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# The WTA NEWS

## It's Divisional Staffing Time

by: Dave Najduch, WTA President

Every year at this time the WTA President writes an article about The Winnipeg School Division and the staffing process. This is no different. The hope is to clarify for members what will be taking place over the months to come.

It is our understanding that the WSD will be following a similar process to that which has occurred in previous years. First, the “**Teacher Staff Vacancy Bulletin**” (the **Blue Sheets**) will be available in the schools on the following dates:

### Bulletins in Schools

1. Thursday, May 7th, 2009
2. Tuesday, May 26th, 2009
3. Tuesday, June 9th, 2009

### Deadline for Applications

Monday, May 11th, 2009 — 12:00 PM  
Thursday, May 28th, 2009—12:00 PM  
Wednesday, June 10th, 2009-4:00 PM

If you are interested in applying for positions as they are advertised, you can check **Employee Connect** for a digital copy of the postings or visit your school office for a paper list. Be sure to meet the timeline requirement for the returning of applications that is provided in the bulletin. It is our understanding that you can also use **Employee Connect** to apply for positions.

- Yes, you can apply for positions! As a member under permanent contract to the WSD, you are able to apply for any of the positions as they are posted in the bulletin.
- No, you did not have to send a letter to the WSD earlier in the year indicating that you are interested in transferring prior to applying for posted positions.
- No, indicating on a school intention sheet that you wish to remain in the building does not prevent you from applying for advertised posted positions.

I would encourage individuals thinking of transferring to ‘polish up’ their resume now so that it is ready to go if a position they are interested in gets posted. The resume can be more generic in nature and then attach a covering letter specific to the position to complete your application.

If you are given an interview, it would be advisable to take a little time prior to the interview to practice answering questions in preparation. Have a trusted colleague or friend ask you questions and review your answers so that you have had an opportunity to reflect on what you wish to say.

The surplus process will also be taking place at the same time. The WSD has indicated that surplus declarations should be made prior to the first round of job postings so that an individual will have the opportunity to apply for positions. It is important to remember that as a surplus teacher, the WSD will not be terminating your employment. In the event a surplus member does not find a position through the bulletin process, the Division is required to place you in a position for the fall term.

The transfer/surplus time of year can be very stressful. If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the process, I would encourage to call our office at 831-7104 for clarification.

# Leaving an Imprint

By: Joan Fransen, WTA Vice-President

Recently, while on vacation, I met two pre-service teachers. One was in her first year of the after-degree programme; the other was completing her final year and had just been hired for next year. Both were enthusiastic—excited about teaching, connecting with students, “making a difference,” and, let’s not forget, paying off student loans. One made the comment that she expected to “blow her entire first cheque!” (I’m sure she’ll learn.)

As my friend, Erna Braun, and I spoke about these young teachers we were reminded about our own respective entries into teaching. We spoke fondly about the support we had received from others—in particular, our school administrators—in helping to make our initial impressions and experiences successful. I know for myself, I had a phenomenal administrator who welcomed me enthusiastically and supported the decisions I made, allowing me to spread my wings yet ready to guide me when need be.

Erna spoke highly of a Winnipeg Principals/Vice-Principals Conference in which Donald Tougas (Sacré-Coeur) had imparted the following to his colleagues: “The first principal leaves the biggest imprint—that’s hard to replace. If it’s a positive relationship, it will create positive relationships in the future.” Upon reflection, I believe this to be a significant wisdom that should not be reserved for administrators but can be extended to all colleagues.

The Gage Canadian Dictionary (1997) defines imprint in the following way:

1. A mark made by pressure; print: *the imprint of a foot in the sand.*
2. An impression; mark: *Suffering left its imprint on her face.*

While the second definition is used figuratively in the way Mr. Tougas speaks, it is interesting to relate its meaning to the first—namely, “a mark made by pressure.” From a one-time connection or conversation to the development of a relationship, an imprint leaves a mark. I believe there is a difference between **making** a mark and **leaving** a mark. What can I do to ensure the mark I leave is not a wound?

In the span of a career one can look back at events, classes, and years that one remembers more fondly than others. I have often spoken of a particular year, early in my career, which I would rather forget. When I reflect upon that year it is usually to say that had it been my first year, I may not have continued my teaching career. What kept me going was that I had positive first impressions and experiences to carry me through.

While we may not have had such positive first experiences we take on the role as staff members in helping to shape the future of new teachers. Each of us has the ability—and usually the opportunity—to impact our colleagues in some way.

We are entering a time when there will be many new teachers as the demographics of the WTA change. It is important for us to help our colleagues make the transition to teaching in a way that will empower them to be successful. What kind of an imprint do you want to leave?

## UPCOMING TEACHER VACANCY BULLETINS

The Winnipeg School Division has advised the Association that effective this school year you can re-view and apply online for positions posted in the Teacher Vacancy Bulletin using Employee Connect. Information about Employee Connect was included with your February paystub.

### NOTE:

**WSD Staffing**— Based on information provided to schools, the following dates will be in place for job postings in schools:

- |    |  |   |
|----|--|---|
| 1. | <b>Thursday, May 7, 2009</b><br>Monday, May 11, 2009     | <b>1st Ad in Schools</b><br>12:00 PM Deadline for applications for 1st ad |
| 2. | <b>Tuesday, May 26, 2009</b><br>Thursday, May 28, 2009   | <b>2nd Ad in Schools</b><br>12:00 PM Deadline for applications for 2nd ad |
| 3. | <b>Tuesday, June 9, 2009</b><br>Wednesday, June 10, 2009 | <b>3rd Ad in Schools</b><br>4:00 PM Deadline for applications for 3rd ad  |
| 4. | <b>Thursday, June 18, 2009</b>                           | <b>Placement of Staff</b>   |

### *Re: Manulife EHB Travel*

**Manulife for active WTA members** - "As long as the insured, i.e. an active teacher, is under age 65 - the spouse's age is not relevant." (i.e. they may be over age 65) "The coverage in place as a 'Class A' employee applies to all eligible dependents too. It is only the 'insured's' age that matters as far as the coverage goes." This means that active teachers' spouses/partners over the age of 65 have unlimited travel if the active teacher is under 65 years of age.



### **Workers' Compensation**

Lab Assistants, Industrial Arts Teachers and Vocational Teachers are ALL covered by Workers' Compensation.

### **QUOTE OF THE MONTH**

Happiness is not a state to arrive at,  
but a manner of travelling.  
— Margaret Lee Runbeck

### **Electoral Units not represented at the March 2009 Council meeting:**

Children of the Earth, David Livingstone, DLC, Elmwood, Garden Grove, George V, Glenelm, Pinkham, Riverview, Support Services, William Whyte

### **DEADLINE FOR ARTICLES TO THE MAY NEWSLETTER IS:**

**April 29, 2009**

*The views expressed in articles in the Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Association*

## ***BENEFITS UPDATE***

### *A. Dental Plan:*

There have been improvements made to the Dental Plan provided by Great-West Life Assurance Co.

1. The Orthodontic amount has been increased to \$1250.00 per person per calendar year (effective January 1/09).  
*Please note that all Orthodontic treatment must first be submitted to Great-West Life.*
2. Dental implants have been added to the Major Coverage (60%) (effective March 1/08). Routine and Major benefits coverage has a maximum of \$2500.00 per person per calendar year.  
*Please note that Routine or Major treatment expected to cost over \$300.00 must first be submitted to Great-West Life.*

### *B. Extended Health Benefit Plan:*

The Extended Health Benefit (EHB) Plan provided by Manulife has offered Plan Administrators of the EHB plan a Dedicated Service Representative (DSR). The DSR is the Plan Administrator's contact for inquiries and issues relating to the general administration of the plan. This includes: claims, eligibility, Internet support, billing, general coverage information, etc.

**ONLY** the Plan Administrator may access the DSR, however, if you have concerns/issues arising from a claim and the 1-800-268-6195 representative cannot assist you, please contact the following Plan Administrators and inform them of your issue. They, in turn, will contact the DSR with your concern and get back to you.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| Plan Administrator for <b><u>Active Teachers</u></b>  | - Sue Lee<br>The Winnipeg School Division—775-0231               |
| Plan Administrator for <b><u>Retired Teachers</u></b> | - Glenda Shepherd<br>The Winnipeg Teachers' Association—831-7104 |

*The Winnipeg Teachers' Association*

*Retirement Reception*

*2009*

Wednesday, June 10th, 2009

7:00 PM – 11:00 PM

Shaarey Zedek Synagogue  
561 Wellington Crescent

Doors Open – 6:45 PM

Presentations – 7:45 PM

Door Donation – \$15.00

*This celebration is to honour ALL retiring members of the WTA and is open to everyone.*

**For further information call  
Tina Garton, Tec Voc**

Additional parking available at:  
St. Mary's Academy  
Unitarian Church  
Lutheran Church of the Redeemer

## *Letter to the Editor*



Dear Colleague,

Re: Members' Appreciation Evening

My name is Steve Patrick. I teach at Daniel McIntyre Collegiate and I am a WTA Council Member.

At the beginning of 2008, the WTA Executive brought forward a motion to spend *up to \$13,000* on a "Members' Appreciation Evening". Essentially, this was to be a dinner for the Council Reps., Committee Members and the Executive. The justification for this event was to recognize the *time* and *effort* put in by the people who serve the WTA. The money to pay for this event was *not budgeted* for. The money was to come out of a reserve (surplus) account.

I and other council reps spoke against the motion. Despite our objections, this motion was overwhelmingly passed by Council.

At the time, I had concerns that the decision to have the 'Appreciation Dinner' was not fully conveyed to our membership. I personally felt that our membership would not allocate this amount of money for such an event. Additionally, the people that attend council, committee and executive meetings are already compensated by receiving a meal.

In my opinion, *no additional* compensation or appreciation is necessary. In comparison, are you similarly compensated every time you have a meeting, practice or rehearsal?

In the end, the appreciation dinner was held at the Victoria Inn on March 25th, 2008. I was attended by about 90 people at a cost of \$4,000.

Shortly after this event, the WTA budget for the upcoming year was opened for discussion and debate. The "Members' Appreciation Evening" was put in as a new budget line. This time, \$10,000 was *budgeted* for another event in the spring of 2009. I asked that this budget line be removed, however, council voted to keep it.

In the spring of 2009, the WTA Council will once again be voting on our budget. Please advise your council representative as to whether or not you support this use of your fee.

Please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Steve Patrick

# *When is an answer not an answer?*

## *MTS and the ongoing saga!*

by: Dave Najduch, WTA President

Over the past few months I have written a series of letters requesting information from the “Home Office” (The Manitoba Teachers Society) about the recent retirement of the General Secretary and the process employed for hiring of MTS Staff Officers. I recently received answers to both requests and each is a classic example of a response without ever answering any of the questions asked.

For those of you who have not been following the saga of the retirement of the MTS General Secretary, here’s the short version. Just before Christmas I spoke with two individuals who both asked why the General Secretary had been fired. I called the MTS President and we had a conversation where lots of questions were asked by me and little information was provided by her. At 6:51 PM on December 23rd, 2008, Pat Isaak sent an e-mail to all Presidents wishing us a Happy Holiday and announcing that the General Secretary and the head of the Disability Benefits Plan had both retired.

At a Metro Presidents’ meeting the first day back in January, I requested information and my impression is that a stone wall went up around this issue. The MTS President has stood firmly behind it ever since. My first written request for information regarding the General Secretary was sent on January 7th, 2009 and was based on MTS Bylaw V (p) that states:

“ensure that any member will have access to the duties, remuneration and the terms of employment of All paid officers and employees of the Society”

A written response was provided indicating that my request had been referred to a lawyer for a legal opinion.

I wrote a second letter February 10th, 2009 requesting the same information as the first and also asked what had been referred to the lawyers, who the lawyers were and for a copy of their response when it was provided. The answer from MTS to all my requests on the matter of the General Secretary was provided March 20th, 2009 and states the following:

“I have been directed by the Provincial Executive to respond as follows:

It is the opinion of the Provincial Executive that the requirements of Bylaw V (p) have been fully met. The legal opinion that I have received on this matter advises that the Provincial Executive does not have the authority to release any further information.”

A classic non-answer. No information based on any of the questions I had asked in my two letters was provided. No opportunity to know what the lawyers were asked or their answers was provided, yet the Provincial Executive believes it has complied with the Bylaw.

It is interesting to note that last year information relating to senior MTS Officers was provided by the MTS President within days of receiving a request based on a motion by her former local teachers’ association President. At the MTS Annual General Meeting last year, very specific information was provided about individuals when the 275 plus members at the meeting were given the opportunity to read a confidential internal process audit of the Society. To my knowledge, neither of these requests for information were referred to lawyers for a legal opinion.

## *When is an answer not an answer? MTS and the ongoing saga! Cont'd*

It leaves one to wonder, what agenda was being served last year when the information was being so freely provided and what agenda is now being served when this information is being so carefully and clearly blocked from member access when the same Bylaw is and was in place.

The second issue that I requested written information on from the President and Provincial Executive was related to the hiring of MTS Staff Officers. This request was based on the WTA's preparation for a motion being sent to this year's MTS AGM on changing who has the authority to hire staff officers.

The focus of my request was to obtain a clear picture of the most recent process that was in place and what it had been changed to. It was clear that this was tied to the last time these changes were made. The request also sought clarification about how the conflict of interest rules were to be applied given a specific hypothetical situation, and finally, I asked if all candidates and names and resumes were shared with the Selection Committee. This information was intended to help with the discussion/debate on the floor of AGM in May. The response to my request states the following:

“As you know, Society bylaws mandate that the Provincial Executive has the responsibility for hiring staff officers. As you know, the mechanism for hiring staff officers has been changed numerous times over the years, providing for a variety of roles for the General Secretary and the Provincial Executive.

Regarding conflict of interest, Provincial Executive is guided by a Provincial Executive guideline. This is the same guideline that was in place during your term on the Provincial Executive and has not changed since then.”

How can you have a debate about the authority to hire staff officers if the Provincial Executive are not prepared to share the process and why it was changed? Once again, a non-answer about a relatively simple topic.

As an MTS member for over 25 years, a long-serving local Association President and former Provincial Executive member, I am left wondering why the organization that is to represent me has consistently refused to share information about the General Secretary's retirement and the hiring of staff officers. I guess I had a higher expectation of those who represent teachers in Manitoba.

