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The WTA NEWS
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Recording Devices ... Where We Go From Here?

by: Dave Najduch, WTA President

The Association has started a discussion at the Executive level and with The Winnipeg School Division related to the use of recording devices in schools. The long term implications of these discussions have the potential to impact all of our members.

It is clear the Division has a policy on the books regarding the use of recording devices. What is not clear is how the policy is being enforced and what, if any, are the consequences for violation of the policy.

The questions I have been asking of the Division are:

- How are WTA members being protected by their employer when it is found that individuals have violated divisional policy as it relates to unauthorized audio and video recordings?
- What can members expect from their employer when it is found that students or parents have posted to the Internet, or any social networking site, unauthorized audio or video recordings?

The work we undertake as educators in the classroom places us in a low risk environment for being recorded. As the teacher we have the ability to direct what is to occur in the classroom during class time. It does not prevent teachers from being recorded, but the reality is it is less likely to occur.

As members become involved in activities outside of the classroom, the greater the potential risk. Field trips, sporting activities, community gatherings and cultural events all remove the students and staff from the four walls of the classroom and increase the possibility of unauthorized audio or video recordings occurring. Once captured on a cell phone or other device, the audio or video can be posted.

As an employer the WSD has an obligation to provide a safe and secure working environment. There are a wide range of divisional policies and consequences in place to ensure that students, staff and parents are safe in schools and during school activities. The making of audio or video recordings and the sharing of these can do great harm and is potentially a safety issue.

The WSD needs to ensure existing policies are enforced and that new policies are developed to help address an area of growing concern.

Paying it Forward

By: Joan Fransen, WTA Vice-President

In the Winnipeg Teachers' Association Constitution it states,

OBJECTS OF THE ASSOCIATION

The objects of the Association shall include the following:

- a) To promote and to advance the cause of education;
- b) To foster active participation by the members of the Association;
- c) To promote the welfare of the members.

A year ago the Council made the decision to institute the Ray Stoyko Memorial Scholarship for two main reasons. First, the Association wished to honour the memory of Ray Stoyko, who had passed away while holding the office of President. Secondly, the Association wished to demonstrate, in a small way, its commitment to the objects of the association—as stated above.

For many years the Association has provided scholarships to graduating students from each of the Winnipeg School Division high schools. The Ray Stoyko Memorial Scholarship is different. It focuses on children of WTA members who have committed themselves to Bachelor of Education programs. That is, each year \$2500 is budgeted to support the full-time enrollment of a member's dependent child (definition of "dependent child" is listed on the application form) in an Education degree program. The first scholarship was awarded in September, 2009.

As stated in Council Policy,

Criteria for the scholarship shall be:

- I. Must be a child of a Winnipeg Teachers' Association member.
- II. Must provide proof of registration as a full-time student in an education certification program.
- III. Academic standing, citizenship, community involvement and volunteer experience will be considered.
- IV. Applicants must complete an application form and must submit an essay (500-1000 words) describing their philosophy of education.
- V. References will be required.
- VI. As part of the application process an interview may be required.

The application form can be found on the WTA website at

<http://wta.mb.ca/documents/RayStoykoMemorialScholarshipApplication.pdf>.

At this time of year, I would remind members whose children meet the application criteria to submit applications for the scholarship. If you know of a colleague to whom this may provide benefit please encourage them to apply. **Applications are due Monday, May 31, 2010 no later than 3:30 PM at the WTA office (202-2639 Portage Ave; FAX: 837-9698).**

We look forward to awarding the scholarship.

Newsletter Updates:

The WTA has created an e-mail distribution list in order to notify members when new editions of the newsletter have been posted on the WTA website. The following schools have not provided a list of their members or their e-mail addresses (either is acceptable.)

Andrew Mynarski, Argyle, John M. King, Norquay, Sister MacNamara and William Whyte

It's not too late to submit school lists.

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.



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 2010 Council meeting:

Andrew Mynarski, Brock Corydon, Carpathia, Children of the Earth, Dufferin, Garden Grove, Gladstone, Grosvenor, Inkster, Student Services, J.B. Mitchell, King Edward, Lab Assistants, LaVerendrye, Luxton, Machray, Norquay, Prairie Rose, Ralph Brown, Robert Sh. Smith, Shaughnessy Park, Sisler, Substitutes, Support Services, Tyndall Park

DEADLINE FOR ARTICLES TO THE MAY NEWSLETTER IS:

May 7th, 2010

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 **Active Teachers** - Sue Lee
The Winnipeg School Division—775-0231

Plan Administrator for **Retired Teachers** - Glenda Shepherd
The Winnipeg Teachers' Association—831-7104

The Winnipeg Teachers' Association

Retirement Reception

2010

Wednesday, June 9th, 2010
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

CriticalThinking Conference

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

I had the great fortune to attend a two day conference about critical thinking, on March 20th and 21st. The workshops I participated in were led by Dr. Enoch Hale, a Fellow of the Foundation and Center for Critical Thinking.

Dr. Hale started the session on Saturday, by focusing on asking questions of ourselves and of our students. He asked us about the intellectual skills we wanted to target with our students, and about the intellectual lesson/insight/ work we might want our students to achieve. He emphasized, that questions we ask our students, and questions they ask, must be very clear. He stated that, a question that is not clearly stated cannot be accurately answered. Dr. Hale also stated, that the first step in intellectual discipline is asking questions. He said the highest form of respect you can give someone, is to ask questions of them. It means you are listening to them, that you value what they have to say, and that you want to learn more from them.

Next, Dr. Hale talked about teacher directed instruction versus student centered instruction. He emphasized that we learn by talking through things and that if you can't teach the content, you don't really know it yet. He challenged us to look at what we currently do to foster higher thinking. Dr. Hale referred to scientists, who begin the study of a topic with a hypothesis. He said students need to ask their own questions, and as soon as they ask questions, they are reasoning through something. Our role, as teachers, is to help students focus on answering the questions they ask, fully.

Dr. Hale shared, that modeling is necessary, but it is not sufficient. Modeling to students caters only to the higher ability students. Our responsibility is to all of our students. He suggested we must teach them how to think critically and have them model this thinking. To teach our students well, to think critically, we must be sure our model for thinking critically is a strong model for our students to follow. Dr. Hale stated that we should challenge students to stop compartmentalizing information, and instead we should encourage them to make connections.

Dr. Hale focused on several frameworks that give a structure to our thinking. He also took us through a series of exercises to help us practice using these frameworks. If our directions are vague, the intellectual moves will be vague. To assist with clarity of instructions, Dr. Hale shared the following framework:

State (key concept)

Elaborate (in other words)

Exemplify (example from your life)

Illustrate (use analogy/metaphor/simile/graph, etc.)

Critical Thinking Conference cont'd.

This framework is something we can use as educators and we can have our students follow it, to clearly demonstrate their thinking.

The participants in the workshops came from a wide variety of backgrounds. Some of those attending were college and university instructors and professors. Others were middle and high school instructors. A few of us were there as elementary teachers. Another framework Dr. Hale shared could be used as a template to assess the quality of any research project or paper. This template applied to all levels of instruction. It is also a template that challenges teachers, to reach a higher level of critical thinking. The template refers to...

The Standards: clarity, accuracy, relevance, logic, breadth, precision, significance, completeness, fairness, and depth.

Critical thinkers routinely apply intellectual standards to the elements of reasoning.

The Elements: purpose, questions, points of view, information, inferences, concepts, implications, assumptions.

As we apply the elements of reasoning we develop intellectual traits.

Intellectual Traits: humility, autonomy, integrity, courage, perseverance, reason, empathy, fair-mindedness.

Dr. Hale stated that critical thinking is a self-directed process, by which we take deliberate steps to think at the highest level of quality. He said that critical thinking is disciplined, self-guided thinking aimed at living a rational life. It is thinking that analyzes thinking.

During the second day of the workshop, participants worked through a series of activities to practice using the templates. Throughout these activities I worked with various educators, from a wide range of teaching experiences. The templates were useful and valid for all of us. We had to demonstrate how we might apply use of the templates to our own teaching situations. It was helpful to work through the templates, in a collaborative fashion.

The conference promised to provide a rich intellectual environment. I was certainly surrounded by a group of intelligent, motivated, and caring educators. Each participant was provided with abundant resources to assist us in reaching a higher order of critical thinking, and to engage students in using systems to engage in critical thinking. I have a variety of booklets and a set of DVDs from the Foundation for Critical Thinking, which I am willing to share with colleagues who are interested.

I would like to thank the Winnipeg Teachers' Association for making this professional development opportunity possible.

Workplace Safety and Health

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

On Saturday, February 20th, 2010, I attended an MTS WSH seminar, with Chris Pammenter, who is an experienced member of the WTA WSH committee.

The seminar featured Dianne Gagnon, an occupational health nurse, from the Manitoba Federation of Labour Occupational Health Centre. Dianne spoke about Health, Safety, and Wellness in the workplace. She introduced participants to the use of body mapping and hazard mapping as tools to identify hazards in our workplaces.

Body mapping is used to collect information about workers' health. The information can assist in assessing possible diseases, illnesses, injuries, aches and pains and other possible health problems. Participants worked through various scenarios, using the body map. We looked at the body area affected, the causes of a problem or complaint, and what can be done about the problem.

In groups, participants drew maps of various worksites. We then assessed the areas in the worksites for health, safety, and wellness concerns. We used coloured dots to identify health concerns such as musculoskeletal/strain/sprain, respiratory/breathing, skin, and other. This mapping certainly made me better aware of concerns I should have about my classroom and what I can change to improve the environment for myself and my students. I know my body is affected by the amount of time I am now required to spend at my classroom computer, for example. I have received a better chair to do this work, but my workspace is not ergonomically correct yet.

Am I responsible for the changes required or is my employer responsible? As I become better informed about Workplace Safety and Health, I realize that we are all responsible. My employer purchased the chair I require to make my workspace better for me, ergonomically, but I had to identify the problem and bring it to the attention of my administrator. Purchasing the chair is a budget item. Other situations at my worksite might not be budget items and require some simple procedures to make the situation healthier. To recognize possible hazards though, I must be aware of them.

Dianne gave a list of health and safety resources available on-line. I have listed them below:

MFL Occupational Health Centre www.mflohc.mb.ca

Workplace Safety and Health Division & SAFE Work <http://www.gov.mb.ca/labour/safety/index.html>

Safety Services Manitoba <http://www.mbsafety.org>

Manitoba Quality Network (QNET) <http://www.qnet.mb.ca>

Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba <http://www.wcb.mb.ca>

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety www.ccohs.ca

Please feel free to contact the WTA WSH committee through the WTA office, with Workplace Safety and Health questions and concerns regarding this article. If you have concerns about health and safety situations in your building, follow protocol by speaking with your administrator or custodian first. Then bring situations to the attention of your WSH representative or committee.

Divisional Staffing Time

By: Dave Najduch, WTA President

At this time every year I recycle an article about The Winnipeg School Division's staffing process. It is our understanding that the WSD will be following a similar process to that which has occurred in previous years.

“**Teacher Staff Vacancy Bulletin**” (The Blue Sheets) will be available in schools on the following dates:

	<i>Bulletins in Schools</i>	<i>Deadline for Applications</i>
1st	Thursday, May 6th, 2010	Monday, May 10th, 2010—12:00 PM
2nd	Tuesday, May 25th, 2010	Thursday, May 27th, 2010—12:00 PM
3rd	Tuesday, June 8th, 2010	Wednesday, June 9th, 2010—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, beginning at 4:00 PM the day prior to the dates provided above or visit your school office for a paper version. Be sure to meet the timeline requirement for the returning of applications provided in the bulletin. It is our understanding that you can also use **Employee Connect** to apply for positions as they are posted.

- **Yes, you can apply for positions!** As a member under permanent contract to the WSD, you are able to apply for any position posted in the bulletins.
- **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.
- **Indicating on a school intention sheet that you wish to remain in the building does not prevent you** from applying for posted positions.

I would encourage individuals thinking about a transfer to “polish up” their resume now so that it is ready to go if a position you are interested in is posted. The resume can be more generic in nature and the covering letter specific to the position you are applying for.

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

The surplus process will also be taking place at this time. The WSD has indicated that surplus declarations should be made **prior** to the first round of job postings, allowing that individual to apply for positions. It is important to remember that as a surplus teacher, the WSD is not 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, I would encourage you to call the WTA office—831-7104 for clarification.