

The Apple Core

Nov 2022

Upcoming Events

Nov. 15- PD Committee Meeting
Nov. 16 - Early Dismissal
Nov. 18- K-8 Admin Day/9-12 PD Day
Nov. 18- CBSC
Nov. 18/19- Indigenous Education Seminar
Nov. 25/26- Equity and Social Justice Seminar
Nov. 26- Holodomor Memorial Day
Nov. 29- Regional Presidents' Meeting
Nov. 30- Final day for resignations and retirements for January
Dec. 1 - Provincial Executive Meeting
Dec. 1/2 - K-8 SICs
Dec. 2 - 9-12 PD Day
Dec. 6 - GVTA Executive Meeting
Dec. 7 - Noon Dismissal
Dec. 12 - Local Leadership Learning Session
Dec. 13 - GVSD School Board Meeting
Dec. 20 - December Apple Core Released
Dec. 20 - PD Meeting
Dec. 21 - Early Dismissal
Dec. 22- Jan 4 - Schools Closed
Jan. 5 - First Day Back
Jan. 5- Joel Swaan becomes GVTA President
Jan. 10- GVTA Executive Meeting
Jan. 10- GVSD School Board Meeting
Jan. 16 - Local Leadership Learning Session
Jan. 17 - January Apple Core Released

President's Address

While it has been a busy month with questions ranging in nature from religious exercises to workload to the historic union action in Ontario that challenged and defeated Doug Ford's Bill 28, I wanted to take a moment to analyze and discuss a persisting local issue. It is an issue that impacts many teachers and has gone on for years: the sub shortage.

Specialty, resource, and guidance teachers were used to fill unfilled sub vacancies over 90% of the time according to information we have received from our GVTA Coverage Beyond Regular Duty form. These individuals have seen no additional compensation for meeting this need and it almost always pushes larger quantities of work outside of the workday. In short, filling sub vacancies takes away the professional time usually spent on regular tasks and student interactions, and pushes many work tasks into what little personal time teachers do have. This has occurred over 47 times to teachers according to our data. Many of the specialty, resource, and guidance teachers that I have had the opportunity to discuss this topic with are often glad to help out so that classroom colleagues are not left to fill this need. However, every single conversation that I have had on this topic has referenced the sub shortage.

I would like to suggest that GVSD does not have a shortage of subs compared to other school divisions.

Please know that I am not saying that we do not have vacancies that go unfilled due to a lack of trying to get substitutes to take positions. This is certainly a reality that leads to increased workload to many of our members. However, it is not due to a lack of subs—it is due to a lack of pay and in how we book subs. With the current list of substitute teachers available to GVSD sitting at slightly over 150, we have almost enough substitute teachers to replace half of the teaching staff in our division on a given day. To contextualize the size of our list, I have been told that there are some divisions with sub lists shorter than 10 names long at certain times in the year.

You may then be asking, "if we have so many subs, why do we experience such a shortage?" This is a very logical question. One major answer is that many of our subs are on the sub list to help out instead of as a necessary stream of income. That is to say our substitutes are more intrinsically motivated by their love of teaching and their desire to help in our education system than they are by the pay. This is a double-edged sword as it means that our substitutes are high-quality individuals but it also means that there are many subs that will not work more than a few days in a month.

To increase the amount of labour in a field, there needs to be a properly balanced incentive to perform the work. The largest incentive GVSD offers is pay. Substitute teachers are paid \$164 a day gross in GVSD. This is roughly 47% of a first-year teacher's daily salary and is a competitive rate in Manitoba outside of Winnipeg (where it is closer to 55%). However, unless one can guarantee subbing for the majority of the school year or having a substantial second source of income, substitutes run the risk of living in poverty with gross incomes below Manitoba's low income cut-off. This risk is an obvious deterrent to anyone looking to trade their labour for wages.

Comparing our rates to those outside of Manitoba shows that our provincially competitive rate is far below the market price. For example, Ontario pays their subs roughly 75% of a first-year teacher's daily salary and Saskatchewan pays 70-100%+ of a first-year teacher's daily salary (depending on the school board and the sub's qualifications). While we may be outcompeting our neighbours in Morden (\$159.27), our rates undervalue the labour of substitutes across the province. In a tight labour market where our province is graduating fewer and fewer teachers every year, we should expect to see sustained sub shortages for years across Manitoba. Without any change in practice, this means we will face sustained issues in filling daily vacancies. We will see principals, VPs, resource teachers, guidance teachers, specialty teachers, and classroom teachers filling these vacancies more and more frequently in the years to come unless something changes.

Fortunately, we have seen some change in GVSD with the introduction of some supply teachers (sometimes referred to as a full-time sub on contract). These supply teachers are required to work somewhere in the division every day but at a pay rate significantly above 47% of a first-year teacher's salary. Our current issue is that we tend to hire these positions months into the school year because the provincial government is currently funding education with one-time infusions of cash and not with reliable and sustainable provincial funding. By waiting months to offer these positions, teachers have been covering vacancies for months. This creates an environment where some teachers fear taking an absence because they know what it could mean for their colleagues at their school. Hiring these positions earlier in the year will help mitigate the multiple issues caused by our unfilled subbing positions.

In conclusion, we cannot expect to pay our subs proportionally half of our provincial neighbours and expect this sub shortage to get better any time soon. While supply teacher positions are not the only solution to what is a more complex issue of unfilled sub positions, they have been a solution that has worked to help fill a vital gap in the teacher labour force here in GVSD. Supply teachers and substitute teachers ensure that our teaching staff can do the work that they were hired to do without having to add a second job during the school day. As we face a new education funding model, a new provincial agreement, and a tight and declining labour force of certified teachers, it is important that we understand what is creating the sub shortage and that we continue to make supply teacher positions a priority in our local divisional funding so we can ensure the wellness and sustainable workloads of all our members.

In solidarity,

Mike Urichuk

GVTApres@MBteach.org

Social & Teacher Wellness

By: Brandy Springer



GVTA wants to take some time to thank Brenda Richer for all of her hard work and commitment over the past few years as chair of Social & Teacher Wellness. She's done an amazing job of putting on events and planning especially with the restrictions presented by the pandemic. Thanks for everything Brenda!

If you have any activities or events you'd like to see happen this year, please feel free to reach out .

Garden Valley Teachers' Association members work on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe, and the homeland of the Métis nation. GVTA respects the Treaties that were made on this territory.

15-Minute Egg Roll in a Bowl



Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 knob of ginger, minced
- 1 teaspoon Chinese five-spice
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- Chili paste to taste
- 1 pound ground pork
- 5-6 cups shredded cabbage or coleslaw mix
- 3 large carrots, sliced
- Rice and green onions for serving

1. Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the garlic and ginger and saute until fragrant.
2. Add the five-spice, soy sauce, chili paste, and pork. Break apart until the meat is browned and cooked through.

3. Add the coleslaw mix and carrots. Toss until the vegetables are tender-crisp.

4. Serve over rice, with green onions and Sriracha if you like that kinda thing.

Don't Forget to Remember: It's All Connected

By: Melanie Urichuk

As the snow falls and the visible change of season allows us to start dreaming of twinkling lights, snowy skates, and cozy movie marathons, it seems as though time starts to blur in the hurried countdown to the winter holidays.

We feel the pressure of planning our own family celebrations, of organizing classroom logistics for crafts, concerts, and curricular content, and for elementary teachers, the “joyful” extra challenge of trying to teach kids to put on and off the many layers of their winter gear on their own (and relatively quickly).

And all too easily, we get swept up in the rush.

Of course, the rush can be exciting! There is so much we can look forward to. But the rush can interfere with our ability to pause, to enjoy, and to reflect.

Each holiday that passes can offer an infusion of energy, and its novelty helps break up the monotony of cold, Manitoba winters. But some days are intended to be observed with active commemoration rather than a passive respectfulness. This has always felt like the core of Remembrance Day for me.

Every year for as long as I can remember, I have sat solemnly in front of my TV and watched the Remembrance Day ceremony in Ottawa with my family. I am the grandchild of a police officer, and my family always spoke very highly of the role that the Canadian Armed Forces played in our world history. Even as I personally have come to learn more about the many controversies that can surround war and the many roles of the military in our world, it has become clearer to me each year that most people are just trying their best to figure out how they can help people.

The many perspectives that are held surrounding Remembrance Day even just in our local community can feel at odds with one another - a potential source of conflict to avoid discussing.

But conversations like these can be had with care. There doesn't have to be a "correct" perspective. We can acknowledge the systemically racist and shameful treatment of our BIPOC veterans both during and upon their return from the world wars while also acknowledging that mental health supports need to be readily accessible to all soldiers. We can agree with Desmond Tutu's statement that neutrality supports the oppressor, while also believing that it took great courage for conscientious objectors to hold fast to their Anabaptist principles of pacifism. We can condemn violence, while also affirming that Ukraine has the right to defend itself using force. These ideas do not have to be completely at odds.

We don't diminish our respect for veterans by making room for nuance as we learn to approach opposing beliefs with curiosity rather than condemnation. In fact, I would suggest that deepening understanding of how difficult and complex our role in history has been is one of the best possible ways to honour the gifts of peace and safety that we as Canadians have been lucky enough to receive.

The grace we offer one another will also be important as we interrogate and solidify our own beliefs - whatever they are.

So as we move forward into the rush, I encourage you to pause before you leave the ideas of Remembrance Day in November. What will you take forward with you into the rest of the year? What perspectives do you hope to consider more fully through next year's observances?

Remembrance Day is not simply a moment to pause and be grateful, but rather an opportunity to fulfill a promise. The words "Never Again" seem to have fallen away from some folks' minds when we commemorate Remembrance Day. That promise requires an active engagement with difficult conversations and uncomfortable facts that we might prefer to forget. Too often we speak of war as something that occurred long ago, rather than grappling with the work that remains to be done in our world today.

But we know that ignoring the violence facing children in Iran, Ukraine, Afghanistan and all around the world does not make it go away. So I would ask that before you put Mariah Carey or Michael Bublé on a loop for the next 6 weeks, ask yourself how you are prepared to make our world safer, kinder, and more beautiful. Maybe it's asking your kids to pick out an additional present to be donated. Maybe it's committing yourself to reading up on a current world event so you can form your own opinion. Maybe it's simply taking an extra breath before you hurry to respond to a differing voice.

"It can be overwhelming to witness/experience/take in all the injustices of the moment; the good news is that they're all connected. So if your little corner of work involves pulling at one of the threads, you're helping to unravel the whole cloth." - Ursula Wolfe-Rocca

Don't forget to remember: it's all connected, all year round.

Resources to help offer diverse perspectives on Remembrance Day:

Valour Road Heritage Minute: <https://youtu.be/Tao7ma4jxUQ>

Sergeant Tommy Prince Heritage Minute: <https://youtu.be/4RrtGg3KnR4>

Tom Longboat Heritage Minute: <https://youtu.be/nniCNm19mAQ>

Winkler & District Cenotaph Information: <http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/sites/winklerwarmemorial.shtml>

Interviews with GVSD Teacher Lieutenant Colonel Mark Wilson <https://www.pembinavalleyonline.com/articles/winkler-set-to-remember-at-the-pw-enns-centennial-concert-hall-for-remembrance-day>

<https://pembinavalleyonline.com/articles/winkler-reservist-earns-lieutenant-colonel-rank-with-support-of-family-community>



Empowering Students to Make Change!

Want to do more for the people in your community? Could you and your students create something unique that would make a real difference for those affected by poverty, racism or one of countless other social justice issues?

Yes, you can make that difference with a Manitoba Teachers' Society Youth Service Grant (YSG) of up to \$1,000. It's our way to help you empower students to make change and develop socially conscious young leaders.

Each grant is approved and funded by the Society and can be focused on racism, poverty, the environment, 2SLGBTQIA+ issues or a social justice issue of your choice. It can dovetail perfectly with your youth in philanthropy, community and social activism student groups.

You can keep us – and your colleagues across the province – updated by social media posts along the way.

Every YSG:

- is focused on anti-racism, anti-poverty or a social justice issue of your choice,
- has a quick turnaround (a maximum of 90 days),
- incorporates a service component,
- directly benefits your community, and
- is not affiliated with any political party.

To be eligible the project must:

- be led and created by K-12 youth from any public school in Manitoba – under the guidance of their teacher(s),
- be self-initiated,
- start and finish in 90 days or fewer,

- have a positive impact on the community,
- have a service component or activity,
- be documented with reasonable frequency on social media,
- be summarized in a final report within 15 days of project completion – with receipts from all purchases, and
- be carried out safely by following all Manitoba public health guidelines and policies specific to your school division.

The project cannot:

- solely be a fundraiser or generate profit for the students hosting the project or an organization,
- charge a fee/ticket or request mandatory donations to access the project,
- pay an honorarium to youth or their family members or the core volunteer team,
- be affiliated with a political party (all projects must be non-partisan),
- use funds to cover purchase prior to project approval.

Applicants must:

- identify an issue, propose a solution and implement with their communities,
- donate any equipment bought for use during the project to your school or a community organization after the project is finished,
- submit a mandatory report, including expense receipts to The Manitoba Teachers' Society within 15 days of completing your project.

Note: Grant funds will only be released upon receipt of report and receipts.

[Application form available here for 2022-23](#)

NOTE: All funds for MTS YSGs will flow directly to supervising teachers.

EDUCATION FINANCE \$



ADEQUATE FUNDING

Since 2016, public education funding has fallen far behind inflation.

The Government of Manitoba is distributing rebate cheques to the tune of \$350 million in 2022 and \$450 million in 2023*. Teachers want to see that money go into classrooms, not mailboxes.



EQUITABLE FUNDING

School divisions should have the resources necessary to respond to the needs of students.

Equitable funding for school divisions should not mean that school divisions are to be equitably underfunded.



STABLE & PREDICTABLE FUNDING

Teachers want to see stable and predictable year-over-year growth in public education funding that meets the needs of students.



RESET, NOT RETURN

Recommendations for supporting teacher mental health and wellness



The Problem: Educators have gone above and beyond during the pandemic, leaving many burnt out and with little time to prioritize their mental health and well-being. The result? University of Winnipeg researchers Sokal, Babb and Trudel have shown that Manitoba teachers have a higher rate of burnout compared to their Canadian counterparts. According to CTF researchers Rogers and Grant, almost 69 per cent of teachers were concerned about their mental health and well-being. Furthermore, 97 per cent reported increased mental/emotional workload/job demands.

Why does this matter? To effectively support the recovery of the public education system from the impacts of the pandemic, the mental health and wellness needs of educators must be addressed.

The health and wellness of educators are directly linked to their ability to support their students. In many cases, educators are the first point of contact for students requiring support. Left unaddressed, mental health and wellness concerns will negatively affect the already dwindling supply of certified educators.

What can we do?

- Acknowledge the toll the pandemic has taken on educators. Consider a survey for staff to identify what supports and programs they would find most helpful. Then conduct regular check-ins and surveys on these measures throughout the school year to gauge what is and is not working.
- Work to reduce the stigma of mental health concerns by making mental health resources more visible and easier to access.
- Look for ways to support teachers who access mental health supports by normalizing seeking help and making it easier to attend.
- Increase time in school for covered mental health check-ins by principals and vice-principals. Provide mental health awareness training for school leaders to make these check-ins more effective. Provide training for school leaders to effectively assess what their staff needs because one size does not fit all in mental health e.g. <https://careforallineducation.com/event-directory/>
- Build time into staff meetings or establish other regular check points throughout the year to discuss best practices for mental health and new mental health and wellness opportunities and resources.
- Provide PD, resources and guidance to cope with new challenges such as the slowed emotional maturity of students caused by the pandemic.
- Within the framework of their position, allow thriving teachers to have choice in what they emphasize and how they teach. Give struggling teachers more support, such as mentors or peer supports.
- Recognize that it is an unrealistic expectation to return to the way it was before the pandemic. The world has changed, and so have the students and educators. Instead, focus on resetting to meet the current needs of students and staff.
- Hire additional support staff. This will help relieve educators' stress and reduce their workloads.
- "Accept that life is different now. Keep calm and carry on. Reset, not return" Dr. Stan Kutcher (2020).

FIRST NATIONS SOLDIERS *in WWI*

"Close to 4,000 members of the Canadian Expeditionary Force were of [Indigenous] descent" (Canadian War Museum)

[They] were not Canadian citizens and not subject to conscription efforts. Regardless, they volunteered and stood as allies with their settler brothers — nation to nation — in defence of the land and our collective freedoms. (Peters, 2014)



**MICHEL ACKBEE, SNIPER
THUNDER BAY BAND**



**CORPORAL FRANCIS
PEGAHMAGABOW**



At the Battle of Mount Sorrel, Corporal Pegahmagabow captured a large number of German prisoners and was awarded the Military Medal. He was awarded a bar to his Military Medal during the Battle of Passchendaele... and a second bar for actions during the Battle of Amiens. (Canadian War Museum) As a sniper in WW I, [he] was deadly accurate. The Ojibway war hero, from the Wasauksing First Nation, faced poverty and persecution when he returned to Canada. (CBC)



**INDIGENOUS
SOLDIERS OF THE
CANADIAN
EXPEDITIONARY
FORCE (CEF) ALONG WITH
ELDERS**

"First Peoples troops left a remarkable record of wartime accomplishment. Several were commissioned as officers, and many served as battle-hardened platoon leaders and combat instructors. At least 50 were decorated for bravery on the battlefield. Many acquired near-legendary status as scouts and snipers, drawing on pre-war hunting skills and wilderness experience." (Sheffield, 2019)



SERGEANT TOMMY PRINCE

Sgt. Tommy Prince (centre), from Brokenhead Ojibway Nation, served in WWII and in Korea with the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. His cunning and bravery earned him a dozen medals, including battle honours for service in Korea with the PPCLI. (PPCLI Museum and Archives in Calgary)