

The Apple Core

Feb 2026

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President's Address:

Hello GVTA Members,

On Feb. 10, 2026, the community of Tumbler Ridge, BC lived through Canada's second worst school shooting in history. GVTA has expressed condolences alongside the Manitoba Teachers' Society, Canadian Teachers' Federation, and many other teacher organizations across Canada.

As Tumbler Ridge seeks healing, I am glad to see support of all kinds pouring into that community. It is important to continue to keep the conversation on remembering those whose lives have been lost even as the public seeks further answers to make sense of the chaos. Honouring those who we lose is a tradition that predates human existence yet continues to this day. The act of honouring our dead serves us in working through our emotions and by providing opportunity for condolence, empathy, and benevolence that helps to build a stronger community.

This last month, GVTA formalized an agreement with the Winkler Community Foundation to establish the GVTA Student Memorial Fund. This is a fund designed to help recognize and honour students who die while enrolled in GVSD schools. This fund will provide some financial assistance to support families if they choose to honour the memory of their child through a special project. Some examples of what funding could be used towards include the creation of an outdoor classroom, a tree being planted in a public place, or a donation to a charity of the family's choosing. The goal is to make sure that teachers are part of the village that helps a grieving family as they suffer a loss.

While we will not be publicly promoting disbursements from the GVTA Student Memorial Fund, we do need GVTA Members to be aware of it. This is because without your awareness that the fund exists, the fund will not be able to be accessed by those it desires to serve. So, if your classroom or school loses a student, please contact president@gvta.mbteach.org so that we can help honour the lives of students lost in our locality.

In solemn 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 Heidi Franz who was the winner of our January readership contest! As the winner of our monthly draw, Heidi will receive a \$25 gift card to the local business of her choice!

For February's contest, send an email with the subject line "February Apple Core Contest" to president@gvta.mbteach.org. Include in the email the base principal allowance in Garden Valley as of Feb. 1, 2026. Consider Appendix 4 on page 193 of the PDF version of the [Collective Agreement](#).

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

Resolutions to MTS Provincial Council

Every year GVTA sends delegates to the MTS Provincial Council. The MTS Provincial Council is the highest authority for conducting the affairs of the Society and meets once annually. This annual meeting is 3 days where MTS Members from across the province meet to review the work of MTS in the past year; consider initiatives, actions, and amendments to various guiding documents; and determine the budget along with all the required fees and rates for disability plans.

Every February, GVTA determines which resolutions we will put forward for the MTS Provincial Council to consider. This year, we approved sending forward two for Provincial Council to consider:

1. An action resolution to adopt the practice of setting the Society fee as a percentage of gross earnings excluding allowances
2. A policy resolution clarifying release time reimbursement rates

The full wording of these resolutions is included in the Apple Core. If you have any feedback, we would love to hear it! Please submit any feedback you have to president@gvta.mbteach.org

Education Funding Announcement Impact in GVSD

On February 9, 2026, the Manitoba Government made its [education funding announcement](#). In this announcement, the government highlighted a provincial funding increase of 3.5%. However, this does not tell the local story.

Pembina Valley Online provided some decent coverage of what this will look like locally in their story about this being a [hard budget year for GVSD](#).

The province is providing an increase of 2.2% on the provincial dollars that they send GVSD. However, [inflation in 2025 was 2.7%](#) according to a bulletin the province put out the same day that they announced their education funding. GVSD has seen an increased enrollment over the 2025-26 school year of over 3%. The province has legislated a reading screening tool which takes time and money to conduct. Demands on teachers have increased, costs have increased, student populations have increased, and yet, fewer provincial dollars will be provided to meet the needs of students in our schools.

In broad strokes, the government is asking our school division to cut staffing/programming or to significantly raise local taxes. It would take roughly a 12% increase of local tax dollars to simply maintain current staffing and student support. Doing so would require our local area to accept the responsibility of funding over 42% of our school budgets when they have been historically tasked with funding closer to 33%. This year, several school boards around the province will need to determine whether this is an equitable distribution of responsibility as they set their budgets.

While I respect the difficult decision that GVSD must make during this budget cycle, I want to make sure that we know that the decision of figuring out where to cut is not a one and done decision for teachers. As teachers, we live with the daily question of how to meet the needs of our students when provided with inadequate funding and support. The emotional labour of teachers is directly and prominently impacted by making these decisions throughout the year. This looks different across the division but includes managing class sizes above

the provincially recommended size, preparing several simultaneous lessons to meet the various needs within a class, having caseloads so large that students are not getting the time that would best meet their needs, or by living with an enduring guilt that it is the teacher's job to close the gap between what is funded and what is needed for each student.

Regarding GVSD's call for a comprehensive review of the education funding model, I think that this is logical. The existing model for education funding has not been substantially changed in decades. This dated model leaves significant capability of achieving adequate education revenue up to each school division's demographics within their tax base while the largest component of school division expenditures is determined at the provincial level. Why should the system used to raise funds for a provincial responsibility be so dependent on municipal zoning and demographics while the expenditures are set provincially? It seems similar to requiring every household to pay the same flat dollar amount for municipal taxes without accounting for their substantial differences in size and ability to pay.

Education is the responsibility of the provincial government. Accordingly, MTS calls on the provincial (not the municipal) government to provide stable, predictable, and adequate funding for education. However, the province seems satisfied to meet only 2/3rds of the request by leaving out "adequate". Going forward, GVTA hopes for the provincial government to take their responsibility more seriously in ensuring adequate education funding for our students.

Notice of Policy Change

The GVTA Executive passed a policy motion at the February 2026 executive meeting that stated as follows:

"That at the September GVTA Executive Meeting, photographs of GVTA executive members will be taken to be distributed to school buildings."

If you have any feedback about this policy, please do not hesitate to contact president@gvta.mbteach.org

GVTA Nominations 2026-2027

It is time once again to announce our Call for Nominations for candidates to serve on next year's GVTA Executive! There is no need for prior experience, only a desire to learn more about the role of the Manitoba Teachers' Society and our local Association as well as a willingness to serve for the greater good of your colleagues.

Please contact Karla Rootsart if you are:

Planning to continue in your current GVTA role. (Note: GVTA does not have term limits) OR

Considering an executive position – self-nominations are welcomed OR

Aware of a person/s that you wish to nominate – just be sure that you have their prior approval with an indication of their willingness to let their name stand.

We are seeking individual candidates for the following...

President – (Please note the specific timelines for this position)

- Please submit your President nominee/s by **4:00pm – Thursday March 12, 2026.**
- If an election is required, it will be held Thursday, March 26, 2026 by secret ballot. The winner of the election will be announced on March 27th.

Nominations for the following executive positions are also open at this time. Nominations should be received by Noon – Monday, May 25, 2026. Elections will be held at the GVTA Annual General Meeting on Tuesday May 26, 2026 with nominations "from the floor" also being accepted at that time.

- Vice-President
- Treasurer
- Secretary
- Collective Bargaining Chair & Collective Bargaining Co-Chair
- Education Finance Chair & Education Finance Co-Chair
- Employee Benefits Chair & Employee Benefits Co-Chair

- Equity and Social Justice Chair& Equity and Social Justice Co-Chair
- Indigenous Education Chair & Indigenous Education Co-Chair
- Professional Development Chair & Professional Development Co-Chair
- Public Relations Chair & Public Relations Co-Chair
- Social and Teacher Wellness Chair & Social and Teacher Wellness Co-Chair
- Workplace Safety & Health Liaison

GVTA EXECUTIVE POSITIONS	DESCRIPTIONS IN BRIEF
President	Call, preside, provide notice, and create agendas for all Executive meetings and general meetings; attends Association Standing Committee, GVSD Board, Society, Presidents' Council, and South Central Region President meetings as necessary; make reports at all Executive and General meetings; act as a liaison between the Association and the Society; execute a recognition for retiring teachers as needed; deal with personnel issues; attend negotiation sessions between the Association and Garden Valley School Division; work with Treasurer to create the Association budget
Vice-President	Assist the president as needed; take full charge of the affairs of the Association during the absence of the President.
Treasurer	Keep an accurate record and take charge of all funds collected; prepare a financial report for each Executive and general meeting; meet with the President in budget preparation; prepare all necessary reports for the yearly financial review; present the completed review at a general meeting; be one of the co-signers to access Association accounts.
Secretary	Keep an accurate record of all proceedings of the Association; distribute agendas and minutes of Executive meetings, special meetings, and general meetings.
Collective Bargaining	Represent GVTA at all regional and provincial bargaining meetings with The Society; survey the local members when appropriate before regional bargaining seminars; promote knowledge of the collective agreement and provincial bargaining procedures, including ratification voting procedures, amongst the Association.
Education Finance	Track trends in Education Finance; gather information to present to local Executive and General Meetings; present to the Board as a part of the GVSD budget process.
Employee Benefits	Develop and promote awareness of all employee benefits; identify and investigate local needs for which the Employee Benefits committee can provide assistance; organize and host Employee Benefits Seminars relevant to GVTA members
Equity & Social Justice	Develop awareness of social justice and equity issues in classroom materials, attitudes, school policies, and programs; share information and resources; identify local needs for which the committee may provide assistance.
Indigenous Education	Develop awareness of indigenous education and equity issues in classroom materials, attitudes, school policies, and programs; share information and resources; identify local needs for which the committee may provide assistance.
Professional Development	Initiate, organize, and implement a program of in-service training to provide opportunities for the continued improvement of GVTA membership's educational practices; inform GVTA teachers of PD opportunities; engage such resource persons as are deemed necessary for the in-service program; prepare, administer, and evaluate the GVTA PD budget; work in cooperation with senior administration in the planning and implementation of PD programs for the division.
Public Relations	Purchase prizes and food for General Meetings; publish a membership newsletter; promote GVTA events for all committees; purchase and distribute a biennial GVTA 'gift' for members. Enhance and increase GVTA's online media presence.
Social and Teacher Wellness	This portfolio is currently under review. Nominations are still welcome.
Workplace Safety & Health Liaison	Promote the aims and objectives of the Association within the GVSD Workplace Safety and Health Committee; inform the Association of the activities of the GVSD WS&H committees; WS&H Liaison shall be an Association member who serves on the GVSD WS&H Committee

2026-2027 GVTA EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS

GVTA positions do not have term limits so, while some persons will be letting their names stand, the following positions are annually open for nominees (including self-nominations) and subject to any subsequent election:

Position		Nominees & School/Administrative Unit		
Nomination Deadline: Thursday, March 12th at 4:00 pm	President	Mike Urichuk (PLS)		
	Vice-President	Kirsten Carman (GVC)		
Nomination deadline: Monday, May 25th at noon Nominations also accepted from the floor at AGM on May 26th, 2026	Treasurer	<i>Incumbent not returning</i>		
	Secretary	Mary Eberling-Penner (PC)		
	Collective Bargaining	Chair		
		Co-Chair	Sarah Coates (GVC)	
	Education Finance	Chair		
		Co-Chair		
	Employee Benefits	Chair		
		Co-Chair	Sarah Coates (GVC)	
	Equity & Social Justice	Chair	Val Harder (DO)	
		Co-Chair	Karla Rootsart (SWD)	
	Indigenous Education	Chair		
		Co-Chair		
	Professional Development	Chair		
		Co-Chair		
	Public Relations	Chair	Jonathan Cullen (NPC)	
		Co-Chair	Karla Rootsart (SWD)	
	Social & Teacher Wellness	Chair		
		Co-Chair		
Workplace Safety & Health Liaison				
Appointed	Past-President	Joel Swaan (Parkland)		
	MTS Provincial Executive	Joel Swaan (GVTA)		
Members-at-Large elected by the members they represent	COSL MAL			
	Members-at-Large represent schools and administrative units who are not represented by other Elected Members. Any units not represented after elections take place at AGM on May 26 th will elect their own representative to the Executive. <i>Units not yet represented are</i>			

MTS Mission Object and Goals

Mission

The Society, as a union and professional organization, is dedicated to advancing and safeguarding the welfare of teachers, the status of the teaching profession and the cause of public education in Manitoba.

Society Objects

The objects of the Society, as stated in the Constitution, are as follows:

- a) to advance and safeguard the interests of its Members;
- b) to advocate for a strong, viable and effective education system that is capable of meeting the needs of students and teachers;
- c) to address social issues affecting the teaching profession;
- d) to promote and ensure high standards of professional conduct by its Members;
- e) to establish and administer insurance and benefit schemes and programs as provided for in this Act; and
- f) to cooperate with other organizations in Canada and elsewhere having the same or similar objects.

Society Goals

The goals of the Society are to:

- a) promote the profession of teaching, high ethical standards within the profession, professional competence and the ongoing professional development of teachers;
- b) engage in collective bargaining and other relevant negotiations to improve the economic benefits, professional rights, pension benefits and working conditions of teachers;
- c) advocate for a strong, viable, and effective education system capable of accommodating the needs of Manitoba students and teachers;
- d) provide its Members with an organization that will give them an equal, effective and democratic opportunity to pursue their professional aspirations; and
- e) address broad societal issues that promote social justice, cooperation and understanding.

RESOLUTION	Policy- Release Time Reimbursement Rate
SPONSOR	GVTA

PROBLEM	Under current practice, substitute teachers incur an opportunity cost when they participate in Society work during school hours on a School Day. Their lack of predictable teaching duties does not currently allow for them to access release time support from the Society.
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MOTION
(insert proposed wording below)

BE IT RESOLVED that **Policy I, Part X – EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT RATES** be amended as follows:

PART X – EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT RATES

...

10.5 Release Time

- (a) **Members attending meetings, business of the Society, or acting as an official representative of the Society that require release time from their teaching duties shall have their release time covered by the Society.**
- (b) **Participation in Society meetings and business is considered the work of a Teacher.**
- (c) **Where a participating Member is a substitute teacher:**
 - i) **The Society will negotiate with the employer to ensure the Member is fairly compensated as though they had been working in their Local. The cost will be charged back to the Society.**
 - ii) **In the event negotiations with the employer of the Member are not satisfactorily concluded, the Society will take appropriate action to ensure the Member does not incur any loss of reasonably foreseeable potential wages as a Teacher by performing union work during a School Day.**

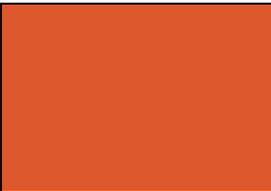
(Insert additions to bylaws in **bold** and indicate deletions in ~~strikethrough~~)

BUDGET

\$0- Our current budgeting practice assumes each participating Member is a 1.0FTE contract teacher.

RATIONALE

<p>Explanation:</p>	<p>This release time policy aims to formally put in writing what already happens for Members on permanent and term contracts. At the same time, it adds a specific support for substitute teacher Members.</p> <p>When substitute teachers choose to take part in Society meetings or activities during the School Day, they give up the chance to accept paid teaching work. This policy recognizes that lost opportunity and asks the Society to negotiate with the employer to offset this loss.</p> <p>This policy ensures that permanent, term, and substitute teachers are treated equitably when participating in the business of the Society.</p>
<p>Alignment with MTS Mission, Goals and/or Objects or Strategic Plan:</p>	<p>Substitute teacher Members face barriers in our existing system that prevent them from having the same access to resources and opportunities that are available to other members of the Society.</p> <p>Without having predictable teaching duties to be released from, our substitute teacher Members have a difficult time accessing the same release time supports provided to other Members. For example, when permanent/term Teachers participate in Society training, their teaching duties are predictable and release time is provided. Substitute teachers cannot be released from work in the same way because they are only paid when they are actively teaching. If they choose to attend Society training, they lose the opportunity to earn wages, insurable hours, and teaching days of experience which impact TRAF and grid placement.</p> <p>This resolution seeks to increase support for our substitute teacher Members by asking the Society to negotiate an agreement with employers to ensure their release time recognizes the opportunity cost that they accrue. If negotiations fail, the Society will reimburse the Member directly for this opportunity cost. In approving this policy, we are ensuring equitable access to release time supports for our substitute teacher Members that permanent and term contract Members currently receive.</p> <p>It is the goals of the Manitoba Teachers' Society to "provide Members with an organization that will give them an equal, effective, and democratic opportunity to pursue their professional aspirations". We believe that this resolution works toward providing equal opportunity for participation in the Society which is the professional organization of all our Members.</p>



Within Strategic Direction 2: Member-Centred Support we are looking to increase engagement and support for equity-deserving Members by ensuring equitable access to supports. We believe that this resolution works toward this desired outcome.

MTS Mission Object and Goals

Mission

The Society, as a union and professional organization, is dedicated to advancing and safeguarding the welfare of teachers, the status of the teaching profession and the cause of public education in Manitoba.

Society Objects

The objects of the Society, as stated in the Constitution, are as follows:

- a) to advance and safeguard the interests of its Members;
- b) to advocate for a strong, viable and effective education system that is capable of meeting the needs of students and teachers;
- c) to address social issues affecting the teaching profession;
- d) to promote and ensure high standards of professional conduct by its Members;
- e) to establish and administer insurance and benefit schemes and programs as provided for in this Act; and
- f) to cooperate with other organizations in Canada and elsewhere having the same or similar objects.

Society Goals

The goals of the Society are to:

- a) promote the profession of teaching, high ethical standards within the profession, professional competence and the ongoing professional development of teachers;
- b) engage in collective bargaining and other relevant negotiations to improve the economic benefits, professional rights, pension benefits and working conditions of teachers;
- c) advocate for a strong, viable, and effective education system capable of accommodating the needs of Manitoba students and teachers;
- d) provide its Members with an organization that will give them an equal, effective and democratic opportunity to pursue their professional aspirations; and
- e) address broad societal issues that promote social justice, cooperation and understanding.

RESOLUTION	Action Resolution to Adopt the Practice of Setting the Society Fee as a Percentage of Gross Earnings
SPONSOR	GVTA

PROBLEM	Under our current system we have our highest paid members pay the least in dues as a percentage of their income while our lowest paid members pay the most in dues as a percentage of their income. To be consistent with our goal for promoting economic justice and teacher welfare, we must consider an alternate fee structure.
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MOTION (insert proposed wording below)	
BE IT RESOLVED that:	
<p style="text-align: center;">Society fees will be set as a percentage of gross earnings received from the employer. Gross earnings includes salary paid for any purpose, excluding backpay and any allowance paid by the employer pursuant to the collective agreement.</p>	
(Insert additions to bylaws in bold and indicate deletions in strikethrough)	
BUDGET	
\$0- fees will still balance our budget but it will be determined as a % of gross earnings instead of a flat dollar-based fee.	

RATIONALE	
Explanation:	<p>The intent of this resolution is to have the Society adopt the ongoing practice of setting membership fees as a percentage of gross earnings received from the employer.</p> <p>In the past, MTS had a committee struck to consider implementing a percentage-based fee structure. The committee agreed on implementing a percentage-based fee structure in principle but did not propose a resolution to implement one (partially due to Bill-64 and the complications of a lack of a harmonized grid). This resolution is being</p>

	<p>presented to allow delegates to decide on what many have already agreed to in principle.</p> <p>Provincial Council can both set fees and determine how fees are set. There is no bylaw enshrining our past practice of a fee pro-rated to number of hours worked. As such, an action resolution is sufficient to shift the practice to a fee pro-rated to number of dollars earned.</p>
Alignment with MTS Mission, Goals and/or Objects or Strategic Plan:	<p>To meet the society goal of promoting social justice, we must look internally and promote economic justice by adjusting our inequitable system of paying shared expenses.</p> <p>A fee pro-rated to dollars earned will allow for the percentage to be set at provincial council each year. This could be similar to how we currently set the rates for our disability plans. This allows for us to share costs more equitably among our membership and attain our goal of greater economic justice for members.</p>