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## Education Funding and the WSD *Yes Virginia it is all about the money!*

by: Dave Najdich, President

As we move into the holiday season and most members begin thinking about the buying of gifts and the number of teaching days left until break, I have spent a great deal of time looking at education funding and The Winnipeg School Division (WSD).

If things continue as they have in past years, the WSD will have published a draft budget for 2009/2010 this month. It will probably reflect no increase in programming and/or services, and some increase in the local tax levy. The budget will be circulated to the public and internally for comment. This is all part of the standard process the WSD has used in its budget development over the last few years.

The problem the WTA has had to come to grips with started in this budget year. The WSD Board of Trustees opted to take a Tax Incentive Grant (TIG) from the Provincial Government to help fund the Division's operations. The TIG was money provided outside the regular model the province uses to fund education and was only granted if the WSD did not raise taxes. There is no formula used to calculate the TIG on a year-to-year basis and the WSD will only know what is available when the announcement is made in the near future.

The problems start here...

- The Province gave just over \$2 million in 2008/2009 in the form of a TIG to the WSD. This money combined with all other revenues saw the WSD still over budget by \$200,000. The WSD balanced its budget by not filling a number of vacant teacher positions and this ensured no tax increase to property owners. The additional \$2 million took the place of a 2% tax increase or about \$19.00 on the average home.
- In the 2009/2010 school year the TIG will need to be in excess of \$5 million from the Province to cover additional operating costs and guarantee no tax increase. If the Board receives less than that amount in a TIG, they will have to cut programming to balance the budget and ensure no tax increase. If no TIG is accessed at all by the WSD, the tax increase will need to be in the range of 3.8% or about \$36.00 on the average home in the WSD.
- If you project into the 2010/2011 school year (a Trustee election year) the TIG would need to be in excess of \$12 million or a 10% plus tax increase.

By depending on the TIG to cover increased operating costs, the Trustees have placed themselves in a position where tax payers expect no increase, the Province will eventually not provide enough TIG and the WSD will start cutting programs and teachers to balance its budget. This is not a good political or financial position for the WSD to be in. The irony in all of this is that according to the WSD the next school taxes paid to the Division from 2002-2007 have dropped by \$160 based on the average home assessment.

By the time you have read this article, the WTA will have met with the WSD/WTA Joint Committee to express our concerns about the use of the TIG and its potential negative impact on the system. The Association will continue to monitor the WSD's budget process, the level of TIG support proposed by the Province and the impact all of this may have on programming and our members who deliver it.

***On a much cheerier note, have a great holiday break! Remember to take time for yourself to recharge and come back in 2009 refreshed and ready to face the challenges of a New Year.***

# *Take a Risk to Reap a Reward*

By: Joan Fransen, WTA Vice-President

There have been times over the years where I've wondered how much of a risk-taker I am. I've always considered myself willing to accept and even embrace change, try a new approach, and consider another person's opinion. Technological innovations have amazed me. Having said that, I wish I could be as free from inhibition in synthesizing such advances as I see our students displaying.

When the WTA launched its new website recently, the web designer came to the office to provide training in order that we be able to update, edit, and generally manage the site on our own. It was somewhat frightening (read *ominous*) to find out how easy it was to make changes that would have the potential to be viewed by more people than one could imagine. Advances in technology have produced software created to run with ease—in essence to make us look good—by providing a product pleasing to the eye, simple to navigate, and requiring a minimum of expertise to maintain.

“Toys” have been designed that boggle my mind. The last time I purchased a computer I was asked how much memory I thought I would need. My response was that I didn't know because who was to say what the possibilities and necessities would be in the future. When I think of the applications we run as a matter of course, I smile because I know our earliest computers would never have been able to manage even a fraction of what is standard today.

Designers of the myriads of technology must be pretty amazing! To be able to take an idea, a mere possibility, and turn it into a functioning product is impressive. Who would have thought, at the time of the Scientific Revolution, that this would be the road the world would be on.

I use these examples to draw a comparison between the things that may seem risky or intimidating to adults (well, not young adults) and the expectations put on our students. When it comes to technology, our students seem fearless. Why is that? What do they know about implementing technology that we could learn? I know that I'm often concerned with whether I could break something or lose something that I wouldn't be able to retrieve.

Why doesn't the sense of fearlessness students demonstrate in using technology transfer to risk-taking we require—and sometimes demand—of them in other situations? Are we developing classroom environments (communities) that foster risk-taking? What will it take for students to take risks in other areas of learning so that they may reap the rewards?

“Putting yourself out there” may be the biggest risk facing our students in the classroom. Having taught students with emotional behaviour disorders I experienced, firsthand, the all-too-often situation where a student would rather not try than risk losing face. Work avoidance can be a very successful strategy. If we view the role of education to include producing “well-adjusted” people we must take the time to actually make the necessary “adjustments” in our practice (since that's what we can control) and not expect something to occur miraculously on its own.

Might it be that for our students to become risk-takers, we need to be risk-takers too?

## **REMINDER: CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2009/2010 WTA EXECUTIVE ELECTION**

The Executive Nominating & Elections Committee is calling for nominations for the 2009/2010 WTA Executive. If you are interested in running for a position on the Executive please contact the Association office at 831-7104 or Dee Smith, Chair, Executive Nominating & Elections Committee at Principal Sparling School.

***What is the WTA?*** The Winnipeg Teachers' Association represents all teachers, including substitutes, clinicians and lab assistants in The Winnipeg School Division. The Association negotiates for its members with the Winnipeg School Board. The WTA actively supports the well-being of all members through various committees such as Teacher Welfare, Professional Development and Public Relations.

***Who can be an Executive member?*** Any member who indicates their willingness to run for election to the Executive when the call for nominations goes out. Candidates may be asked to speak at the Election Forum during the March WTA Council meeting. The new Executive year begins on June 15th.

***What will I do if elected?*** All Executive members attend a retreat/workshop to become familiar with current issues and to determine (based on interest and experience) which committee they will Chair and/or sit on. There are committees which require less time and are ideal starting points for new members.

***What is the time commitment for an Executive member?*** There are two Executive meetings per month. The meetings start at 4:30 PM and run between two to four hours (supper is served.) There is one Council meeting per month commencing at 6:30 PM. Committees meet at times determined by their mandate, or need, and can vary from two to three times per year to once a month.

***What do I get out of it?*** Some rewards are extrinsic. Members are reimbursed for travel to Executive meetings and for dependent care. The opportunities for Professional Development are many and all are encouraged to take advantage of them. Substitutes are paid for by the Association when individuals attend PD opportunities.

Some rewards are intrinsic. Members of the Executive play an important role in achieving improvements in the working lives of teachers. They gain an insider's view of the politics; negotiations and goals of those involved in education throughout the Province. Executive members know that they have helped all their colleagues by serving their Professional Association.

***Is that all?*** No. You will get to work with a group of fun-loving, hard-working, supportive people who may soon become a group of trusted friends.

For further information please contact either the Association office or Dee Smith.

## DENTAL PLAN BENEFITS & COVERAGE

Plan Covers:

- spouses of eligible contracted teachers/lab assistants
- dependent child under 18 years of age
- dependent child under 25 years of age if fulltime student
- dependent child who was incapacitated for a continuous period beginning before age 18 or while a fulltime student and before age 25

Annual Deductible: \$15.00 person/\$30.00 family. If both spouses are WTA members the maximum deductible is \$30.00 in a calendar year. (*Note: there is a deductible holiday for the 2008 calendar year.*)

Annual Benefit Maximum: Routine and major combined = \$2,000.00 per person  
 Orthodontic = \$1000.00 per person  
 Total = \$3000.00 per person

Any Routine or Major Treatment expected to cost over \$300.00 and all Orthodontic treatment must first be submitted to Great-West Life.

### Great-West Life Office Mailing Address:

Winnipeg Benefit Payments  
 P.O. Box 3050  
 Winnipeg, MB  
 R3C 4E5  
 Phone: 942-3589  
**Plan No. 51001**

The 2008 Dental Fee Guide is in effect.

### Routine - 100% Coverage

- cleaning, bitewing x-ray, fluoride (limit twice in a calendar year)
- oral examinations
- full mouth x-rays (once every 24 months)
- extractions
- fillings
- dental surgery (excluding orthodontic or extensive procedures)
- diagnostic x-ray and lab work
- general anesthesia
- endodontic treatment (root canal)
- periodontal treatment (gum disease)
- treatment for relief of dental pain
- injected medication
- space maintainers (not used for orthodontic purposes)
- consultations - relines, rebases and repairs to existing dentures
- pit and fissure sealants (up to age 19)

### Major - 60% Coverage

- crowns, bridges, implants, dentures, etc .
- replacement of prosthodontics (dentures, etc.) if appliance is at least 5 years old
- procedures involving gold if no reasonable substitute at lower cost could be rendered

### Orthodontic - 50% Coverage

- correction of malocclusions of teeth
- appliances
- observation adjustments
- repairs
- bands
- consultations

*Benefit payments for orthodontic treatment are spread over the treatment period.*

WTA 2008/2009 Pre-Retirement Seminar  
REGISTRATION FORM

**Applicant Data**

|   |                   |                     |
|---|-------------------|---------------------|
| First Name  | Initial           | Last Name           |
| Social Insurance Number: _____ ( <i>required to obtain data for you from TRAF</i> )                     |                   |                     |
| Home Address: _____   |                   | Postal Code: _____  |
| Home Phone: _____   | Work Phone: _____ |                     |
| Spouse or Partner (Full Name) _____   |                   |                     |
| His/Her date of birth - Note: this information is required. _____                                       |                   |                     |
|   |                   | Month - Date - Year |
| Will your spouse/partner be attending? Yes [ <input type="checkbox"/> ] No [ <input type="checkbox"/> ] |                   |                     |
| There is a charge of \$15.00 <i>per attendee</i> for materials, coffee, dinner, etc.                    |                   |                     |
| <i>Please indicate below if you have any dietary restrictions or allergies:</i>                         |                   |                     |
| Specify type of dietary restriction/allergy: _____  |                   |                     |
| _____   |                   |                     |

**Retirement Seminar Data**

I would like to attend the Pre-Retirement Seminar on (please check ONE):

**March 17th, 2009** [  ]

at McMaster House Arnett Auditorium, 191 Harcourt Street commencing at 5:00 PM

T.R.A.F. will provide you with a maximum of TWO printouts of retirement information based on possible retirement dates that you designate. Retirement dates may be milestones (e.g. age 65), or specific dates (e.g. June 2010). *Please NOTE: estimates will not be provided to anyone but the pension plan member.*

|                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Retirement date #1 | Retirement date #2 |
|--------------------|--------------------|

Confirmations will be sent to applicants. Please note that enrollment is limited (maximum of 80). Please apply early. Cheques are payable to **The Winnipeg Teachers' Association**, payment (\$15.00 per attendee) is due with the application. Mail the application and cheques to the WTA office, 202-2639 Portage Avenue R3J 0P7. **Deadline for applications is one month prior to the seminar.** If you have any questions please contact Glenda Shepherd, 831-7104.

## *Distinguished Service Award Recipients*

1979 - Dr. Alice Cheatley  
 1980 - Dorothy M. Slaughter  
 1980 - Anthony Romanow  
 1981 - Shirley Chappell  
 1981 - Kiva Berger  
 1981 - Rae Kulba  
 1981 - George H. Enns  
 1982 - John H. Lockett  
 1983 - Alfred Laser  
 1983 - Nina Phillips  
 1983 - Marilyn Thompson  
 1984 - Aubrey Asper  
 1984 - Ethel Arnott  
 1984 - Terry Clifford  
 1985 - John W. Carroll  
 1986 - Dawn McBain  
 1986 - Phyllis Moore  
 1987 - Doreen Pruden  
 1988 - Kai Arnot  
 1988 - Chris Pammenter  
 1989 - Walter Watts  
 1989 - Ron Banister  
 1990 - Carole Wylie  
 1991 - David Turner  
 1992 - Jack King  
 1992 - Ardythe McMaster  
 1993 - Sandy Millen  
 1993 - Dick Marshall  
 1994 - Anne Monk  
 1995 - Bob Davies  
 1995 - Joe Scott  
 1996 - Erna Braun  
 1996 - Gordon Crook  
 1996 - Linda Guse  
 1996 - Louise Kernatz  
 1997 - Claretta Shefrin  
 1997 - Mavis Riley  
 1998 - David Najdich  
 1998 - Neville Trevenen  
 1999 - Barb Lercher  
 2000 - Suzanne Adkins  
 2000 - Patt Keating  
 2001 - Joan MacDonald  
 2001 - Susan Yee Wickler  
 2002 - Donald Teel  
 2003 - Brenda Craig  
 2003 - Pat Lewicki  
 2003 - Ray Stoyko  
 2004 - Wendy Land  
 2004 - Henry Pauls  
 2006—Margo Foxford  
 2007— Ruth Livingston  
 2007— Henry Shyka (Honourary DSA)  
 2008—Glenda Shepherd (Honourary DSA)

# WTA DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD NOMINATION FORM

All parts of the application form must be completed fully and submitted on time for consideration of the application

Name of Nominee: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Location: \_\_\_\_\_

# of years Association involvement: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete the following precisely and accurately, and if necessary, append additional pages.

1. Major Association/Society Professional...

Area of involvement

Dates

a) Council Rep. \_\_\_\_\_

b) Executive (specify roles)

|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

c) WTA Committees (specify)

|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

d) Other committee involvement (specify)

|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

2. Major contribution to the Association (e.g. Service to the Association/membership through advocacy/support.)

Specific areas:

Dates

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide any further information on the nominee's contribution to the Association that you may feel the committee should consider.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

In addition please provide the names of two members who would provide additional information. The Committee may contact these people should they require further information. You may only support ONE application per year.

Name

Location

Phone #

|    |       |       |       |
|----|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 2. | _____ | _____ | _____ |

Name of Nominator: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Location: \_\_\_\_\_  
 School Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Return this form to the WTA office via FAX - 837-9698 by:  
February 15th, 2009.**