITA Annual General Meeting: **Motion** - Moved by K. Deline, seconded by R. Ledochowski that the Minutes of the April 19, 2019 ITA AGM be accepted as presented. **101 votes for; 0 against, 5 abstained. Carried**
3. Election of Officers: **Motion** – Moved by M. Lawson (Electoral Officer), seconded by L. Fuerst, that the 2020-21 Executive Nominees be acclaimed as presented. **105 votes for; 0 against, 1 abstained. Carried**
4. Approval of 2018/2019 Audit: **Motion** – Moved by R. Good, seconded by M. Nickel that the Interlake Teachers' Association accept the 2018/2019 audited statements as presented. **102 votes for; 0 against, 4 abstained. Carried**
5. Approval of 2020/2021 Budget: **Motion** – Moved by R. Good, seconded by C. Mazurat that the Interlake Teachers' Association adopt the 2020/2021 budget as presented. **100 votes for; 0 against, 6 abstained. Carried**
6. Setting of 2020/2021 Membership Fees: **Motion** – Moved by R. Good, seconded by L. Sturgeon that the Interlake Teachers' Association set the 2020/2021 FTE fee at the greater of \$130 or 10% of the 2020/2021 Manitoba Teachers' Society fee, and \$0.60 per day for substitutes. Fees to be on a pro-rated basis. **101 votes for; 2 against, 3 abstained. Carried.**
7. Appointment of Auditor for 2019/2020 Fiscal Year: **Motion** – Moved by R. Good, seconded by K. Simcoe that the Interlake Teachers' Association appoint Haworth & Company Chartered Professional Accountants as the auditor for its 2019/2020 fiscal year. **103 votes for; 0 against, 3 abstained. Carried.**

The 2020/21 ITA fee will be **\$130**, \$0.60/day for subs. The 2020/21 MTS annual fee will be **\$1042**, up from \$1012 this year. Fees are divided by 20, and come off September to June payroll only.

A Special Thank You: To Leslie Fuerst, who has decided to step down from the ITA Executive. Leslie began her union work early on with our Collective Bargaining team. She later held the position of Member-At-Large as well as most recently Field Services. We thank you for your time and commitment to members of the ITA, and wish you well as you continue to share your talents with your students, colleagues and family.

More MTS Information: MTS Provincial Council Recap – Due to the webinar format of this year’s Provincial Council Annual General Meeting on Friday, May 22, only essential business of the Society was conducted. Election of officers, adoption of the budget and setting of fees were all passed. MTS will now refocus their attention to items on the horizon including:

- Phase 2 proposal to re-open schools June 1; next year early start date & lost PD days.
 - A decision on the court challenge to BILL 28 is expected this Summer 2020.
 - Next steps in bargaining strategy: PTTA arbitration dates set for early January 2021.
 - K-12 Review recommendations expected to be released Spring 2021.
- **Minister Goertzen’s video message to all Manitoba Teachers** – See the video [HERE](#)
- Minister Goertzen addressed the 333 delegates at the recent MTS AGM. He thanked teachers for their work and spoke to the May 21 proposal regarding reopening of schools.
- **Talks promised between MTS and Province regarding reopening schools** - [LINK](#)
- **To start its next 100 years, MTS unveils a new logo** - [LINK](#)

Reminders:

- [LINK](#) for the MTS Guide to Working at Home for Teachers. - This document **specifies our professional responsibilities**. A reminder that the Manitoba Teachers’ Society *Code of Professional Practice* still applies while you work from home.
- **“Take Care of You”** – [MTS LifeSpeak](#). Log in to access through group account, Use the client password: MTSBalance.
- EAP Services & MTS Staff Officers are still working for members.
- Here is the [LINK](#) to EAP. **Or Phone: 204-837-5801**
Toll-free: 1-800-378-8811
 - Here is the MTS contact page [LINK](#) to reach a staff officer. **Or Phone: (204) 888-7961**
Toll Free: 1-800-262-8803
- The Interlake School Division is pleased to offer our school communities a confidential well-being support line to help manage during the COVID-19 pandemic and the suspension of classroom learning. This support line is available to parents, staff and, students.
- This is not a crisis line. It is a place where you can go to ask questions, to talk, and to be supported during the suspension of classroom learning. We commit to answer emails and phone messages in a timely manner, but cannot guarantee next day service. Our team of experts in education and mental health are here to lend support on a wide variety of topics from now through June 26th.
 - The well-being support line can be reached @ by calling 204.467.5100 or email wellbeing@isd21.mb.ca