

The Apple Core

Sept 2026

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Welcome back Teachers!

After a summer away, I hope that your first full week back is going well. This edition of the Apple Core hopes to provide you with some updates as we look back to any updates since June's edition and as we head into October.

In my role as GVTA President, I represent the interests of all Teachers in Garden Valley School Division. The capitalized term "Teachers" includes teachers, principals, clinicians, coordinators, and substitute teachers.

It is my job to be able to represent you and share your stories to help make improvements for all teachers as I meet with to our superintendent, school board trustees, principals, teachers, elected representatives, MTS staff, and others. In order to do this job well, I need to know how you are doing and how your job is going. You can reach out at any point in time for advice, guidance, ideas for improvement, to communicate issues, to let me know what is going well, or for any other reason. The more I hear from you, the more effective I can be. Last year, I heard from over 200 Teachers and I hope to hear from even more folks this year.

My email and cell are listed below and can be contacted 24 hours a day. If I am unavailable when you contact me, my standard is to follow-up with you within 48 hours.

In solidarity, Mike Urichuk
President@gvta.mbteach.org
431-775-4282

Orange Shirt Day

Every September 30th we observe The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation in Canada. This day is set aside to commemorate the lasting impacts and legacy of the Residential School System in Canada. The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation is also known as Orange Shirt Day because we wear Orange Shirts in recognition of the story of [Phyllis Webstad](#) to remember that every child matters and deserves respect.

In the recent past, GVTA has offered a bulk shirt order for Orange Shirt Day shirts through a supplier that held a design made by the Manitoba Teachers' Society (MTS). MTS has [created a new design](#) in partnership with an Indigenous artist. MTS has also changed suppliers, and we are unable to facilitate a bulk order on the timeline that we had used in previous years. I am providing you notice in case you were hoping to participate in the usual bulk order through GVTA for this September 30. Later in the school year, GVTA will facilitate an order for those interested in participating.

While wearing orange is a very visual way to recognize The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, it is more important for us to engage in the learning around this day. MTS has [created a toolkit of resources](#) to support

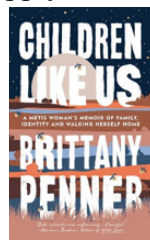
Garden Valley Teachers' Association members work on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe, and the homeland of the Métis nation. GVTA respects the Treaties that were made on this territory.

Teachers in this work with students. There should also be a treaty education toolkit available to each school that may have some relevant resources for teaching about Residential Schools.

ESJ book club

You are invited to join the ESJ book club. We meet once a month for a one hour discussion about various ESJ books and topics.

We supply the books (which are yours to keep!) Here are a few examples of past choices:



We will chat about our summer reading, discuss topics we want to focus on throughout the year, and hand out our first book for the 2026-2027 year.

- **First book club:** Wednesday, October 7th, 4:00-5:00pm.
- **Location:** GVC Tec – GVTA Office
- **Deadline to join:** Friday, Sept. 25

Email Val Harder (Valerie.harder@gvgsd.ca) or Karla Rootsart (karla.rootsart@gvgsd.ca) to join! All are welcome.

Professional Development

The Joint GVTA-GVSD PD Committee has functioned for decades to provide GVSD Teachers PD through CLGs, small group project funding, independent PD opportunities, planning divisional PD Days, and more. This school year, a smaller form of the committee will be meeting to review the composition of this committee and how it functions.

If you have any opinions about PD in GVSD, please do not hesitate to reach out to president@gvta.mbteach.org. For example, are there any PD opportunities that you wish were funded, but typically haven't been? Post-secondary courses? Small group PD? International PD?

Until this review is complete, the GVTA-GVSD PD Committee will continue providing similar support as they have in the past.

Please submit [CLG applications](#) to president@gvta.mbteach.org before **September 18, 2026**.

Apple Core Readership Contest:

To incentivize readership of the Apple Core, GVTA facilitates a monthly contest for all Teachers that read the Apple Core.

Congratulations to Rhonda Peters who was the winner of our June readership contest! As the winner of our monthly draw, Rhonda received a \$25 gift card to the local business of her choice!

To enter September's contest, send an email with the subject line "September Apple Core Contest" to president@gvta.mbteach.org. In that email, simply tell me to which local business you would like to receive a gift card to.

Entries received before September 22, 2026 will be eligible to win a \$25 gift card to the local business of your choice!

Congratulations GVTA Scholarship Winners!

In June, GVTA awarded \$4500 to support post-secondary education students. Congratulations to winners:

- Alisa Butkaliuk (GVTA Education Scholarship- NPC)
- Bryson Penner (GVTA Education Scholarship- GVC)
- Gus Titchkosky (GVTA Education Award)

Teacher Regulation

Many teachers have seen newspaper articles about teachers that are receiving disciplinary action through the relatively new Teacher Registry and the Commissioner of Teacher Professional Conduct. While these reports and stories are very public, roughly half of the resolved complaints received from the Commissioner of Teacher Professional Conduct have been dismissed. A total of 23 complaints were founded and resulted in a resolution by the commissioner while 17 complaints were unfounded or dismissed at the time of the [Commissioner's Report](#). Also found in that report, the most common complaints involved: mocking students, yelling at students, and an inappropriate use of force. After the report however, many complaints were filed regarding inappropriate communication with students.

Some reminders for all Teachers,

- Keep all communication with students on divisionally approved methods (ex. Teams). Do not communicate with students on Instagram or [other social media platforms](#).
- Keep communication with students within school hours as much as possible. If communicating outside of the school day, it is recommended to include parents on that communication.
- Treat students with respect. Be friendly, but not friends.
- We all want students to be safe, remember your [Duty to Report](#).

Employment Standards

Employment Standards Changes - Sick Notes for Employee Absences

Effective October 1, 2026

Purpose

Changes to The Employment Standards Code will limit when employers can require employees to provide a sick note for a short-term illness or injury. These changes take effect on **October 1, 2026**.

The new rules are intended to reduce unnecessary requests for sick notes while allowing employers to verify longer absences when appropriate.

What Is Changing?

A **sick note** is a note, certificate, letter, or other document from a health professional that confirms an employee cannot work for a short period because of an illness or injury.

Beginning October 1, 2026, employers cannot require a sick note unless:

- The employee's absence continues for more than one week, or
- The employee has missed more than 10 scheduled workdays due to illness or injury during the same calendar year.

An absence for part of a day may count as a day of absence toward the annual 10-day threshold.

What Employers Need to Know

Employers may no longer require a sick note for most short-term illnesses or injuries that fall within the limits set out in The Employment Standards Code.

When a sick note can be required, employers must accept notes from eligible health professionals who provided care for the employee's illness or injury, including:

- Physicians
- Physician assistants and clinical assistants
- Registered nurses and nurse practitioners
- Registered psychiatric nurses
- Licensed practical nurses
- Psychologists
- Midwives
- Equivalent health professionals outside Manitoba, where applicable

If an employer requires a sick note, the employer must reimburse the employee for any reasonable fee charged to obtain the note.

To receive reimbursement, employees must provide proof of the cost within 30 days. Employers must reimburse the employee within 30 days after receiving proof of the expense.

What Employees Need to Know

Employees generally cannot be required to obtain a sick note for an illness or injury related absence of one week or less, unless their total illness-related absences exceed 10 scheduled workdays in the calendar year.

Employees who are required to obtain a sick note may be reimbursed for reasonable costs, provided they submit proof of the expense within the required time-period.

Other Medical Documentation

These changes apply only to sick notes used to verify short-term illness or injury absences.

Employers may still request medical documentation when permitted by law or where documentation is needed for purposes such as:

- Certain job-protected leaves
- Workplace accommodations
- Return-to-work planning
- Insurance requirements

Additional Information and Resources

A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document is attached for additional information.

This information is also available on the Manitoba Employment Standards website:
www.manitoba.ca/labour/standards

Employers may also wish to review educational resources, and employer supports related to the new requirements prepared by Doctors Manitoba, in partnership with employer and human resource organizations.

Employment Standards

Phone: 204-945-3352

Toll-Free: 1-800-821-4307

Website: www.manitoba.ca/labour/standards

This bulletin provides a general overview of legislative changes. For complete details, refer to The Employment Standards Code.