

# WINNIPEG TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

## 2025-2026 EXECUTIVE ELECTION CANDIDATES' BIOGRAPHIES

An election of the WTA Executive will take place on April 15 and 16, 2025, by secret ballot in schools and other workplaces.

The following members have accepted nominations for positions on the WTA Executive as Table Officers. The candidates for the positions of President and Secretary have been elected by acclamation. There are three candidates for Vice-President, one to be elected. There are two candidates for Treasurer, one to be elected.



### **KRISTEN FALLIS – PRESIDENT ELECT**

Kristen Fallis has been serving as the Vice President of the Winnipeg Teachers' Association since January 2022. She is also in her third term as a Member-at-Large on the MTS Provincial Executive. Prior to that, Kristen has experience teaching at all levels of education as a Music specialist and classroom teacher.

As Vice President of the WTA, her portfolio includes Chair of the Bargaining Committee, Public Relations Committee, and Workplace Safety & Health Committee. Kristen has been actively involved with the WTA for 10 years in a variety of roles.

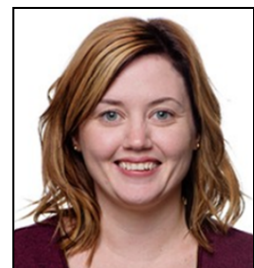
As a Member-at-Large for Provincial Executive, Kristen has served on behalf of MTS members as the Chair of the Group Benefits Standing Committee, Disability Benefits Plan, and a member of the Provincial Bargaining Committee. She also has sat on the Administrative and Support Staff bargaining table team.

Kristen will continue to advocate for the health and well-being of members in her role as President. She will be a strong voice in preparing for bargaining and has a vast array of experience at the table and working on behalf of member's collective bargaining rights. She will continue to act on behalf of members and support their needs.

### **KRISTY FROHWERK – SECRETARY ELECT**

I currently teach Grade 2 at Lord Nelson School. I have been an elementary classroom teacher for the past 16 years with experience teaching in almost every grade from Nursery to Grade 6 and in a support role. At home, I spend my time with my family, many nieces and nephews and partner Colin who is very supportive of everything I do. I am an animal lover and advocate, love my dogs, enjoy gardening and being at the lake in the summer.

Over the past eight years, I've served as a WTA Executive member, including five years as WTA Secretary and six years as a WTA Council Representative. My committee experience includes chairing the Workplace Safety and Health, AGM, and Monitoring committees, as well as co-chairing the DSA committee. I've also been an active member of the AGM, DSA, Group Benefits, WTA bargaining, and 50th Anniversary committees, and served as a Member-at-Large of Executive. Additionally, I've participated in 13 MTS AGMs throughout my tenure. I have enjoyed my time on Executive, learning alongside my colleagues and working on behalf of members. I look forward to the opportunity to serve as a Table Officer and the Secretary in the 2025-2026 year.



### **JEFF KIRKPATRICK – VICE-PRESIDENT CANDIDATE**



A grade 5 and 6 teacher at Carpathia School, Jeff Kirkpatrick has been with the division for 12 years. He was a late bloomer in regard to becoming a teacher and was an Educational Assistant prior to returning to University. Jeff has been a WTA Executive member for the last few years and is passionate about union affairs wanting to make change happen for our members.

He is an advocate for union issues and wants to use his voice as the WTA Vice President to be able to do more. He has learned about Union leadership and relations through MTS Labour School and built understanding of WTA with his work chairing different committees, such as the political action, group benefits and AGM.

He also sits on the MTS Ad Hoc committee reviewing and updating the code of professional conduct.

Jeff is committed to building a better awareness of how the WTA is helping and building more engagement with our members. He wants to advocate for our members at higher levels.

In his spare time Jeff can be found working in his studio making pottery, playing board and tabletop games, as well as engaging in discussions at the local brewhouse.

### **PAUL SHIARO – VICE-PRESIDENT CANDIDATE**

My name is Paul Shiario, and I am running for the position of Vice President of the Winnipeg Teachers Association. I have been a teacher for 21 years; in addition to this, I wear the hats of husband, dad and cat owner.

I have been active with the WTA for 20 years, spending many of them on Executive. During this time, I gained experience in a variety of areas, serving as Chair of the following Committees: AGM, Benefits (Co-chair), Credentials, Health and Safety, Political Action, and Wellness.

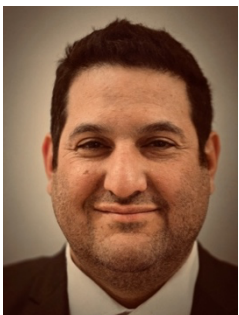
While chair of the Political Action Committee we produced a trustee candidate survey, designed to help inform voters. As Wellness chair, we were able to approve a variety of grants which were of benefit to members. This meaningful type of work made my years as a member of the Executive enjoyable.

My union participation includes attending several AGM's (where I met several colleagues from other Associations) and taking part in a focus group regarding our current MTS contract. These are the types of experiences which would help me in the role of Vice President.

Thank you for your consideration, I hope I can count on your support.



### **SAM ZURZOLO – VICE-PRESIDENT CANDIDATE**



I have been a public-school teacher for 18 years. I have taught in junior and senior high. It was twelve years ago I attended my first WTA meeting and found a group of people passionate about the rights of teachers. I found my place amongst them. Ten years ago, I put my name forward for executive and I have been serving ever since. I served on the finance, wellness, WPHS, Group benefits, bargaining, substitutes, trustee liaison and as a table officer. I sat across from the school division as a member of the table team when we bargained for our collective agreement. Five years ago, I put my name forward as the treasurer. I have chaired our finance committee and managed our investments and budgets. I am a member of the Education Finance

Standing Committee of the MTS. I have been actively involved with the Society through seminars over the summer and during the year.

My goal as the Vice President is to address teacher workloads, build capacity of the association, and work to end the violence our members face. I want to build a better workplace for you. I am here to represent you. Please vote for Sam Zurzolo!

### **KATIE HURST – TREASURER CANDIDATE**

Since becoming a permanent teacher in 2020, I have been actively involved in the Winnipeg Teachers' Association. I have represented Elmwood High School and Faraday School, served as an alternate representative for Faraday and Lord Selkirk Schools, and previously held a Member-at-Large position on the WTA executive. As a member and representative, I have contributed to the Wellness, Political Action, and Equity and Social Justice Committees. During my time on the executive, I chaired the Workplace Health and Safety and Equity and Social Justice Committees, advocating for teachers' rights to a physically and emotionally safe workplace while promoting equity and anti-oppression learning for teachers and WSD staff.



I began my career as an Early Years Performing Arts teacher and later transitioned to Senior Years humanities. I took this leap because I love a challenge and wanted to grow as both a teacher and learner. This change has given me the confidence to serve on the Finance Committee and put my name forward for this role. I hope to earn your support, as I am committed to fiscal responsibility and promoting initiatives that uplift our profession, support public education, and strengthen our community of learners.

### **JON ROMU – TREASURER CANDIDATE**



With 24 years of teaching experience, I am honoured to seek the position of Treasurer for the Winnipeg Teachers' Association. Since 2017, I have served on the Finance Committee, ensuring financial responsibility and stability. My three years on the Executive Committee have deepened my understanding of the challenges educators face, and I am committed to advocating for our profession.

In addition to financial oversight, I have contributed as Distinguished Service Award Chairperson and Reception Committee Chairperson for two years, strengthening connections within our teaching community. These roles have reinforced my belief in recognizing and supporting our colleagues.

I have the experience and dedication necessary to lead the Finance Committee with transparency and fiscal responsibility. As an Executive, I have the opportunity to make a difference in the classrooms of educators who feel bogged down by bureaucracy and politics. Teachers should be free to focus on teaching, shaping, and inspiring the future.

I am committed to serving with integrity and ensuring our Association remains strong. I ask for your support as Treasurer so we can continue to advocate for teachers and protect the future of education.

**The following 16 members have accepted nominations for positions on the WTA Executive as Members at Large, including one Vice-president candidate and two Treasurer candidates. Nine to be elected.**

### **DEAN ARRIGO**

Hello, my name is Dean Anthony Arrigo, and I am running for a position with the WTA executive as a member-at-large.

Before I became a teacher in 2002, I worked at the Real Canadian Superstore as an assistant produce supervisor. I was well-versed with being part of the UFCW union and working with other employees. I realize the importance of unions and how they can be beneficial to those of us in the teaching profession.

If elected, I would like to work more with the substitute committee as I believe subs who have most of the same rights as teachers, have the right to be heard and to have benefits that are deserving that full-time and contract employees currently have.

I have had several teaching contracts within WSD since 2010, mostly as a French Immersion and Basic French teacher. I value the collaboration between all educators within a school and believe and want each student to reach their full potential.



### **GINA CERQUEIRA**

With over 20 years of teaching experience, I have had the privilege of working at Gordon Bell, R.B. Russell, and Kelvin High Schools. My career has been dedicated to the humanities, where I have fostered a love for literature, history, and critical thinking in my students. In addition to my classroom experience, I have served as a school counselor, providing guidance and support to students navigating academic and personal challenges.

My extensive experience in diverse educational settings has equipped me with a deep understanding of the unique needs of students and the importance of creating inclusive and supportive learning environments.

For the past two years, I have served as a WTA representative for Kelvin High School, actively advocating for the interests of my colleagues and contributing to the professional community.

As a potential member-at-large for the Winnipeg Teachers' Association (WTA), I bring a wealth of experience and a commitment to advocating for the well-being and professional development of educators. My collaborative approach, strong interpersonal skills, and dedication to educational excellence make me a valuable asset to the WTA. I am eager to contribute to the ongoing efforts to support teachers and enhance the quality of education in our community.

### **SARAH DUCHARME**

It's time that teachers feel excited and passionate about teaching again, free from the worries and stresses education now holds for us. Are you concerned about violence in schools, lack of substitute teachers, losing preps, sharp reports, and changes in staffing? So am I!

As an advocate, I have been a council representative at 4 of the 5 schools I've worked at and currently sit on the WTA Workplace Safety and Health Committee. Member workload and mental health is a priority for me, which is why I have decided to let my name stand for member-at-large for the Winnipeg

Teachers' Association Executive. In 15 years of teaching early years, and a PBDE, I have had many conversations with colleagues sharing our passions. However, things are now being overshadowed by

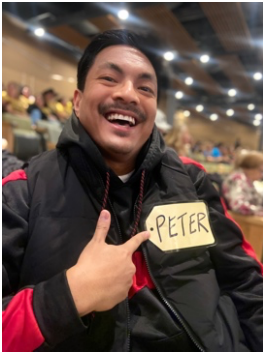




the challenges we face daily in our classrooms. Instead of talking about how to best help our students succeed, we have to navigate ever harsher realities in our schools.

I am running for Executive because teachers need strong advocates during these challenging times, giving voice to what it means to be in education.

### **PETER ESPINOLA**



Teaching in today's world has its challenges. From increased demands and violence to rising burnout, it's more important than ever that we feel supported. That's why I'm running for WTA Executive at Large—to help amplify our voices and ensure our needs are met.

I'm a proud U of W graduate and have taught for 8 years at Dufferin Elementary, an inner-city school. The challenges of working in such a dynamic environment have deepened my understanding of the issues teachers face daily. As the current WTA Rep for our school, I've seen first-hand how clear communication and strong advocacy can make a real difference.

I'm committed to advocating for better working conditions, more equitable support for teachers, and smarter use of our union dues. I want to build stronger engagement among members, ensuring every voice is heard. With provincial bargaining evolving, it's crucial that we unite and work together to protect our profession.

Outside of teaching, I enjoy exploring Winnipeg's best restaurants, sweating off the calories with Thai kickboxing, and escaping on backcountry canoe trips and snowboarding. I'd be honoured to have your support as we work together to build a more engaged and resilient WTA."

### **ALLYSON FEDAK**

I am seeking re-election to the WTA Executive to continue advocating for all members, especially those whose voices are often unheard. As the Anti-Racism and Climate Justice Support Teacher for the Winnipeg School Division, I am committed to equity, inclusion, and meaningful representation.

I have held several leadership roles including council representative, provincial council delegate, chair of the WTA Equity and Social Justice(ESJ) Committee, and on the ESJ Standing Committee for MTS.

Our union must be a strong, proactive voice for all teachers, particularly those from marginalized communities who face systemic barriers in their profession. I believe in a WTA that listens, represents, and takes action to ensure every teacher is supported and valued.

If re-elected, I will continue working to make our union a space where every member—regardless of identity, background, or experience—feels seen, heard, and empowered. I ask for your support to keep advocating for a more just and inclusive WTA.

Outside of my professional commitments I am a dedicated mother of four, spending evenings ensuring their endless appetites for food are satisfied while also taking them to various arts, sports, and social activities.



### **KELLY FRIESEN**



I'm Kelly. I'm currently the LAL/EAL teacher at Collège Churchill High School, but I've taught multiple subjects and grades throughout my 22 year career in the WSD.

I care a lot about teaching and learning. I care about helping my students develop both academic skills and empathy for others. I care about my colleagues—I care that they are supported with the resources and time they need to do their jobs well. I believe deeply that good working conditions for teachers are good learning conditions for students.

I care about protecting and maintaining a strong collective bargaining agreement that ensures all teachers are treated fairly and with respect.

I care about politics, and I'm quite worried about what's going on out there in the political world. I care about the rhetoric that threatens the well-being of some of my students and colleagues—particularly those who are new to Canada, racialized, trans, or otherwise othered.

While I do a lot of caring about politics, education, and the politics of education, I temper that by being in nature, hanging out with my family, reading books, drinking tea, and taking in live music (especially at the Winnipeg Folk Festival).

### **DAVE HARACK**

As the longest serving WTA Executive, David has been passionate about supporting his fellow colleagues through his involvement since he began teaching. He has dedicated time to chairing and sitting on various committees to better the workplace for teachers, including Group Benefits, Teacher Welfare, the Negotiations Table Team and the DSA to name a few. He has been teaching for the past 23 years at Tec Voc High School and has always been helpful with teachers seeking advice either through his direct knowledge or by directing them to the appropriate resources. David credits his mother with his decision to become an educator. She taught for many years and made many positive differences in people's lives, and she inspired him to do the same. An easily approachable and personable man, David has been and continues to be a strong advocate for better working conditions for his colleagues in his role within the WTA. In his free time David enjoys spending it with his partner Lori, their 2 Golden Retrievers Dexter and Sunny, especially at the Lake.



### **SANDY HULL**



Sandy has been a dedicated educator and WSD employee for fifteen years, teaching Home Economics (Family Studies, Foods, and Textiles) and Sociology to grade 7 – 12 students at Sisler High School. She has taken on numerous roles at Sisler, including serving on the Convocation, Valedictorian, and Indigenous Student Services committees, and is a strong supporter of student activities. She also serves on the Sisler CARES committee which encourages staff wellness and positivity. Sandy works to promote an inclusive, supportive environment where everyone can thrive.

Actively involved with WTA for the past six years, Sandy has served on the Annual General Meeting and Workplace Safety and Health committees. She has attended the provincial AGM for the past four years. She is currently on the WTA Executive and is chair of the Distinguished Service Award committee.

Sandy recognizes the diverse needs of teachers, professionally addressing concerns and directing colleagues to appropriate resources for assistance. She understands the importance of collective

bargaining in protecting and advancing teachers' rights. Sandy will continue working to address issues affecting teacher well-being, such as workloads, safety, and benefits, and to ensure that the WTA continues to advocate for and act in the best interests of its members.

#### **KATIE HURST**

*See this candidate's statement above,  
Submitted for the election of the Treasurer.*



#### **DEVIN KING**



Hi everyone! I've had the pleasure of meeting many of you in my time at Elmwood, Harrow, River Heights, Educational Technology Support Services (RIP), Sisler, and the mentorship program at the PLLC (also RIP). Is it unwise to mention how many terminated programs I've been a part of? Probably! Even though those programs are gone (stop mentioning it stop mentioning it), a lesson I learned in those roles is the importance of service, and how in the school system, there aren't many roles that are there to support teachers. The work that I did, at its core, was meant to make better working conditions for the teachers who I worked alongside. I want to bring that same approach in the role of member-at-large.

Can I guarantee that my participation in WTA won't mean it will disband simply because I am there? I cannot. But I absolutely can guarantee that I will stand as an advocate for teachers, ensuring fair working conditions, and pushing for ways teachers can be better served.

I hope that you will afford me the privilege of working in service to you as a Member-at-Large of the WTA.

#### **JEFF KIRKPATRICK**

*See this candidate's statement above,  
Submitted for the election of the Vice-President.*



## **SHAWN KOZARCHUK**



Shawn Kozarchuk is a dedicated and passionate union advocate committed to strengthening workplace rights and fostering a fair, safe, and supportive environment for all members. He currently works at Lord Selkirk Elementary School as a Learning Support Teacher. For several years, he has been the chair of the WTA Executive Nomination and Elections Committee, ensuring a transparent and democratic process, empowering members to have a voice in union leadership. Beyond elections, Shawn plays a key role in shaping the WTA's direction through active involvement in the AGM Committee, Wellness Committee, Bargaining Committee, and Workplace Safety and Health Committee. Whether advocating for mental and physical well-being, negotiating fair contracts, or ensuring a safe and healthy work environment, Shawn is dedicated to protecting and advancing the interests of his colleagues.

Shawn has also been involved with the Manitoba Teachers' Society; he has sat on the Workplace Safety and Health Standing Committee.

With a strong belief in collaboration and proactive leadership, Shawn works tirelessly to build a stronger, more inclusive union that prioritizes member engagement and workplace improvements. He is committed to actively seeking members' input through open communication, surveys and meetings; ensuring that all voices shape our union's priorities and decisions.

## **MELISSA LIVINGSTONE**

I am Melissa Livingstone, and I have taught in the Winnipeg School Division for nine years as an elementary teacher. I know the challenges that come from working in our division and will use my experiences to advocate for all WTA members. I am running to be a Member-at-Large to learn more about the union process and advocate for our members.

My time at council meetings has equipped me with the knowledge and experience to effectively represent our collective interests. I am passionate about the political landscape and its impact on education, and I strive to stay informed and engaged in these matters.

Teacher wellbeing is a top priority for me. I understand the challenges we face, including violence, morale issues, and staffing shortages. I am dedicated to addressing these concerns and working towards solutions that benefit all WTA members.

I believe in the power of unity and collaboration. By bringing together teachers, SSSTs, and administrators, we can create a stronger union that benefits all. I am committed to listening to our members' concerns, respecting their perspectives, and advocating for their needs.

Thank you for your support. Let's work together to create positive change for our community





## JENNIE MATTEIS



My name is Jennie Matteis, I am a retired teacher and I am currently a Substitute Teacher for the Winnipeg School Division. I taught for 30 years before retiring and I was a member of the WTA Executive table officer team for 5 years, and a Member at Large for 20 years.

I have had a variety of chairing and sitting on WTA committees. I really enjoyed working for the members and try to make a difference. I am again running for the position of member at large because I feel that I can make a difference. I am not afraid to speak up and being and being retired, it makes it much easier to do. I feel that we are coming up with quite a few challenges that the division is throwing at our teachers and I want to be there to advocate for our teachers. Please consider voting for me. I promise I will not let you down. Thank you.

## JON ROMU

*See this candidate's statement above,  
Submitted for the election of the Treasurer.*



## DAN WALDRON



My name is Dan Waldron, and I have been an English teacher at St. John's High School for ten years. I've also been involved in extracurriculars, including coaching basketball. In my free time, I enjoy live music, playing and coaching basketball, and board games with friends.

For the past five years, I have served on the WTA Executive, chairing or co-chairing committees such as DSA, AGM, Group Benefits, and a Group Benefits Ad-Hoc Committee while contributing to several others. I am running for re-election as a Member at Large, bringing focus, determination, and experience to the role.

I am passionate about WTA's role in supporting educators. Now more than ever, teachers' concerns must be heard at both the divisional and provincial levels. Each year, we are asked to do more, and our voices must be amplified during these transitions. Teacher safety and well-being are critical to ensuring we remain effective professionals. I ask for your vote to continue advocating for these important issues.