

# The Apple Core

March 2016

## Upcoming Events

GVTA Exec meetings for the year at NPC. All meetings start at 4:00pm.

All are welcome:

- April 5
- May 3
- May 31—General Meeting
- June 7

## On the Upcoming Manitoba Election....

*As a rule, memories fade with the passage of time* – Richard Wright

Rick Schroeder – GVTA President

While the last 15 years have been relatively peaceful on the labour front, with modest salary increases over the duration, your GVTA continues to be active in its efforts to advocate for all things that benefit public education. We are unwavering in our actions and hold to beliefs that promote effective teaching, successful learning, and the best conditions for public education. GVTA and its teachers take seriously our role as the best advocates for promoting strong policies and ensuring that adequate resources are always at the center of discussions. A cornerstone of that advocacy is best demonstrated when we cast our ballots on Election Day.

Why does our vote matter? We must vote to ensure that the voices of educators are heard, to exhibit to our students the prominence we place on actively participating in civic processes, and to do our part to shape education in Manitoba and ensure it is always – moving forward in the best possible ways. Because Election Day shapes education – moving forward, we sometimes need to be reminded to be mindful that – Election Day has shaped education in the past.

Since 1999, the tone of the government's approach to education in Manitoba has changed. While there have been challenges for educators over the last fifteen years, those challenges are paltry compared to those of the 1990s. However, many current members were not employed during those years and did not experience the turmoil of that decade. As Election Day approaches, we remind all of our members that we must not be complacent. For those who experienced the 90s, our collective memory remembers those turbulent times, when education funding in Manitoba was cut back and the public education system seemed under constant attack.

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The 90s witnessed an erosion in working conditions for members. Teacher salaries were rolled back through the loss of Professional Development days. From 1995-1997, the teacher salaries were decreased 6% due to the actions of government which froze education funding. Restrictions were placed upon the collective bargaining process that undermined a free and open negotiating process (Look up - Bill 72). As funding was cut back, workloads for educators increased with the introduction of standards tests, the 200-day school year (with a pre-Labour Day start) and continual demands to *do more with less*. Seven hundred teaching positions were lost and class sizes increased. The government of the day seemed less concerned with supporting its teachers and promoting best practices, and appeared focused on fiscal restraint – the old term for *austerity*.

As frontline targets of those wanting to administer fiscal constraints, MTS members were vocal opponents to the actions of government and their negative consequences for the classroom. Things were so serious that MTS suspended all standing committees and ad hoc committees, to concentrate efforts to oppose Bill 72. Teacher representatives at the MTS AGM went so far as to use a scheduled afternoon session to march on the legislature to demonstrate teachers' ire with the directions being taken. On a Saturday afternoon, teachers from around the province rallied at the legislative grounds to protest the cutbacks and the serious implications of those cut backs upon the classroom. That rally of mid-1990s educators remains a testament to how passionately teachers support the cause of public education, and how willing they are to support their colleagues. More importantly, it also proved the efficacy of a united collective action to educate the public and focus attention on public education.

This period in time provides an important component of our collective memory that we must not forget. However, if it is true that "*as a rule, memories fade with the passage of time*", we need to think and care deeply about what GVTA members can do to prevent history from repeating itself as we approach April 19<sup>th</sup>. It has been suggested that this election, we need to consider our values, and those of the various candidates and parties and then...

- reflect upon the impact government can have on public education and member welfare
- research the candidates' positions and each party's platform
- be informed about the issues and, given the opportunity, ask questions of the candidates
- be a passionate professional and ensure that education is a major issue of the campaign
- be a tireless advocate of the public school system
- provide a strong voice for the concerns of teachers

On April 19<sup>th</sup> - or earlier at an advance poll - support your values, public education, and member welfare by casting your ballot alongside the 400 members of the Garden Valley Teachers' Association and the 15,000 members of The Manitoba Teachers' Society.

## ESJ Corner

### Book Club:

"Book club with an Equity and Social Justice theme....there are so many great, quick reads with educational themes that resonate with quality teaching and student centered learning. If interested we'll be starting soon.



Books will be provided and some user and time friendly discussion meetings, with snacks and beverages provided throughout the school year. Locations for meeting will be announced as they could be in different locations to promote creative discussion environments. i.e. Coffee Culture, park, etc.....

If interested email either Joe Lindhorst or Carl Pfahl, Your Equity and Social Justice Reps., to confirm attendance and then we'll get the ball rolling. First Book club meeting with book choices will be Wednesday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> at NPC Culinary Class room at 4 pm.

This way we can choose a book from several options, order the book and start after Spring Break....

### An excellent resource:

How to help Refugees rebuild their lives by Melissa Fleming, Ted Talk:

[https://www.ted.com/talks/melissa\\_fleming\\_let\\_s\\_help\\_refugees\\_thrive\\_not\\_just\\_survive?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/melissa_fleming_let_s_help_refugees_thrive_not_just_survive?language=en)

## Committee Spotlight—Education Finance

The Education Finance Committee lead a discussion with board members at the liaison meeting on January 14<sup>th</sup>. We began by expressing gratitude for the ongoing facility improvements around the division, continued book purchasing in the early years, increased band funds, more differentiation in divisional PD, and the completion of the fibre optic network.

Most of the conversation, however, was focused on the increasing mental health demands being placed on the education system. It was suggested that a mental health coordinator and/or itinerant counsellor would provide both direct service for students and unifying leadership for the division. We also highlighted the need for more professional development on mental health for all staff. Finally, we asked the board to review their staffing allocation policy with these increased demands in mind.

## New Benefits Overview

### DENTAL PLAN

Levels of Coverage:

Level 1 (80%), Level 2 (50% ), Level 3 (50%), at a \$1,500 combined annual maximum per person per year on all services.

**LEVEL ONE-** Basic Coverage (Preventative Services) - 80%

Examinations	Fillings	Endodontics	X-rays
Periodontics	Cleaning	Consultations	Drugs
Fluoride	Extractions	Space Maintainer	Anaesthetics
Denture repairs			

**LEVEL TWO-**Major Restorative - 50%

Bridges and Crowns	Gold fillings (if required)
Partial and complete dentures	Dental Implants
Replacement of existing appliances (if 5 years old or rendered unserviceable as a result of additional work if temporary only)	

**LEVEL THREE-**Orthodontics - 50% (dependents to age 21 or 25 if attending post secondary)

Correction of malocclusion of the teeth	Observation adjustments
Repairs and alterations	Appliance service
Recementation of bands	Consultations

### VISION PLAN

You will be reimbursed 100% of eligible eye care expenses to a maximum of \$300 per person every 24 consecutive months following the actual purchase date of the first Vision Care item claimed.

Eligible expenses include the cost of:

- eyeglasses (frames and/or lenses), replacement glasses and contact lenses when prescribed by a physician, ophthalmologist or optometrist.
- repairs to existing glasses.
- laser eye surgery (including costs for foldable lens implants when performed by an ophthalmologist or physician.