



Garden Valley Teachers' Association

# The Apple Core

June 2020

## Upcoming Events

PD Committee Mtg – Tuesday, June 16 @ 2pm

Last day of School – Tuesday, June 30

GVSD Board Mtg – Tuesday, Sept. 8 @ 7pm

GVTA Executive Mtg – Tuesday, Sept. 15 @ 4pm

Early Dismissal Staff Mtg – Wednesday, Sept. 16

September Applecore – Monday, Sept. 21

Greetings, GVTA-ers, for the last time!

At the time of writing, there are several unknowns about the upcoming school year: What safety measures will be required with a return to school? Will full-days with full-classes be permitted? Will remote teaching and learning be happening also? On what date will the return to classes occur? Will PD be affected by the government's current planning?

I had a conversation with a teacher two weeks ago where they said that Whatever was coming (at the time, it was the possible return of students in June), they weren't worried because they knew that GVTA and MTS were on it, had teachers' backs, and were trusted.

I'm hoping – if I leave any legacy at all after four years of GVTA presidency – that the relationship between members and their union is stronger than ever. I have complete faith in the work of MTS including President James Bedford and General-Secretary Danielle Fullan Koltan. GVTA president-elect Mike Urichuk starts his term on July 1st, and I'm excited to be on his team as past-president. Mike will continue to use the GVTAPresident@gmail.com address, and calls and texts will reach him at 204-573-6214.

Please, find time to relax this summer. Spend time with family and friends in a safe, COVID-19-friendly way. Take care of yourselves and each other.

In Solidarity,

Joel  
gvtapresident@gmail.com  
204-384-5635 (call or text)

# COVID-19 and WSH What workers should do

Workers should know and understand their workplace health and safety responsibilities — and those of others. If you're a worker, you also have four key rights: the right to know about hazards in the workplace; the right to participate in health and safety activities in the workplace; the right to refuse dangerous work and the right to work without being subject to discriminatory action.

## Know when not to come to work

The following workers must not go to work:

- Workers who are ill, whether or not the illness has been confirmed as COVID-19.
- Workers who have travelled internationally or domestically. Manitoba Health recommends a 14 days of self-isolation for all forms of travel out of the province
- They share a residence with a person that has been exposed to COVID-19.
- Workers who have been exposed to anyone confirmed to have COVID-19, or to anyone with possible symptoms of COVID-19, should call Health Links-Info Santé at 204-788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257 (toll-free) for an assessment and to determine any necessary next steps.

## Preventative Measures At Work

Take other preventative measures while at work

- If entering the workplace, workers should:
- Comply with the employer's instructions around minimizing exposure to COVID-19.
- Wash their hands frequently, and/or use hand sanitizer.
- Take steps to minimize exposure to COVID-19 while away from work. Stay at home to do your part to flatten the curve.

Right to refuse work

- Under The Workplace Safety and Health Act, workers have the right to refuse work that they reasonably believe constitutes a danger to their safety and health, or that of another person should they perform the task. There is a legal process that work refusals must follow. Check [www.safemanitoba.com](http://www.safemanitoba.com) for information.
- An undue hazard is an “unwarranted, inappropriate, excessive, or disproportionate” risk, above and beyond the potential exposure a general member of the public would face through regular, day-to-day activity.

## Protect mental health

Workers in the workplace may also be affected by the anxiety and uncertainty created by the COVID-19 situation. It's important to remember that mental health is just as important as physical health, and to take measures to support mental well-being. Remember that MTS offers supports. Visit [mbtach.org](http://mbtach.org) or call 1-800-262-8803

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.

# A huge thank you

By by Mary Eberling-Penner, Mike Urichuk, and Raff Bagnulo

A huge thank you to the other GVSD staff who stepped forward to serve on the WSH committee for the Division: Monica Ginter, Joel Swaan, Matt Scholz, Doug Still, Joel Martens, Helen Guenther, Bruce Fehr, Dorothy Fenwick, Waldemar Plet, Philip Petkau, Corey Keyes, Bill Prazak, David Hoepfner and Terry Penner. We also say a Thank you to Abe Wiebe who also was part of the WSH committee until his recent retirement. As a committee we work hard to make our workplaces safe!

Thank you to Collective Bargaining Committee Members:

Thank you very much to all members who have served on the collective bargaining committee this year. Your work, support, and contributions have been greatly appreciated. Our strength comes from our solidarity and collective effort, neither exist without you folks. The bargaining process is long and there have been many contributors to the work of this committee within this current bargaining cycle and within this school year. Please join me in thanking the following members who served on the GVTA Collective Bargaining Committee this year:

- Mary-Anna Aaldyk-Doerksen (WES)
- Jessica Askin (DO)
- Roxanne Baraniski (PRS)
- Kirsten Carman (GVC)
- Arlyn Filewich (MTS)
- Anny Froese (PDS)
- Jim-Parry Hill (SUB)
- Terri Hill (MTS)
- Melanie Howe (GVC)
- Joanne Litchie (PCS/EWS)
- Dale Martens (NPC)
- Jessica Riddell (ECS)
- Joel Swaan (President)
- Joanne Unrau (SWD/HFS)
- Moyra Vallely (JRW & Co-Chair)

On behalf of the co-chair, Jennifer-Laura and myself, we would like to say a big thank you to the GVSD/GTVA Joint PD Committee for all their work this year. Each school representative helps plan school-based PD in their schools and as well as attend monthly GVSD/GTVA Joint PD Committee to plan the divisional PD and promote the planning of collaborative learning groups (CLG) in their schools. We would like to thank Janice Krahn and the principal representative, Garth Doerksen, for their advice and their time to attend our committee's monthly meeting.

Also, thank you to GVTA president, Joel Swaan, for attending the monthly PD committee meetings. We congratulate you on your successful election to a position on the MTS Provincial Executive.

## New members of provincial executive

There will be three new faces on the MTS provincial executive after a vote by delegates to the 101st Annual General Meeting of the Provincial Council.

There were six positions open for members-at large.

Newly elected were:

- Joel Swaan, Garden Valley
- Kristen Fallis, Winnipeg
- Cathy Pellizzaro, Thompson

Re-elected were:

- Catherine Hart, Seven Oaks
- Chris Darazsi, River East Transcona
- Kerry Enns, Border Land

## New fee approved

Delegates to the MTS Annual General Meeting approved a new budget, including a slight fee increase. The annual fee for full members will go to \$1,042 from \$1,012.

# Food Talk: Mars Bar Cake Recipe

By: Mary Eberling-Penner, (secretary)

Summer is quickly approaching, and you might like a treat to celebrate an unusual year of teaching. This recipe is easy and tasty.



- 6 cups Rice Krispies cereal (dry), in a large mixing bowl
- 8 Mars Bars, cut up into chunks.
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup margarine

Have a 9X12 pan or plastic container ready, sprayed with Pam or greased with margarine. Slowly melt Mars bars and margarine together (lots of stirring!) on low to medium heat. Pour the sauce over cereal and mix until covered, then press into the container.

Topping: Melt one small bag of milk chocolate chips (about 2 cups) and 2 tbsps. of margarine in the microwave, stirring every minute until smooth and creamy. Spread over the Rice Krispies cake. Allow to harden and cut into pieces. Store in a closed plastic container in a cool place.

## Minister speaks to AGM

Education Minister Kelvin Goertzen zoomed in from his home office in Steinbach, MB, to bring greetings to the 333 delegates attending the 101st annual general meeting of The Manitoba Teachers' Society.

The minister's attendance at the annual meeting was well timed as it gave him the opportunity to address some of the top of mind issues arising from the province's recent announcement about the return to school.

Yesterday [May 21st] the province announced that as of June 1, schools across the province will be opened for limited use. This allows for things such as one-on-one assessment, planning for the upcoming school year and giving students access to the internet. The minister was clear that this is not a return to in-class instruction, and recognizes that this element further adds to the workload of teachers.

"With in class assessments, preparing for a return in September and then doing at home learning instructions, that's a lot to take on," he said. "We've given a little discretion there. We haven't set hard dates within June, other than learning is going to continue we're giving teachers the discretion in terms of how that might happen."

The minister then spoke about the province's proposal to start school on August 31, as a way to help minimize learning loss and help with the transition back to in-class instruction.

"Summer is precious all the time in Manitoba for obvious reasons, but particularly this year," he said. "It is really important to have as much of that summer as possible, balanced with the reality that we've lost a lot of learning for many students."

He said that some students have done well with remote learning, while others have struggled.

"We need to find additional days to help those students who need remedial learning to catch up," he said. "So we are having that dialogue and we're having that discussion and we'll see if there are other suggestions that are better than the ones that have been put forward."

The minister acknowledged that, “we may not be able to make every student whole in one year, in terms of that learning loss.”

Looking ahead, he said that there have been many questions about the upcoming school year.

“We are fully committed to coming back in the new school year this fall,” he said. “We want our kids to be back, but we want it to be done safely. We will be taking the advice of public health.”

He said that while safety is paramount, it is important that the return to school is not done “artificially”.

“There is a risk to creating such an artificial environment for kids that it has a negative social or personal effect on them,” he said. “We want schools to be as normal as possible. We’re all going to be trying to find that balance together, as teachers, as family members, parents and of course as medical folks, but that’s the task that we have.”

## President’s address AGM

The following are excerpts from President James Bedford’s address to the virtual MTS AGM, held Friday, May 22.

The pathway that brought us here today has not been an easy one to travel, but perhaps a few words that will help us understand the decision making process.

We have been guided throughout by three underlying principles. The first is the observance of the law, the Emergency Measures Act that limits gatherings within the province.

Secondly, we have tried for the best part to preserve the intent of our Bylaws; not every word, but the spirit of those words, in the actions that we have taken.

And lastly, but I think first and foremost in our decision making, was to ensure the physical and mental health of you, delegates and members of the Society. None of the work that we do is more important than our health.

I recognize that today’s meeting is far from what is normal. I liken it to our classrooms. Our members are doing outstanding work doing Emergency Remote Teaching and Learning, but underlying all that they do is the proof that the most effective classroom is the real one, with teachers and students together within the same room.

It has been on the advice of our valued legal counsel that we are doing the essential business of the Society today, approving our budget and setting our fee, and having the opportunity to elect members-at-large to the Provincial Executive so governance will continue.

And the essential work of the Society has been going on diligently this past year, and especially these past months. As you are well aware, the Minister has delayed the release of the K-12 Education Review Commission recommendations. The Minister has confirmed that we shall see no implementation of recommendations until next summer at the earliest. The Minister has also stated that legislation to move us to provincial bargaining will come after the release of those recommendations, so we continue to wait.

But we have not been idle, as the recent Louis Riel Arbitration award has shown. I know that you join with me in thanking our staff and the leadership of the Louis Riel Teachers’ Association for their hard work back in the fall. And we wish our colleagues in the Pembina Trails Teachers’ Association well on their arbitration.

Turning now to the past two months, I want to acknowledge the work of staff and leaders throughout the Society. At the end of March, just as all of you were asked to do something that you have never done before, the General Secretary asked the same of staff.

Over the course of a week we were able to ensure that technology and training were in place to ensure that

members, in what is perhaps one of the most critical times in public education in our 100 year history, would continue to be supported by their Society.

Not only has the work continued without interruption, but the scale of much of that work has exceeded by far previous records. Visits to our website, calls to staff, social media postings and requests for interviews have exceeded previous totals. It has been clear to me that in this, an information age, the primary goal must be to inform members, and the public, in the most timely and efficient means possible. Not only do we have the tools to do that, but more importantly we have the people to do that. For those of you who are local leaders, I know that you have turned to the Society for support, and I urge you to continue to do that.

For me, one of the outcomes of this pandemic crisis has been building a positive relationship with the Minister of Education. Regular phone calls, at times without an established agenda other than an opportunity to check in, have been much appreciated.

We have had the opportunity to raise issues of concerns as well as pass along information. The establishment of the Response Planning Team under the direction of Assistant, now Acting Deputy Minister, Rudy has been productive in bringing education partners to a single table to address a multitude of issues, not least of which have been June report cards and recovery learning in the fall.

As the work of leadership is all about building positive relationships, those phone conversations shall continue until they can again be in person conversations. We shall maintain the positive and constructive relationship with the Minister when the Education Review recommendations are finally released.

## **GVTA AGM – May 26th**

With 77 attendees, several motions were passed at our most recent AGM.

- It was moved and carried that the GVTA Membership fee for the months of June, July, and August be amended to \$0.
- It was moved and carried that the annual GVTA Membership fee for 2020-21 be \$120. This amount is prorated for part-time teachers and substitutes.
- The 2020-21 GVTA Executive was proclaimed:
  - President: Mike Urichuk (ECS)
  - Past-President: Joel Swaan (PLS)
  - Vice-President: James Driedger (NPC)
  - Secretary: Mary Eberling-Penner (PCS/EDW)
  - Treasurer: Rhonda Peters (NPC)
  - Collective Bargaining: Mike Urichuk (ECS) / Jessica Riddell (ECS)
  - Education Finance: James Driedger (NPC) / Laura Unger (DO)
  - Employee Benefits: Kirsten Carman (GVC) / VACANT
  - Equity & Social Justice: Donna McCausland (NPC) / Val Harder (DO)
  - Indigenous Education: Roxanne Baraniski (PRS) / Ashly Dyck (PRS)
  - Professional Development Raffaele Bagnulo (NPC) / Jennifer-Laura Heide (DO)
  - Public Relations: Jonathan Cullen (NPC) / Kayly Letkeman (DO)
  - Social & Teacher Wellness: Brenda Richer (NPC) / Carmelle Gerein^\* (NPC)



- Social Media Coordinator: Sarah Waldner^ (NPC)
- Workplace Safety & Health Representative: Mary Eberling-Penner (PCS)
- Members-at-Large: Kelsey Dyck^ (JRW), Gerald Letkeman^ (SUB), Shanna Potter (WES), Karla Rootsart^ (SWD/HEW), Moyra Vallelly\* (COSL), VACANT (BVS/BES), VACANT (PDS)

New to 2020-21 GVTA Executive

\*Appointed at June 2 Executive Meeting

GVTA is saying good-bye to current executive members who are concluding their terms. Thank you to:

- Members-at-Large Sherry Ehnes (BES/BVS) and Jennifer Kennedy (SWD/HES) who served the division as representatives of their school units;
- Gwen Heinrichs (DO) has been our Employee Benefits Chair for several years, having served as co-chair before that. Gwen has contributed often to the Applecore and represented GVTA at MTS AGMs;
- Caitlin Parr (GVC) has been the Social & Teacher Wellness Chair for many years, and has brought about several positive initiatives, including the December Movie Night and our Wellness Month partnerships;
- Anny Froese (PDS) is also a long-time member as Education Finance Chair. On behalf of GVTA, Anny has made presentations to the GVSD Board Liaison Committee each budget cycle with regards to how the divisional budget can best serve our students, and also attended MTS AGMs.

Each of these members will be missed, and we wish them all the best in their future endeavors.

The first 30 attendees to sign-in were awarded \$10 gift cards to the local business of their choice. Congratulations to Alison MacKinnon-Seymour (JRW), Amanda Hildebrand (JRW), Arla Reimer (SUB), Barrette Plett (PLS), Brandy Springer (JRW), Candace Funk (DO), Carmelle Gerein (NPC), Cecilia Gil Veloz (PRS), Cindy Phillips (WES), Crystal Hildebrand (BVS), Dawn Dreger (BVS), Ginette Wilkins (NPC), Harold Epp (PCS), Ian Hart (PLS), Jami Plett (PCS), Jessica Askin (DO), Jim Parry-Hill (SUB; paid it forward), Joanne Litchie (PCS), Jon Kreiser (GVCTec), Kath Penner (JRW), Kelsey Dyck (JRW), Laura Penner (NPC), Laura Unger (DO), Lincoln Wiebe (WES), Melanie Urichuk (GVC), Michael Dyck (GVC), Michelle Ginter (PDS), Patricia Neufeld (WES), Teri Wilson (GVC), Val Harder (DO), and Walter Fehr (BVS).

Through this endeavour, GVTA was able to support Charley B's, Co-op, Copper & Sparrow, Country Cycle, Flavors of Mexico, Hillbilly Greenhouse, Janzen's Paint, King's Deli, McDonalds, New Leaf Greenhouse, Pure Anada, Reitmans, That Burrito Place, Tim Hortons, Time-Out Sports, Whitecap, and Winkler Collar Club.

## MTS AGM – May 22, 2020

Thanks to Mike Urichuk, James Driedger, Raffaele Bagnulo, Gwen Heinrichs, Roxanne Baraniski, Kirsten Carmen, Jonathan Cullen, and Joel Swaan who attended the MTS Virtual AGM this year.

Resolutions passed at the MTS AGM:

- Lifetime Membership: Nancy Kerr, Ian Mac Intyre
- Honorary Membership: Terry Price
- Definitions &/or Processes of:

- Objects of Society
- Active Members definition clarification
- Nomination Process for Provincial Executive
- Professional Misconduct procedure
- Membership rules around serving on the Provincial & Local Executives, including those on Long-Term Disability
- Withdrawal from Membership procedure
- Filling Provincial Executive vacancies
- Duties of Assistant Secretary General
- MTS Political Action Committee definition
- Timing of Presidents' Councils
- Provincial Collective Bargaining Protocol – Communication
- Provincial Bargaining Ratification process
- Additional Regional President's Meetings process formalized
- Subsidies to Locals – Grants no longer beholden to 75% budget
- Continue Comprehensive Sex and Health Education Ad Hoc Committee to oversee recommendations from 2019-20 Committee



## PARTNERSHIP TO DEFEND PUBLIC SERVICES WINS COURT CASE

**Justice McKelvey has ruled in our favour – Bill 28 has been ruled unconstitutional. She says it best in the following quote from the ruling:**

**“I have concluded that the PSSA operates as a draconian measure that has inhibited and dramatically reduced the unions’ bargaining power and violated s. 2d) associational rights. There is no meaningful bargaining afforded in the current situation. Any improvements which have been collectively bargained since 2017 are minor and reflect the lessened degree of bargaining power because of the removal of monetary issues from the bargaining table.”**

Yesterday we received the ruling on the Constitutional Challenge of the Public Services Sustainability Act which is a clear victory as outlined in the MFL Statement below. This win, along with the Louis Riel Arbitration Award, means that The Manitoba Teachers’ Society has achieved a clear victory over Bill 28. It is vindication of our Lead Table Strategy and the Society’s many efforts over the past three years to ensure the best outcome in bargaining for our Locals. We recognize that this has been a difficult road and has required a long term strategy but it has indeed been worth it. We set out to attack Bill 28 with a two-pronged approach; a legal strategy and a bargaining strategy. We have been victorious in both. Our next action will be the Pembina Trails Arbitration in January of 2021, where we will hopefully repeat the gains of Louis Riel and make further improvements in the collective agreement. Our deepest thanks goes to every President, Collective Bargaining Chair and Local for everything you have done to support the Lead Table Strategy over what has turned out to be a long journey. Thanks for your continued efforts to stay the course, as the end is now in sight!

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## **The Manitoba Teachers' Society Guidance on Teachers' Working Conditions effective June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020**

Pursuant to its powers under the Emergency Measures Act, the government of Manitoba has declared a provincial state of emergency and has issued a number of Public Health Orders including an order to shut down all public schools completely.

As of June 1<sup>st</sup>, Phase 2 will take effect which allows the limited use of school facilities under certain specific conditions. Notwithstanding that you may believe that you are effectively and efficiently working from home, the Division has the right to direct you to work from school, subject to individual circumstances that might require an accommodation.

The conditions that each Division must comply with include the following:

- classroom learning remains suspended, however students will be able to meet with teachers for the purpose of assessment and planning for the resumption of classes in September;
- occupancy must be based on maintaining physical distancing of 2 m. in individual rooms;
- there can be no more than 25 people per room;
- teachers and students may meet in small group or one-on-one settings so long as physical distancing is maintained;
- sports, band, and other extracurricular activities can resume so long as physical distancing is maintained;
- choirs or musical theatre activities will not be allowed;
- a separate entrance to the facility or staggered hours should be established wherever possible;
- washrooms and lunchrooms must have frequent sanitation and should be monitored to ensure appropriate physical distancing;
- water fountains that are not touchless or can't be cleaned between users should be closed;
- sharing of items including food and drink containers should be avoided;

- students must bring their own lunches, or provided lunches must be individually wrapped in disposable containers;
- COVID-19 screening must occur at the start of each day, anyone with symptoms will not be allowed to attend. On-site temperature checking is not required;
- signage must be installed outlining physical distancing protocols and floor markings where any lines of people may form, both inside and outside of the facility;
- signs highlighting the importance of hand hygiene, physical distancing, and staying home when sick must be prominently displayed;
- hand hygiene must be encouraged, and hand sanitizer must be available at all building access points;
- travel should be limited within the school throughout the day.

For more information see [Limited Use of School Facilities, May 29, 2020](#):

[https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/support/limited\\_use\\_school.html](https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/support/limited_use_school.html)

### **Some FAQs**

#### **1. What if I arrive and any of these conditions have not been met at my school?**

Under the *Workplace Safety and Health Act* a worker may refuse to work at a workplace if he or she believes on reasonable grounds that the work or the workplace constitutes a danger to his or her safety or health or to the safety or health of another worker or another person.

The first step is to report the dangerous situation to your principal and attempt to seek a reasonable solution that complies with the government's directives.

If no satisfactory solution is reached, contact a MTS Staff Officer (204-888-7961) or your Local President, and explain the situation. At that point, a phone call might be made on your behalf to provincial enforcement officials who are tasked to ensure that all businesses and workplaces comply with the government's directives. Significant fines can be levied for failure to comply.

Workplace Safety and Health may also be contacted, and they may conduct an investigation.

During all of this time, you are not obliged to perform dangerous work or in a dangerous workplace. Further, your colleagues cannot be requested or assigned to do your work unless advised that you have refused to do it on the basis of it being dangerous.

Further, the Division cannot retaliate against or punish you in any way for advocating for safety in your workplace.

## **2. What if the stress of the situation causes me to be unwell?**

If you feel sick and unable to perform your duties you should inform your principal and, subject to satisfactory arrangements being made regarding any students you are supervising, you should go home. You should report this action to your Local Association President or a MTS Staff Officer.

## **3. What will my Local Association and/or MTS do about the situation?**

Your Local and the Society will, in addition to providing you with advice; give consideration to filing grievances where your employer has not provided you with a safe workplace or accommodated you appropriately where necessary.

## **4. Where can I find out more information and contacts?**

The MTS website at [www.mbteach.org](http://www.mbteach.org) is an excellent resource for all types of information, resources and contact information that you can review and consider as we move forward with care, safety and in consideration of the well being of teachers and students during these unprecedented times.