

# The Apple Core

January 2018

## Upcoming Events

### GVTA Executive meetings:

- February 6
- March 6
- April 3
- May 1
- June 5

Held at NPC and begin at 4:00.  
All members are welcome

### Other Events:

- February 2nd, K-8 PD day, various locations in GVSD
- February 2-4th, MTS Bonspiel, Brandon, MB
- February 7th, 4:00pm –ESJ book club, CKs

Welcome  
Back!

Welcome to 2018. By now, you may have forgotten how rested and relaxed you felt a few weeks ago during Christmas break, but I hope you are able to find time each day to wind down, take some deep breaths, and relax in your corner of the world.

As president, one of the ways in which I am accountable to the members of GVTA is with my time. As my salary is subsidized by your GVTA fees, I'd like to give you a picture of what your president's time generally looks like.

As a teacher on a full-time contract, I teach half-time mornings at Parkland School, and I work for GVTA the rest of the time. Financially, I receive a full paycheck from the division, and GVSD invoices GVTA for 50% of my salary.

For the school portion of my job, I teach twenty-one 35-minute periods per 6-day cycle, I receive three prep periods per cycle, and I contribute proportionally to my school with before-school supervision and lunch duty on a rotational basis. I attend staff meetings, non-report card writing Admin days, Workplace Safety & Health meetings, and afternoon PD and PLC sessions. These afternoon hours are billed back to the school division as though I am a part-time teacher. The division receives a list of my "additional hours worked", and reimburses the teachers' association for my time which means that I am more accurately working about 55% for the division, and 45% for GVTA. Regardless of percentage division, the workload of the president doesn't diminish if a half-day is spent at a PLC meeting - all of the usual obligations still apply.

As to how my GVTA time allocation gets spent, it is not quite so cut-and-dried to say that my mornings are for teaching and my afternoons are for GVTA business. The presidency is more of a 24-hour "on-call" type of position. In the 2016-17 school year, I attended 14 meetings before school, 60 meetings/visits over the duty-free lunch hour, 19 afternoon meetings during the week, 67 meetings

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after school, 7 evening meetings at 7pm or later, 8 full day meetings during the week, and 9 full day Saturday or Sunday meetings, as well as 5 full days in August. Each meeting requires a varying amount of preparation and follow-up.

In addition, I am available by phone call, text, or e-mail, which are generally received when it is convenient for you, the member. The gvtapresident@gmail.com e-mail account lists over 800 emails and conversations from July 2016 through June 2017; additional e-mails come to the @gvsd.ca address, and the old @hotmail.com account.

The total sum of my time for GVTA business, meetings, preparing information for *Apple Core*, and related professional development worked out to 4 hours and 23 minutes per school day last year, including sick days, personal days, and an extra-curricular day. I don't keep any sort of "regular office hours" whereby teachers could expect to find me in one place, although I'm very often at my desk in the MPR at Parkland School. Rather, if I receive a request to come to where a member is, off I go.

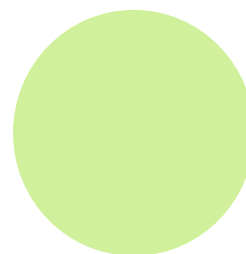
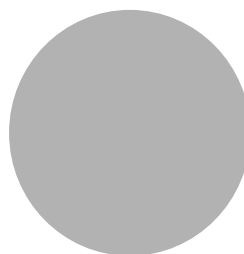
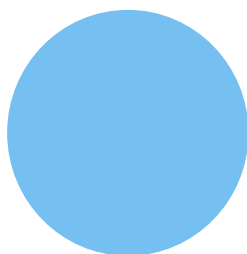
Due to the number of hours put in before and after school as well as at lunch or on weekends, there are also times where I tend to personal business in the middle of the afternoon (full disclosure!). I can write a report or agenda at 10 o'clock at night, but I can't shop for groceries at that time. With many Saturdays, after school, and evening hours away from my family, there would be some times where their needs would need to be addressed while school is in session in the afternoon. Certainly it is difficult to meet with most teachers while they are teaching, so it became more important to be available from 3:30-6pm than 1-3:30pm. It has not yet happened that I've been unable to meet with a member at their request.

I hope this answers some questions for you with regards to presidential release time. It doesn't fit within a conventional teaching day, and certainly flexibility is required by me, my family, and GVTA members. Certainly, there's more that could be done - particularly with PR and maintaining a more prominent social media presence - but the hours are full. That said, they are not too full for you if you have any kind of need: please call, text, or e-mail, and I will do what I can to help out.

Enjoy the weather, take time for family and friends, and I look forward to seeing you on my upcoming school visits.

Yours in service,

Joel  
204-384-5635  
gvtapresident@gmail.com



Garden Valley Teachers' Association members work on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe, and the homeland of the Métis nation. GVTA respects the Treaties that were made on this territory.

# **GVSD**

**Employees and Families  
Come and Go  
Bowling Night!**

**Feb. 23rd  
5-8pm**

**Valley Bowling Lanes  
Pizza, chips and pop provided**



# Indigenous Education Report

Roxanne Baraniski from Winkler Elementary School has joined GVTA as the co-chair of the Indigenous Committee. She and James Drediger will be attending the MTS Indigenous Training in Winnipeg on February 9 and 10.

## Employee Benefits Report

### ERIP - Early Retirement Incentive

#### What is it?

The Early Retirement Incentive (ERIP) is a monetary incentive paid to teachers who retire prior to the age of 58.

#### What is the Monetary Value?

Teachers who are 54 and 55 of age (on the last day of employment) receive \$15,000.00

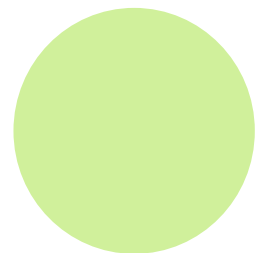
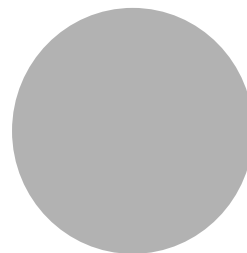
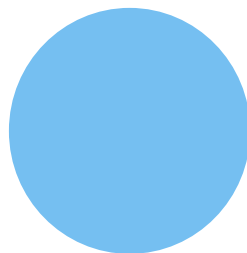
Teachers who are 56 and 57 of age (on the last day of employment) receive \$12,000.00

#### What are the Requirements?

- That the teacher be employed by Garden Valley School Division, with the last year of employment being the year in which ERIP is taken.
- Deferred salary or full time Board approved leave does not count as a break in service provided there is an equivalent period of service immediately prior to the last seven (7) consecutive years of service.
- As well, Sick Leave and/or Long Term Disability does not count as a break in service and **does not require** an equivalent period of service immediately prior to the last 7 consecutive years

#### When do I apply?

Notification of retirement must be submitted prior to **March 15** of the school year in which a teacher wishes to retire. A teacher is permitted to complete the school year.



# Social and Wellness Report

January is here. While it can be tough to stay active and maintain a healthy routine throughout the entire year, January offers a special challenge. Days are short, cold is long, and the pressure to be a new you is real.

Luckily, we live in a community filled with opportunities to improve our work-life-balance. Below, I have included a few of the many options available to us in the Winkler and Morden areas.

## Sports and Fitness:

Drop-in volleyball, badminton, basketball and pickleball are all available for free in Morden. See the community calendar at <http://www.mordenmb.com/living-in-morden/events-calendar> for more details.

Free public skating is available on Fridays and Sundays in Morden and Sundays in Winkler.

Morden has a number of low-cost leisure activity programs which you can peruse at <http://www.mordenmb.com/city-services/parks-dept/recreation-programs>

Both Morden and Winkler have many different fitness and yoga facilities that offer a variety of unique programming.

## Nutrition and Cooking:

The Pembina Valley Local Food Market is available through the winter months, at specific times. They will be at the Morden Chamber office Thursday, January 25<sup>th</sup> from 4:30-6:30. For more information about their schedule, visit: <https://www.pembinavalleyonline.com/event/pembina-valley-local-buying-club-and-farmers-market-4>

There is a World Cooking Class available at Morden (Friendship) Activity Centre on Thursdays from 6-9 pm. See the following link for more information: <http://www.mordenmb.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/World-Cooking-Classes.jpg>

Prairie Oils & Vinegars offers cooking classes as well. See more information at: <https://prairieoils.ca/pages/cooking-classes>

## Arts and Crafting:

On January 19<sup>th</sup>, Winkler Arts and Culture – along with Back Forty – are hosting a Coffeehouse and open mic night beginning at 7:30. Keep an eye out for more events like this at <http://winklerarts.com/>

Pembina Hills Art Council offers a number of art classes for adults as well as children. Check out their available options at <http://pembinahillsarts.com/>

We hope these activities will help us all to find some joy and balance at this busy time of year.



# WORKING TOWARDS RECONCILIATION AND THE CALLS TO ACTION



**Wednesday, February 21 @ 7:00 p.m. &**

**Thursday, February 22 @ 9:00 a.m.— 3:30 p.m.**

**Western School Division Office**

**Become a facilitator for The Blanket Exercise.**

**This is a hands on way to explore the nation-to-nation relationship with indigenous peoples, to work towards reconciliation, and to empower people to build bridges of understanding and respect.**

**To register, please contact Cyndy Kutzner by calling 204-822-4448 or by email at [ckutzner@westernsd.mb.ca](mailto:ckutzner@westernsd.mb.ca).**

**Western School Division, Unit 4—75 Thornhill Street, Morden, MB R6M 1P2**

# Bill 28 to cost teachers \$15,000 in future earnings



Earlier this year, the provincial government introduced Bill 28 – The Public Services Sustainability Act, more aptly referred to as the “wage freeze bill”.

This bill would impose a two-year wage freeze for all new public sector collective agreements, with minimal increases of 0.75 per cent and one per cent in the subsequent years of a four year agreement.

Bill 28 would also restrict the ability to bargain for increases to other monetary benefits such as premiums, bonuses or allowances. However, the bill does not affect an employee’s entitlement to a pay increase as a result of promotion or reclassification, or to a periodic or performance-based increases within established pay range.

The government claims that the wage freeze is needed to bring the deficit under control, except the “savings” from freezing the wages of the province’s 120,000 public servants is being directed to the Fiscal Stabilization Fund (Rainy day Fund), rather than to reducing the deficit.

Either way, this bill will have a significant impact on future earnings for Manitoba teachers. It is estimated that each full-time public school teacher will lose out on an average of \$15,000 in future earnings.

This amounts to about \$217 million in foregone salary increases by the time the next provincial election comes around (2020).

The Manitoba Teachers’ Society and other public sector unions have deemed this bill unconstitutional as it undermines the process of meaningful, good faith bargaining. The unions have joined together and formed the Partnership to Defend Public Services and filed a statement of claim in the Court of Queen’s Bench which includes a request for an injunction against Bill 28.

A court date has been set for May 29, 2018.

The injunction, if successful, will stop Bill 28 from coming into effect.

As we await the court date, we encourage you to speak out and stand up against this unconstitutional legislation.

Talk to your neighbours, family and friends and consider sending a letter or email to your MLA stating your disappointment with this legislation. Spread the word amongst colleagues and encourage them to do the same.

It’s more important than ever that we work together to raise awareness and to support each other as we fight to safeguard public education and the status of the teaching profession.

# Literacy/numeracy foundation, solutions flawed



Try building a house on quicksand. It's tough – you get stuck, and you sink. Try building a life without a foundation in literacy and numeracy.

It's hard to overstate the importance of solid skills in reading and math. Students lacking in these areas are more likely to become frustrated, discouraged, and in later years, drop out of school.

There's no shortage of debate about how to foster strength in reading, writing and math. And there are plenty of ways to measure how children in schools are faring. On a global scale, there's the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development every three years. PISA is a product of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, a policy think tank that examines the economic role of schools and education. It provides a ranking of student achievement across the globe in core subjects.

Manitoba, like provinces across Canada and countries around the world, participates in PISA testing, however there's a growing movement to halt the program. The reason: the testing methodology, and therefore the findings, are flawed. One researcher went so far as to deem PISA results "useless and meaningless."

Academics around the world are speaking out over concern that the test results, and the intense media coverage they receive, pressure countries and provinces – "economies", as PISA defines them – to make drastic and detrimental changes to their education systems. All of it rooted in defective data.

Great Britain has announced that it will no longer take part. And even though PISA results place Alberta students at the top in reading and science, the Alberta Teachers' Association has called on the province to "end the PISA obsession", noting methodological deficiencies that render results, both negative and positive, unreliable. Inconsistent test questions between countries and even between individual students, and the lack of provision for cultural or socio-economic differences between countries are cited as fatal flaws.

In a 2015 article for the Washington Post called "Can PISA be saved?", researchers Alma Harris, professor of educational leadership at the Institute of Education and University College London, and Yong Zhao, presidential chair and director of the Institute for Global and Online Education at the University of Oregon argue that "it is as if every country in PISA is devoid of historical, social, economic and cultural heritage. These influences are forensically airbrushed out in favor of neatly wrapped causal attributions that can be conveniently turned into policy solutions and commercial packages. This homogenizing is not only devaluing but it is potentially dangerous."

Dangerous indeed. With intense pressure to achieve high scores, some PISA participants may test only their most proficient students, artificially inflating their results and leaving decision-makers to base education policy on fallacy over fact.

Enter into the fray the Manitoba government, which promised a plan on improvement to literacy and numeracy prior to its election two years ago. The plan has yet to emerge. Consultation, however – in a form – is underway. With consultants, not teachers.

And now the province has extended its consultation on education policy to insurance companies and software developers through the North Forge Technology Exchange, an innovation-based economic development agency.

As governments and teachers alike seek to improve student comprehension of basic and essential skills, suggestions are always welcome. Solutions, however, should be expert driven. Some 16,000 are available, and they're already on the payroll.

*For more information, attend your MTS regional meeting, talk to your colleagues, students' parents and follow MTS on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for updates on this issue and others impacting you and your classroom.*



# Concern grows over future of French education



The dismantling of the Bureau de l'éducation française (BEF), the organization responsible for the creation and administration of French-language education in Manitoba, is ringing alarm bells as both educators and parents wonder if this is the first of many cuts to come to francophone programs.

In October 2017, the position of assistant to the deputy minister (ADM) focused on French-language education was abolished and all other BEF staff were transferred to jobs in English-language education.

This is cause for concern since a fully functioning BEF is essential to the quality of French-language education that Manitoba educators and schools provide to students.

Over the past 14 years, French language programming has represented the fastest growing segment of Manitoba's K-12 education system with enrolment up nearly 40 per cent.

Currently, there are more than 30,000 students enrolled in French-language education and this number is expected to increase in coming years based on factors like immigration, increased opportunities for French speakers, partly due to the enactment of *Bill 5-The Francophone Community Enhancement and Support Act* which promises bilingual capacity for frontline services, and recognition of the value of being immersed in the French-language education system.

The government's commitment to improving the number of public services offered in French does not align with the cuts to French-language education and begs the question of how they plan on providing French-language service when the future of quality French-language education is being threatened.

Suffice to say, all indicators point to the need for more investment to strengthen French-language education, not less. Join us in calling on the province to restore government funding and resources to the Bureau de l'éducation française and to reinstate an assistant to the deputy minister to ensure that French-language education remains a priority.

Community meetings will be held in early March to further discuss this issue. Please ensure that your members, students and students' parents are informed about these meetings.

For those of you on Facebook, join the community group Ensemble pour l'éducation française. This group is a great resource and offers a space where concerned community members can express themselves and share information in regards to the history, current issues and the importance of French-language education in Manitoba.

To join the group, simply log in to your Facebook account and search *Ensemble pour l'éducation française* or type the following link into your address bar. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/527049504345984/>



- 1. Equity and Social Justice:** Thanks and best wishes to Joe Lindhorst (NPC) who has served as the ESJ Chair for several terms, and will be leaving the division at the end of the term. This leaves a vacancy in our ESJ portfolio. Please let Joel know if you would like to learn more about the role of ESJ Chair or Co-Chair.
- 2. MTS Annual General Meeting Resolutions:** We have begun the process of drafting resolutions to come to the floor of the MTS AGM in May. The resolution deadline is in March. If you have ideas for resolutions, or you see a way that MTS can improve the way they do things, please speak to Joel.
- 3. School Visits:** Joel will be visiting schools in February/early March. Due to involvement in extra-curricular activities at Parkland, these visits will take place during afternoon recess, or for high schools, at the end of a lunch hour. Joel will bring cookies and your annual GVTA gift, provided by the GVTA PR Committee [Karla Rootsart (SWD) & Joanne Unrau (HES)]. Visits will take place on:

Feb 6: Plum Coulee	Feb 7: Blumenfeld
Feb 9: GVC @ 12:40pm	Feb 9: Edelweiss
Feb 12: Emerado	Feb 13: NPC @ 12:40pm
Feb 13: Hochfeld	Feb 15: J.R. Walkof
Feb 20: Parkland	Feb 21: Division Office @ 12:40pm
Feb 22: Subs @ CKs @ 4pm	Feb 26: Prairie Dale
Feb 27: Southwood	Feb 28: WES
Mar 5: Border Valley	
- 4. Fall General Meeting:** Thanks to those who provided feedback with regards to the Fall General Meeting. We take the feedback we receive very seriously, and have had several conversations about format, timing, programming, and more at the last two executive meetings. We look forward to seeing you at our future general meetings as we work to improve the way we conduct our meetings. The next general meeting will be on Tuesday, May 29<sup>th</sup>, with location and time to be announced.
- 5. New Constitution:** The GVTA has been asked by MTS to align our constitution with theirs, which necessitates the creation of a new Bylaws document as well. Currently, we have no bylaws; all of the information that would go in a bylaw document is either in our current constitution or our policy and procedures document. We anticipate that we will have new documents ready to be passed by membership at the May Annual General Meeting.
- 6. Liaison Meeting:** Our January Liaison meeting with members of the Board and Sr. Admin will focus on our Educational Finance presentation to the board.
- 7. GVTA Collective Bargaining Survey:** Please take about 15 minutes to complete the GVTA member survey, available at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GVTA2018>. The survey is open until midnight on Friday, January 26<sup>th</sup>.
- 8. February 2<sup>nd</sup> K-8 PD Day:** The PD Committee is diligently planning the February 2<sup>nd</sup> PD Day with sessions at Plum Coulee School, and a Poverty Simulation at Emerado. Thanks to the schools who are hosting, and to the PD committee for their work in arranging this event.
- 9. Next Executive Meeting:** All members (teachers, clinicians, substitutes, and those on leave who have worked at least one day this year) are always invited to our monthly meetings, which are the first Tuesday of the month at 4:15pm. If you are planning on attending, please contact Joel so that he can make sure there's enough food for supper! The next meetings are February 6, March 6, April 3, May 1, & June 5.