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## From the President

MIKE GIFFEN

While June is a very busy time of the year in our schools, it is my hope that people are able to reflect on the past year and celebrate their work. I would like to thank every SOTA member for the excellent work they have done for their students and their colleagues this past year.

Being President of our Association again, has been an enriching and fulfilling experience for me. This year has been eventful, hectic, demanding at times, and always very rewarding.

This year we were faced with the province's K-12 Educational Review. While this review has brought us many challenges and unknowns, it has also brought out many SOTA members willing to speak to what they value about our profession.

When the Education Review Commission started to hold public forums, I heard from many people that not only did many SOTA members attend, but they spoke up, and spoke well. When I asked how they knew they were SOTA members, the response was, "because when they spoke, they always shared that in Seven Oaks we ..., or as a SOTA member I ...". This speaks to the pride we have in our practice and about our strong beliefs around what is best for our students to succeed.

On June 10<sup>th</sup> SOTA members along with trustees and superintendents met to share our experiences from attending these public forums. It was also an opportunity to thank people for their efforts. We had great conversations about the strong presence we had at those forums and what action we can still do. Some of the suggestions made were to ask the politicians that will be coming to your door asking for your support in the next provincial election, what their thoughts

are on amalgamations? And what their thoughts are on providing fair funding to all school divisions?

On June 17<sup>th</sup> I attended the K-12 Education Review evening public hearing when Seven Oaks School Division presented. Chair Ed Ploszay, Vice Chair Greg McFarlane, and Superintendent Brain O'Leary presented. They had 10 minutes to share their brief submitted to the commission, followed by 20 minutes of question and answers. My take away from that presentation came from when I heard one of the commissioners share that "maybe we should just recommend to the province that everyone becomes Seven Oaks." At which point I did the only appropriate response I could think of. I clapped.

As the likelihood of an early provincial election call becomes greater, the Teachers' Society is gearing up. Within moments of the announcement, MTS will go live with campaign information and materials designed to raise the profile of public education and equip our members to engage effectively with everyone from family and friends to candidates at their doors.

Monitor your email throughout the summer and if you haven't signed up with MTS [My Profile](#) please do so immediately. This creates a direct pipeline between MTS and yourself that is both reliable and secure.

Our MTS President James Bedford reminds us that, "Working together, we can ensure that the protection and enhancement of public education will be top of mind as Manitobans head to the polls."

I wish everyone a well deserved restful and safe summer and in the final days of the school year please take care of yourself and each other.

# Long Service & Retirement Reception

Honouring our members



25 Year Recipients: Tony Kreml, Karen Vaarmeyer, Jeff Cieszecki  
Michelle Bahaud, Howard Kowalchuk

## Congratulations to all of our 25 Year Members

Allison Arnason  
Michelle Bahaud  
Jeff Cieszecki  
Jacquelyn Hutchinson  
Robert Kennedy  
Howard Kowalchuk  
Peter Krahn  
Tony Kreml  
Karen Vaarmeyer  
Sonja Wiens

On June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019, SOTA honoured our 25 year members and acknowledged our retiring members along with the SOTA Scholarship recipients. The event was hosted at Prairie's Edge in Kildonan Park which provided an intimate atmosphere for all to gather and celebrate. Retiring members were acknowledged at the June 4<sup>th</sup> celebration and will be honoured at a Retirement Dinner on Wednesday, June 19<sup>th</sup>



## Retiring SOTA Members

Robin Allary	Kim Kovacs
Jeff Anderson	Kim Kozak
Susan Babynchuk	Marusia Kulyk
Rhonda Beddome	Bonnie Luck
Sharon Berkowitz	Shelley Maslow
Sharon Bohemier	Jean McLeod
Donna Borkowski	Howard Ryant
Richard Chin	Michelle Shuckster
Lawrence Danylchuk	Christine Stafeckis-Santa
Janice Deck	Rosemarie Todaschuk
Cathy Horbas	Laura Veitch
Lisa Johnston	Irene Waplak

## SOTA Scholarship Recipients

Jenna Myskiw – Garden City Collegiate  
Marley Pauls – West Kildonan Collegiate  
Joel Jae Serrano – Maples MET School  
Marta Tkaczyk – Garden City Collegiate  
Hazel Wallace – Garden City Collegiate



# SOTA/Board Professional Development Fund

## Did You Know?

changes highlighted in red

### Timelines for applications have changed

The application deadline for In-Province requests is **10 calendar days** prior to the start of the activity (including Tuition).

\*\*\*In-Province activities occurring in **July, August and September** must be submitted on the first school day in June. This year that date is June 3rd, 2019

### The Out-of-Province Amount has increased

A maximum of **\$2500** Canadian may be granted per application.

### There is something **NEW** added to the approved in-province activities list...

#### Member Initiated Project (MIP)

The MIP grant allows individual members or teams of two members, to extend their learning related to their practice and gives them the opportunity to develop and implement resources.



- The MIP grant is able to support **10 grants with funds up to \$800** each, to develop teaching strategies and support materials related to their practice; to apply their learning in their practice.
- **Funds may be used for:**
  - release time (up to 2 sub days @ \$214/day)
  - supplies to develop classroom support materials
  - books or materials needed to further professional learning
  - honoraria
- **Funds may not be used to** purchase pre-packaged programs or to purchase electronic devices
- **Timelines:**
  - November 1st, 2019 - Application deadline
  - December 1st, 2019 - 50% funding advanced
  - April 10, 2020 - Report and receipts due
  - April 30, 2020 - Remaining funding forwarded.

#### • Activities eligible for a MIP grant may include:

- Creating teaching resources
- Implementation of research-based learning
- Purchasing resources to support professional learning
- Hosting workshops open to members in the Division. (hosted after school hours)

- Please see full MIP Guidelines for further information and application form, on the SOTA website: [www.sotamb.org](http://www.sotamb.org)

**Deadline for MIP grants is November 1<sup>st</sup>, however they are reviewed on a first-come first-served basis**

### MTS Catalogue of Workshops

visit the MTS website at:

[http://www.mbteach.org/pdfs/pd/PLS\\_Catalogue\\_2019-20.pdf](http://www.mbteach.org/pdfs/pd/PLS_Catalogue_2019-20.pdf)

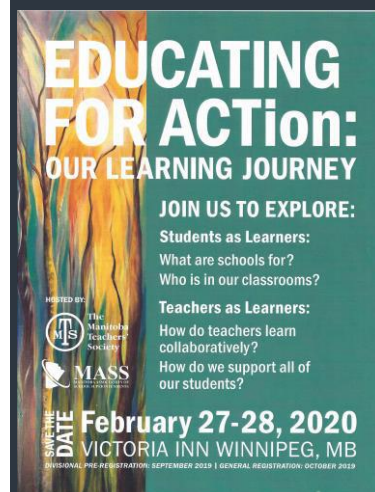




photo credits: MTS Facebook account

# My Classroom. Our Future.

This past winter the Public Relations Department at the Manitoba Teachers' Society approached me and invited me to participate in their most recent

campaign titled My Classroom, Our Future. You have likely seen, as I had at the time, the television commercials, social media posts, and billboards featuring three incredible colleagues from around the province sharing their stories about being educators. Fellow SOTA member Michelle Jean-Paul, former SOTA member Wade Houle, and Tammy Tutkaluk from Brandon all shared compelling and passionate narratives that addressed the themes of poverty, class size, inclusion, and the importance of

honouring our diverse students and their diverse needs. I was honoured to be asked to share my story; however, I was concerned that I would have little of value to contribute. As much as I feel confident about my work in the classroom, with the union, and in extra-curricular areas, there are times that I question whether I am doing it right. If we are honest with ourselves, we all feel this way sometimes. Ultimately, I shook off my trepidation and invited the team from Tripwire Media into my classroom for the day.

It was a beautiful coincidence that the first person I met for the pre-interview was a former student. Brayden Watling, who I had the honour to direct in Maples Collegiate's production of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* in 2006, arrived full of knowledge, maturity, and fond memories of his time at Maples. It was wonderful to share my thoughts and feelings about

teaching and the education system with someone who had known me at the beginning of my career. The day afforded me the opportunity to openly discuss a wide range of topics that I am passionate about: social justice, labour rights, 2SLGBTQ+ affirming schools, mental health, the importance of representation, humanities and arts education, identity formation, and the sheer joy of teaching. I was able to share this experience with a wonderful group of students who you can look out for when the campaign airs in the fall.

When I saw the final product, I ugly cried. It was overwhelming to see what they had done with the footage and to see how they captured my voice. I was incredibly worried that the video would paint my story in an inauthentic light, but I was so thrilled with the result.

I will admit that I am still a bit concerned about what the television and social media posts will look like. In addition, I hope that I do not have to drive home past a billboard with my face on it every day. However, I am so grateful to have been given this opportunity to share my story, to have worked with the wonderful Anne Bennett, Doug Darling, and Danielle Fullan Kolton, and to speak on behalf of my colleagues in the profession. Thank you, MTS and staff, for honouring the authentic voices of teachers.

I cannot wait for you to see the commercial. I hope that I have done SOTA proud.

Lindsay Brown (they/them)  
Proud queer, non-binary teacher, SOTA member, and trouble-maker



# 2019 – 2020 SOTA Dates



## September

13 – Executive  
17 – Council

## October

1 – Executive - BZERC  
5 – WORLDTEACHERDAY  
10 – MTS/TRAF Pension Sustainability Seminar  
11 – Divisional Day  
15 – Council  
22 – Fall Reception  
23 – Maternity/Parental Leave Seminar 4-6pm  
25 – MTS PD Day

## November

5 – Executive – SOSD Boardroom  
19 – Council

## December

TBD – Executive  
17 – Council (if required)  
Friday 20<sup>th</sup> through  
Friday Jan. 3<sup>rd</sup> WINTER BREAK

## January

7 – Executive - BZERC  
21 – Council

## February

4 – Executive– SOSD Boardroom  
12 – MTS/TRAF Pre-Retirement Seminar  
18 – Council

## March

3 – Executive - BZERC  
17 – Council  
Friday 27<sup>th</sup> through  
Friday April 3<sup>rd</sup> SPRING BREAK

## April

7 – Executive – SOSD Boardroom  
15 – Maternity/Parental Leave Seminar 4-6p  
21 – Council

## May

5 – Executive – SOSD Boardroom  
12 – Council  
20 - 23 MTS AGM  
28 - Long Service Reception

## June

2 – Executive  
16 – Council  
17 - SOTA Retirement Dinner

## SOTA Council

Each school or workplace is allowed one councillor for each ten members or part thereof greater than four, and at least one alternate for every two councillors.

Join us at Council, typically the third Tuesday of each month. Meetings are held in the Maples Math Open Area, starting at 4:15pm.

Get involved with SOTA Council!

\*Executive & Council Meetings begin at 4:15pm

\*\*Council Meetings are held at Maples Collegiate – Math Open Area

## 2019-2020 SOTA Executive

**Mike Giffen** – President

Members at Large

**Shelley Torz** – Vice President

**Lindsay Brown**

**Joanne Kosheluk**

**Jeff Cieszecki** – Past President

**Daniel Buchanan**

**Niall McFadyen**

**Julie Springer** – Treasurer

**Charlene Eckert**

**Lisa Meyers**

**Carol Sawka** – Secretary

**Catherine Hart**

**Elizabeth Walker**



375 Jefferson Avenue  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
204.985.6120 ph  
204.470.5525 cell  
www.sotamb.org

**SOTA**  
Seven Oaks Teachers' Association

