

Editor: Carol Boyko  
Gordon Bell High School  
FAX: 783-9469

WTA Office - 831-7104/FAX - 837-9698  
e-mail addresses: wta@wta.mb.ca  
pres@wta.mb.ca — vpres@wta.mb.ca

# The WTA NEWS

## For Your Information

by: Dave Najduch, WTA President

### *The Winnipeg School Division—Employee Connect System*

Employee Connect is being used by the WSD for a wide range of items for all employee groups. To date approximately 800 of the 2400 possible WTA members have logged into the system and are active.

The problem for some of our members continues to be linked to the process required to first register with Employee Connect. To gain access, a member must provide their employee number, Social Insurance Number (SIN) and bank account. These are submitted once online and then compared to the same information the WSD already has on file about you. The system then verifies that you are who you say you are and members then create their own password for all future access to the system.

The concern which we have raised with the Division is that many WTA members do not wish to share their bank account information or SIN over the Internet. We have asked the WSD to review this process and look at developing another method to log into Employee Connect for the first time. We have asked the WSD to review this process and look at developing another method to log into Employee Connect for the first time.

Once WTA members have access to Employee Connect, individuals can review their absences, obtain/review monthly pay statements and apply for jobs when they are posted as part of the regular Division staffing process. As part of our discussions with the WSD, they have also indicated that for the 2009 income tax year, the T4 slips will still be mailed out as in the past, but if members wish to have access to these earlier, they will be available online through Employee Connect.

If you wish to register with Employee Connect, go to the WSD web page, find “Staff Services” at the top of the page and click. Locate the Employee Connect box and click into that. Follow the registration steps and develop your own password. At present you will need your WSD employee number (can be found on your monthly paper pay statement), bank account number and SIN.

### *H1N1 Update*

You will find included in this month’s newsletter four pages provided by The Winnipeg School Division related to H1N1. We have included these as part of the newsletter to ensure that WTA members will have access to the information in a timely manner. I would encourage everyone to read the information provided. A number of important issues are addressed, including what you should be doing if you are pregnant or have a pre-existing medical condition.

The WSD has also made it clear that they will be following the Collective Agreement practice of asking for a doctor’s note after a three-day absence. The Association is encouraging members to provide the note when possible. If you have tried to see your physician and have been unable to get in, document the time, date and individuals talked to so that if asked by the WSD this information can be shared with the Division.

If you have questions or need clarification on these or any other item, please contact me at the WTA office—831-7104 or via e-mail at pres@wta.mb.ca

# Supporting the Collective

By: Joan Fransen, WTA Vice-President

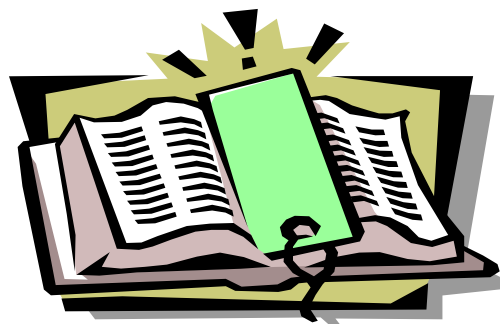
All teachers in Winnipeg School Division (WSD) are members of The Winnipeg Teachers' Association (WTA). The WTA provides services to represent and support its members in matters involving salary, benefits, and working conditions. In its endeavour to improve the lives of its members, The WTA and the WSD recognize the WTA as its official representative as stated in the collective agreement. "The Division recognizes the Association as the sole bargaining agent for all teachers in the employ of The Winnipeg School Division." (The Winnipeg Teachers' Association – Collective Agreement, p. 1, Section A – Governance Clause #2.)

According to the WSD Annual Report, there are over 3000 teachers—all WTA members—within the school division. The Negotiations Committee meets to produce a negotiations package which addresses areas of concern, as well as, to make improvements for the membership. Each fall, the Committee solicits input from members regarding issues for inclusion in the clauses of the collective agreement. This is one way individual members may identify their concerns. The current Committee is reviewing proposals for inclusion in the 2010-2011 package. It pays particular attention to the nature of the requests, and especially, the number of requests supporting each issue. Informally, individuals or school staffs provide input during annual school visits.

Another way the Negotiations Committee prepares for negotiations is by comparing the collective agreements of other Associations—both inside and outside of Manitoba. In this way, we are sometimes able to improve wording and discover the areas of concern of other teachers. Collective Agreements of each local of the Manitoba Teachers' Society can be found on their website (which is linked to our site).

It is important for individuals to know what is in the collective agreement. Clauses pertaining to working conditions are as important—perhaps even more—than clauses pertaining to salary. It often takes years of seed planting and cultivation to grow a clause. When the Committee formulates a clause it does so with care, in an effort to better the lives of the collective. Each teacher has an obligation to abide by the clauses that have been duly negotiated. By doing this, one supports their colleagues.

As the Committee prepares next year's package, take time to review the collective agreement ([http://wta.mb.ca/ca\\_1.html](http://wta.mb.ca/ca_1.html)). Let us know if you have concerns or questions; if in doubt of how to interpret a clause of the collective agreement, call the WTA office (831-7104).



## CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2010/2011 WTA EXECUTIVE ELECTION

The Executive Nominating & Elections Committee is calling for nominations for the 2010/2011 WTA Executive. If you are interested in running for a position on the Executive please contact the Association office at 831-7104.

***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 the Association office.

## WTA 2009/2010 Pre-Retirement Seminar REGISTRATION FORM

### Applicant Data

-----  
First Name

Initial

Last Name

Social Insurance Number: ----- (*required to obtain data for you from TRAF*)

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 [ ] No [ ]

There is a charge of \$15.00 *per attendee* for materials, coffee, dinner, etc.***Please indicate below if you have any dietary restrictions or allergies:***Specify type of dietary restriction/allergy: -----  
-----The seminars will take place on (please check ONE):

January 26, 2010 [ ] March 18, 2010 [ ]

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 2015). ***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 date of the pre-retirement seminar.** If you have any questions please contact Glenda Shepherd, 831-7104.

## **WTA Workplace Safety & Health Survey Results**

By: Melinda Guenther-Balodis, Chair, WTA Workplace Safety & Health Committee

The WTA Workplace Safety & Health (WSH) Committee would like to thank those Council Representatives that completed and returned the WSH surveys that were sent in your October Council packages. The Committee felt overall, that the results from the survey were positive regarding the function of WSH committees in the Division. Here is a brief summary of survey responses:

### **28 responses received:**

**21—Elementary Schools (N-8)  
8—School-based Committees**

**7—Secondary Schools**

1. *Do you feel you have a voice in working in a safe environment?*  
24—yes                      3—no
2. *Are you aware of the protocol in your building regarding WSH concerns?*  
23—yes                      4—no
3. *Do you know who the WSH Committee members are?*  
25—yes                      2—no
4. *Are the minutes from WSH meetings and inspections shown to staff?*  
12—yes                      15—no
5. *Are there regular inspections?*  
22—yes                      6—no or not sure
6. *Do you think the system addresses your concerns?*  
23—yes                      3—no                      1—blank

Some comments suggested members are not always aware of protocol when addressing Workplace Safety & Health concerns. The first step is to address the concern with your administrator of custodial staff. If the concern is not addressed in a timely fashion it should be raised with the building WSH Committee or Representative. If the concern is in writing it is more likely to be addressed, and it should show in the WSH Committee minutes. These minutes are sent to your WTA WSH Chair.



## Manulife Claim Forms etc.

Please be advised that if you require ManuLife claim forms they are available from:

- (a) for active and retired teachers - you can access a claim form from the Manulife web site  
*www.manulife.ca*
- (b) for active teachers - your school office and/or the Division (775-0231)
- (c) for retired teachers - the WTA office, 202-2639 Portage Ave., R3J 0P7 (831-7104)
- (d) Manulife will send a claim form with their reimbursement

ManuLife requires you to put your address on ALL claim forms. If you have a change of address, please highlight it with an asterisk to draw attention to your new address.

Name changes:

- (a) for active teachers - inform Sue Lee, WSD Benefits Department (775-0231)
- (b) for retired teachers - inform Teachers' Retirement Allowance Fund (TRAF - 949-0048)

Change in status i.e. single to family and vice versa: (Note: once you are enrolled in FAMILY coverage all dependents are automatically added to your history with ManuLife and adjudicated accordingly.)

- (a) for active teachers - inform Sue Lee c/o WSD Benefits Department
- (b) for retired teachers - **you may not change your status**, except in the event of the death of a spouse

### **DENTAL CLAIMS...**

WTA members are reminded that **dental claims** are to be sent to the dental plan carrier - **Great-West Life Assurance**, **NOT** Manulife Financial. Manulife is the Extended Health Plan carrier **ONLY**.

### ***Maternity/Parental Leave and the Dental Plan...***

***Please be advised that individuals who go on (or are currently on) Maternity/Parental Leave are now covered for the length of the leave 54 weeks.***

The following electoral units were absent from the October 2009 WTA Council meeting:

Children of the Earth, Kelvin, Lab Assistants, Lansdowne, LaVerendrye, Montrose, Norquay, Ralph Brown, Shaughnessy Park, Substitutes, Support Services, WAEC—700 Elgin Ave.

### **Quote of the Month**

Discussion is an exchange of knowledge; argument an exchange of ignorance.

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

**Deadline for articles for the December Newsletter:**

**Wednesday, November 25th, 2009**



**The Winnipeg Teachers' Association**

Group Benefits Committee

*is hosting a*

**MATERNITY, PARENTAL, ADOPTIVE LEAVE SEMINAR**

*Information will be shared on EI benefits, sick leave and SUB Plan Benefits.*

*Date: December 3rd, 2009*

*Location: The Manitoba Teachers' Society  
Arnett Auditorium  
191 Harcourt Street*

*Registration/Snacks: 5:00 PM*

*Time: 5:30 PM*

*Facilitator: Nancy Kerr  
MTS Staff Officer*

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**Please fill out the registration form below and FAX back to the WTA office—837-9698 by: Monday, November 30th, 2009**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_ School Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_



# H1N1 FACTS

## About This Bulletin

This fact sheet provides basic health information and advice for you with regards to the H1N1 influenza. It has been prepared in consultation with employee groups.

## Recognizing the Symptoms

Infection with influenza can cause a wide range of illness. Staff who become ill may only have mild symptoms. Some people who get infected with the virus may not get sick at all.

When you have influenza, you may get sick very suddenly with:

Fever greater than 38° C **AND**

Cough **AND**

One or more of the following:

Sore throat;

Muscle aches;

Joint aches;

Fatigue;

Feeling very tired or exhausted.

Other symptoms can include:

Chills;

Loss of appetite;

Runny or stuffed nose;

Children may also feel sick to their stomach, vomit or have diarrhea;

Elderly and immune-compromised people may not develop a fever;

Most people recover in 7-10 days.

## Preventing the Spread

Seek medical attention if you have the symptoms of influenza. You should remain at home until your doctor says you can return to work.

If you are ill and must leave your home to visit a health care provider, you should call ahead to the clinic and advise them of your symptoms.

Wash your hands often using soap and running water.

Cover your cough or sneeze with your upper sleeve, not your hands.

Try to limit person-to-person contact and wherever possible keep a distance of one metre between you and the sick person.

## Treating the Symptoms

The best ways to treat the symptoms of influenza are:

Get plenty of rest

Gargle with salt water if you have a sore throat

Use a cool mist humidifier to help with a stuffy nose

Water, juices, clear broths and soups help replace the loss of fluids

Warm fluids may help loosen up mucus in your throat and lungs

Staff with very serious illness, such as those hospitalized or those with other health problems may be prescribed antiviral medication.

## Treating a Fever

Fever is a sign that the body is fighting an infection or other illness. The only way to really know if you have a fever is by checking your temperature. You can measure your temperature by using a thermometer. The use of glass mercury thermometers is not recommended.

**You have a fever if the thermometer indicates a temperature of 38°C (100.4°F) or higher.**

If you have a fever:

Dress in lightweight clothing and keep the room temperature to 20°C;

Drink plenty of fluids;

Eat small, nutritious meals;

Use acetaminophen (Tylenol) or Ibuprophen (Advil) to lower your body temperature.

**DO NOT FORGET TO WASH YOUR HANDS FREQUENTLY!**

For further information, contact your health-care provider or call Health Links-Info Santé at 788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257

## Medical/Emergency Care

It may be hard to decide if and when you should see a doctor or seek emergency medical care. Here are some recommendations that will help you decide:

### Emergency Care:

Seek emergency medical care if you feel so sick that you cannot stay at home.

If you feel you need medical care on an emergency basis, go to the Misericordia Urgent Care Centre, a hospital emergency department, or call 911;

If you are going to Urgent Care or to a hospital emergency department, call ahead to let them know you are coming and tell them that you think you may have influenza A or H1N1;

Ask the hospital for specific instructions regarding where you should go when you get there and whom you should notify when you arrive;

If you haven't done so already, you may be asked to put on a mask when you arrive at Urgent Care or the hospital.

Call a doctor or Health Links-Info Santé at 788-8200 if you have any of the following:

- Breathing is difficult or painful;
- Shortness of breath;
- Coughing up blood;
- Increased wheezing;
- Fever for 3-4 days without getting better;
- Feeling better then suddenly having a high fever or becoming sick again;
- Extreme sleepiness, are difficult to wake up or being disoriented or confused;
- Extreme ear pain.

See a doctor as soon as possible if symptoms worsen. If you are too sick to phone a doctor, call 911.

You should call your doctor right away if you have symptoms of influenza and any of the following conditions:

- Chronic heart or lung disease;
- Any other chronic condition ( requiring regular visits to the doctor's office);
- Persons who are very old and frail;
- Persons who are on treatments or medication that affect the immune system.

# H1N1 FACTS

## School Closures

H1N1 is considered to be present in our communities and in all public settings. Health officials assess the situation on an ongoing basis to determine the most appropriate public health interventions to best protect the health of our staff.

Any decision to close a school or set of schools would involve careful consideration of the specific situation at that time, taking into account the spread and severity of the virus within our buildings, as well as recommendations from the Public Health Agency of Canada, and other agencies having jurisdiction.

Direction on school closures for public health reasons would come from the Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth, in consultation with the Chief Provincial Public Health Officer and/or regional medical officer of health.

## H1N1 Vaccine

The H1N1 vaccine is expected to be ready this fall and there will be enough supply for every Manitoban who wishes to be vaccinated.

The vaccine may arrive in batches, so health officials will identify people who should be prioritized for the vaccine, either because of their essential role during flu season or because they are considered to be at greater risk for severe illness.

In order to best meet the needs of the community, how and where the H1N1 flu vaccine will be provided to people who wish to be vaccinated will likely be determined at a regional level.

The Winnipeg Regional Health Authority will be administering the H1N1 vaccine once it is made available.

## Disposable Masks

Manitoba Health and Healthy Living and the Public Health Agency of Canada do not recommend that healthy people wear masks as they go about their daily routines, including going to and from work.

There is no evidence that wearing a mask will prevent the spread of infection in the general population.

## Pandemic Plan

For further information about the Winnipeg School Division's Pandemic Plan, please visit our website at [www.wsd1.org](http://www.wsd1.org).

**For further information, contact your health-care provider or call Health Links-Info Santé at 788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257**



## H1N1 QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

### About This Bulletin

This question and answer sheet provides basic information with regards to the H1N1 influenza. It has been prepared in consultation with employee groups.

### What is influenza (the flu)?

Influenza is a respiratory disease caused by a virus. It can cause a variety of symptoms, such as fever, cough, aches and physical exhaustion. People usually recover from the flu without medical help.

However, very young children and the elderly have a higher risk of severe illness, as well as people with lowered immunity (i.e. those with chronic illnesses).

### How is influenza spread?

Influenza spreads easily from person to person by coughing or sneezing, by hand-to-hand contact with an infected person or after handling objects contaminated by infected people.

The virus can survive on hard surfaces for up to 48 hours, on cloth, paper or tissue for up to 12 hours and on hands for about five minutes.

This is long enough for you to inadvertently touch your mouth, nose or eyes and transfer the virus to your body.

People can spread influenza up to 24 hours before symptoms appear and up to seven days after.

Not everyone who gets influenza develops symptoms however they still may be able to spread it to others, especially if they cough or sneeze.

### Where can I get more information on self care and influenza?

For more information on influenza and self care, contact Health Links-Info Santé at 788-8200 or your primary health care provider.

### I'm pregnant – should I be concerned?

Pregnant women are not more likely to get the H1N1 influenza, but if they do catch the virus, they may be more likely to develop severe illness that may affect their pregnancy.

It is the Winnipeg School Division's expectation that all staff will report to their assigned duties during this pandemic period unless you are ill.

Accommodations will be made for those staff who provide medical support for accommodation in consultation with the Superintendents Department and the Human Resources Department.

### Do pregnant women need a different kind of treatment for pandemic H1N1 flu?

You may be prescribed an antiviral to help treat your symptoms.

Your health care provider will decide this with you. Antivirals are most effective if given as soon as possible after symptoms start.

Antivirals have been licensed by Health Canada to be used during pregnancy.

### How can I prevent getting sick?

All staff should take the same basic precautions, including:

Cover your cough by coughing into your elbow or sleeve or use a tissue to cover your nose and mouth.

Discard the tissue in the garbage immediately and wash your hands with soap and running water.

Wash your hands often with soap and water. When soap and water are unavailable, a hand sanitizer may be an acceptable alternative if your hands are not visibly soiled.

Limit touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

Maintain your health by taking care of yourself and those in your care including eating a healthy balanced diet, avoiding cigarette smoke and other harmful substances, being active and getting enough rest and sleep.

**For further information, contact your health-care provider or call Health Links-Info Santé at 788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257**

# H1N1 QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

## **When should I go to my doctor?**

Early treatment can help to reduce the risk of severe illness, therefore pregnant women should visit a health care provider if they develop flu-like symptoms, as soon as possible.

Anyone who has symptoms of a more severe illness such as shortness of breath, dehydration or severe weakness, or if any other symptom (s) gets worse, should seek immediate medical care.

People should also see their health care provider if they do not get better as they normally would, even if they've already seen their doctor about their illness.

## **If someone at work is or has been sick, what should I do?**

The likelihood of being exposed to pandemic H1N1 at work is generally the same as it would be in any other public setting or at home.

While at work staff should wash their hands regularly and follow the same basic precautions they would in any other setting. Masks are not recommended at work even if colleagues or clients have been ill.

If someone in your workplace is showing flu-like symptoms, they should seek medical attention.

If you have concerns about your workplace and its pandemic preparedness, speak to your Immediate Supervisor or School/Building Administrator.

## **Should I still get the seasonal flu shot?**

Manitoba Health is recommending that all Manitobans get the seasonal flu vaccine however it will still be a personal choice.

The seasonal flu vaccine has been deferred until after the H1N1 vaccine program has been completed except for those that are considered a high risk.

These include individuals 65 years old or older, people with long term or chronic diseases and children 6 months to 24 months of age.

## **Will the H1N1 flu vaccine be available in schools?**

The H1N1 vaccine should be available in Manitoba as early as the last week in October. Enough vaccine has been ordered to administer to all Manitobans who wish to be vaccinated.

The vaccine may arrive in batches, so health officials will identify people who should be prioritized for the vaccine, either because of their essential role during flu season or because they are considered to be at greater risk for severe illness.

In order to best meet the needs of the community, how and where the H1N1 flu vaccine will be provided to people who wish to be vaccinated will likely be determined at a regional level.

Manitoba Health is not expecting the vaccine to be made available through the schools but rather administered through local clinics or through your medical practitioner.

## **Do I need a medical note upon returning to work after an extended period of time?**

During this H1N1 outbreak, it is expected that the Winnipeg School Division will operate as it normally would if there was no pandemic.

All absences, as per school division policy, requires a medical note after three days.

All attempts should be made to obtain a medical note prior to returning to work after three days.

If it is not possible to obtain a medical note prior to returning to work, the matter will be reviewed on a case by case basis by the Human Resources Department and School/Building Administrator.

## **Where can I get more information on our pandemic plan?**

For further information visit the Winnipeg School Division's Pandemic Plan on our internal and external website at, [www.wsd1.org](http://www.wsd1.org).

# **REMEMBER TO STAY HEALTHY!**

**For further information, contact your health-care provider or call Health Links-Info Santé at 788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257**

## *Where is MTS going from here?*

By: Dave Najduch, WTA President

Over the last few months I have had numerous WTA members asking, when my next Manitoba Teachers' Society (MTS) article would be coming out? To a large degree I felt it was time to give MTS and the goings on a bit of a rest even though the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in May 2009 generated a lot of information that could have been shared with the WTA membership. However, time and circumstances leave me feeling compelled to write to our members again about a new issue that has arisen at the MTS.

In the minutes of the September 19th, 2009 MTS Provincial Executive (PEX.) meeting the following motion was passed with a roll call vote:

“That the Society begin the process of hiring for the position of Assistant General Secretary, term to begin January 1st, 2010.”

The motion itself seems somewhat inconsequential, until you realize that there is a person currently in the position of Assistant General Secretary (AGS). The fact that a roll call vote was used to pass the motion was interesting as well. A roll call vote requires the name of each individual P.Ex. member be recorded either in favour of, or opposed to the motion. Roll call votes are seldom used by the P.Ex. and having one requested for this motion speaks to the possibility of a much larger issue lurking in the background.

We fast forward to the Presidents' Council meeting held October 24th, 2009 and the matter of AGS further develops. Presidents' Council brings together the Provincial Executive, the Presidents and most Vice-Presidents of local Associations from across the Province once very few months to hear reports and discuss issues.

After the MTS President's Report in the morning, a motion was brought forward by the President of The Flin Flon Teachers' Association and seconded by the President of The Louis Riel Teachers' Association (LRTA) asking the Provincial Executive to reconsider the motion they passed in September regarding the position of AGS. During the public debate on the floor, it became clear the current AGS's contract expires in December 2009 and that she had asked for a two-year extension. The motion to have PEX. reconsider its actions was passed by a clear majority of the Presidents in attendance.

After lunch the AGS issue resurfaced during Question Period. The President of The Seven Oaks Teachers' Association asked how the motion passed in the morning could be taken back. This went nowhere. The President of The River East Teachers' Association (RETTA) brought a number of concerns to the floor of Council regarding MTS and was aggressively criticized. Other concerns were expressed about MTS and by the end of the meeting many on both sides of the issue left feeling uncomfortable and disillusioned with what had taken place.

I then attended a regular meeting of Metro Presidents' on Monday, November 2nd, 2009 where concerns from Presidents' Council were again brought to the Metro group by the Presidents of Louis Riel and River East/Transcona Teachers' Associations. During this portion of the Metro meeting things seemed tense. The MTS President, Pat Isaak expressed the position of the PEX. and the meeting ended.

## *The Big Picture!*

Within the space of less than one year two senior staff of The Manitoba Teachers' Society, the General Secretary and now the Assistant General Secretary will have left the employ of MTS. At the same time you have a Chief Financial Officer on extended leave and the current General Secretary with a contract that expires in 18 months. Over the same space of time the professional staff of MTS has certified their union as a local of the Teamsters'.

Concerns about the staffing process of MTS are now being expressed by other locals beyond the WTA. These locals are bringing those concerns forward for discussion at both Presidents' Council and the Metro Presidents' meetings.

For some observing the staffing issues, it continues to be much less about who is leaving the employment of MTS and much more about who will be put into these positions in the months ahead. There is already speculation about who the P.Ex. will appoint to the position of AGS.

The response from the MTS President is everything that is occurring is confidential and cannot be talked about. This has been taken to the point of the Provincial Executive now developing a strict set of guidelines regarding confidentiality for P.Ex. and the staff of the Society.

At a number of levels the internal operation of MTS seems to be in disarray. Pat Isaak has said repeatedly that the members of the Society want MTS to focus on teacher issues and this is where the organization can do its best work. The problem seems to be that a growing number of local associations are now bringing concerns about the internal operation of the Society forward and hoping for some type of positive resolution. It is time for the P.Ex. to develop a strategy that can address the perceived and/or real issues regarding staffing and then get back to the broader based work on behalf of the membership.

