

The Apple Core

Jan 2026

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President's Address:

On January 13, MTS President Lillian Klausen and MTS Vice President Joel Swaan visited several schools in Garden Valley. Lillian attended part of the Principals' Council meeting to hear what is happening in our schools across the division before visiting classrooms in Border Valley School, JR Walkof, Southwood, Hochfeld, and GVC. At the end of the school day, Lillian was able to hear from several members at a meet and greet at GVC Tec before our monthly GVTA meeting.

In our travels throughout the day, we discussed the many realities that members in our school division live every day. In every interaction, Lillian sought to really hear the concern and collect perspectives so that she can include GVTA members in her advocacy on behalf of members province wide.

Thank you to Lillian and Joel for visiting and to our Members for welcoming them into our schools. Stronger connections between GVTA and MTS helps improve public education, the teaching profession, Member welfare, and the building of more harmonious relations between school divisions and Members.

In Solidarity,
 Mike Urichuk
president@gvta.mbteach.org



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.

Apple Core Readership Contest:

Congratulations to Heather Distefano who was the winner of our December readership contest! As the winner of our monthly draw, Heather will receive a \$25 gift card to the local business of her choice!

For January's contest, send an email with the subject line "January Apple Core Contest" to president@gvta.mbteach.org. Include in the email the maximum number of sick leave days that a Member in GVSD can accrue. Consider Article 7.01 clause 5 on page 35 of the PDF version of the [Collective Agreement](#).

Entries received on or before February 4, 2026 will be entered to win a \$25 gift card to the local business of your choice!

MTS Provincial Council Preparations:

As we begin the second half of the 2025/26 school year, GVTA starts to focus on elections and the MTS Provincial Council.

Elections for the MTS Provincial Executive have commenced with the call for nominations on January 14, 2026. The following positions must be filled for 2026 – 2028:

- One (1) position for Member-at-Large Indigenous
- Five (5) positions for Members-at-Large

The **deadline** for nominations is **Saturday, March 1, 2026 at 4:00 p.m.**

On a Local level, nominations to the GVTA Executive will open in February.

MTS Provincial Council is where resolutions are made to amend MTS bylaws & policies, elections take place for the MTS Provincial Executive, and where annual MTS fees are set. MTS also grants its highest awards at Provincial Council, namely:

- Honourary Membership Award
- Life Membership Award
- 1922 Award (Service to the Teaching Profession)

If you know of a teacher or non-teacher that has contributed significantly to the teaching profession or the mission of MTS, please consider nominating them for one of the above awards. Find more information here.

Each year there are dozens of resolutions to amend MTS bylaws & policies at the MTS Provincial Council. GVTA is considering bringing forward a resolution to take a GVTA procedure province wide. In GVTA, substitute teachers are provided with release time support when participating in union work. That is, a School Day spent doing union work is compensated by the division as if the Member worked in the division on that School Day. The union then reimburses the division for the release time provided. While this is the practice in GVTA, the rest of the province only provides this release time support to permanent and term contract teachers. If this resolution were to pass at the MTS Provincial Council, it would ensure substitutes have equal access to release time supports when participating in union work across the province.

Federal Student Loan Forgiveness for Educators

As of December 31, 2025, teachers and clinicians working in remote and rural communities, qualify for federal student loan forgiveness. Thank you to the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) for this successful campaign in extending this campaign to educators. **Winkler and all other GVSD communities qualify as rural locations for this program.**

Under this program, teachers and clinicians can receive forgiveness of up to \$30 000 over the course of 5 years

if they work in a rural/remote area. The annual loan forgiveness amount for eligible teachers will be:

- Year 1: \$4,000
- Year 2: \$5,000
- Year 3: \$6,000
- Year 4: \$7,000
- Year 5: \$8,000

Teachers who have worked 10 consecutive months as of December 31, 2025* (or later) and meet all other eligibility criteria can apply by mail using the following form: [Application for Canada Student Loan Forgiveness](#). Paper applications will be processed after March 16, 2026. It is expected that by mid-March 2026, educators will be able to apply online.

Once you have worked in an eligible occupation for 10 consecutive months, you have 90 days to apply for the benefit.

*Currently, due to the requirement for 10 months of prior consecutive work, educators may not be eligible to apply until **June 2026**. CTF is seeking answers and solutions to this possible delay in eligibility. Despite this regulatory issue, we recommend that members apply for loan forgiveness at their earliest convenience.

Please note that applications may be rejected given the current work period regulations. Members who receive rejections are encouraged to email the CTF/FCE at cslf-erpec@ctf-fce.ca so that we may track this issue and continue to advocate for regulatory improvements.

For more information, teachers can visit the [CTF website](#) or contact the National Student Loans Service Centre (NSLSC) at 1-888-815-4514 or [through their website](#).

PD On Reconciliation:

In Altona, Tuesday, Jan 20, we have a rare local-ish chance to hear Niigaan Sinclair in Altona, Rhineland Pioneer Ctre, 7 PM. Niigaan Sinclair is an Indigenous writer, mentor, activist, and educator. He has roots in Peguis FN. He calls us to live in our treaty relationship, and to continue the work of Truth and Reconciliation. This event is free, open to all. This is short notice, but well worth making plans.

For anyone interested in our Residential Schools History, the documentary “Sugarcane” is the subject of a viewing party on Jan 22, 7 PM, at St. Pauls United Church, Morden. Free admission. Discussion to follow. Sugarcane examines the intergenerational trauma resulting from the Residential School at William’s Lake, B.C. <https://webmail2.mymts.net/service/home/~/?auth=co&id=125476&part=2&timeStamp=1768357889216>

ESJ Event April 21

Save the date! Dr. Izzedin Hawamda is coming to Winkler! He will be presenting to GVTA members on Tuesday, April 21 from 4-6pm. Supper will be provided for all attendees.

About Dr. Hawamda: Izzeddin Hawamda- was born and raised in the West Bank, Palestine. He currently serves as the Anti-Racist Education Professional Learning Initiative Coordinator with Louis Riel, River East Transcona, and Winnipeg School Divisions. Izzeddin has completed his PhD in Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Manitoba. Izzeddin has been actively speaking about the power of dialogue and the importance of sharing, listening, and respecting diverse perspectives and narratives. Izzeddin has been telling stories of Palestine publicly using storytelling as an approach to bring communities together.

The workshop is called, “Stories for Learning and Healing.”

Keep your eyes peeled for more information regarding sign up leading up to the date!



INTERNATIONALLY EDUCATED TEACHERS WORKSHOP

Are you a teacher who did not attend elementary or secondary school in Canada as a student?

This session aims to support internationally educated teachers working in Manitoba public schools in their socio-professional integration. Access to funding is available for MTS members from equity-deserving groups to attend this event.

**JANUARY 31, 2026
9:00 A.M. - 3:30 P.M.**

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