



## 2020- 2021 Slate of Nominations – Updated April 14, 2020

### **President: Mike Giffen - Acclaimed**

My experience as President and past Provincial Executive member of the Manitoba Teachers' Society, will continue to strengthen the work within our SOTA Executive and membership to ensure our collective voice plays an active role in our profession and public education.

I have been teaching since 2001. Working at Elwick Community School and Edmund Partridge Community School I have taught grades 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7. I have been involved with Association work for over 14 years with 10 years on SOTA Executive, 4 of those years as your SOTA president.

In 2011 I was elected to the Manitoba Teachers' Society Provincial Executive and re-elected in 2013.

In working with members across the province I chaired:

- Equity and Social Justice Standing Committee
- Curriculum and Teaching Standing Committee
- Teacher Education and Certification Standing Committee

My Provincial Executive experience also allowed me to represent Western Canada as a Trustee for the Canadian Teachers' Federation. I was the MTS representative to the Manitoba branch of the Canadian Council for Policy Alternatives, and I also attended monthly meetings with the Manitoba Social Justice Coalition.

As your SOTA President from 2013-2015, I worked to ensure the collective agreement was upheld and re-established a positive working relationship with MTS and the Division. During this time, I was part of the Negotiations Table Team that successfully negotiated our Collective Agreement that brought many benefits to our membership.

In May 2018 I was re elected to SOTA President. As your current President I continue to uphold the collective agreement and be responsive to members.

I believe that my extensive and varied experience with MTS and SOTA will best serve our membership with the many challenges ahead.

## **Vice President – Elect 1 out of 2 candidates**

### **Vice-President: Jeff Cieszecki**

During my 26 years of teaching, I have been an active Seven Oaks Teachers' Association Executive member, ten years as a Table Officer, three as a Member-at- Large. I have also served as a Provincial Executive member of The Manitoba Teachers' Society for the past five years. As a new teacher in 1993, I experienced the impact of austerity on our profession. As we move to the release of the Provincial Government's Educational Review and potential implementation of its recommendations, I am concerned for the future of the teaching profession in Manitoba. With my experience as a classroom teacher and union leader, I can be a strong, experienced voice for teachers in Seven Oaks.

#### Seven Oaks Teachers' Association Experience

Currently I am your SOTA Past President (two years). My primary duties include chairing the Constitution and Policy Review Committee. I am the SOTA Collective Bargaining Chair for the past three years, and have been on the bargaining Table Team for a total of five years.

Prior to my work as Past President, I served three years (2015-2018) as SOTA President, working on your behalf in the following roles: Co-chair of the Divisional Workplace Safety and Health Steering Committee, Economic Welfare Committee, Negotiations Table Team and SOTA/Superintendents Liaison. Outside of the Association I participated in meetings with Metro Association Presidents, Metro Collective Bargainers, Metro Workplace Safety and Health, and Presidents' Council.

I have also served as SOTA Vice-President (2013-2015) with duties that included the SOTA Professional Development Committee, SOTA/Board Advisory (co-chair), Economic Welfare Committee, Negotiations Table Team, and the Constitution and Policy Review Committee. Further work included participation in Manitoba Teachers' Society regional workshops on Professional Development, Education Finance, Employee Benefits, Equity and Social Justice, and Collective Bargaining.

Other duties on SOTA Executive include Treasurer (three years) and a Member at Large (three years) chairing committees for Professional Development and Education Finance. I was a member of the Manitoba Teachers' Society's Educational Finance Standing Committee (five years). I have also represented SOTA members at 12 MTS Annual General Meetings during my time in Seven Oaks (with an additional four years as Provincial Executive member). I served as a SOTA Head Councillor/Councillor at Maples Collegiate.

I am an experienced bargainer, with professional development that includes the Harvard Law School's Program on Negotiations, and the Canadian Teachers' Federation Collective Bargaining Conference. In regards to legal issues that teachers face, I have attended four of the recent Canadian Association for the Practical Study of Law in Education conferences (three as a voting delegate), and the Mel Myers Labour Law Conference (four years).

### The Manitoba Teachers' Society

I have been a Provincial Executive member of The Manitoba Teachers' Society for the past five years. My committee duties over this time have included:

Collective Bargaining Standing Committee Chair (first year)

Political Action Committee (two years)

MTS Meet and Greet with Manitoba Government MLAs (three years)

Manitoba First Nations School Teachers Membership Ad Hoc Committee Chair

Resolution B24 Committee of the Provincial Executive – to explore what Local representation may look like with potential amalgamations

Education Finance Standing Committee Chair (three years)

Indigenous Voice and Action Standing Committee Chair (one year)

MTS/MSBA/MASS – Inter-organizational Indigenous Committee

MTS Audit Committee member – including MTS Long Term and Short Term Disability Plans (four years)

Canadian Teachers' Federation Annual General Meeting – MTS Delegate (five years)

Canadian Teachers' Federation/Education International Ad Hoc Committee (five years)

MTS Reserve Fund Review (one year)

SAGE Ad Hoc Committee (two years, one as chair)

The Manitoba Teachers' Society Provincial Council (four years)

Liaison with South Central Presidents (three years)

Liaison with Northern Presidents (one year)

My Provincial Executive Governance Training includes professional development with the International Foundation of Employee Benefit Plans in Trust Management Standards at the Fundamental and Advanced levels.

I have also served as liaison with the following SAGE groups:

Manitoba Association of Mathematics Teachers (MAMT)

Science Teachers' Association of Manitoba (STAM)

Manitoba School Counsellors' Association (MSCA)

Manitoba Music Educators' Association (MMEA)

Council for Indigenous Education of Manitoba (CAEM)

Manitoba Physical Educators Teachers' Association (MPETA)

### Professional Teaching Experience

I have been teaching in Seven Oaks for 25 years, with a current assignment at Garden City Collegiate (two years). I have worked as a science teacher at Maples Collegiate (15.5 years), coordinator of the College and University Program and First Year Now University Program (two and a half years) and taught TAS (Engineering Design) and Science at Seven Oaks Middle School (two years) and three years as full time release SOTA President. My educational credentials include a Bachelor of Science (Physics – University of Winnipeg), Bachelor of Education

(University of Winnipeg), Master of Science (Space Studies – University of North Dakota), and Master of Education (Curriculum – University of Manitoba).

Throughout my work as a Provincial Executive member, I have been a strong advocate for all teachers of Manitoba. As this year's MTS Chair of the Collective Bargaining Standing Committee, we have developed Communication and Ratification Protocols for the MTS Provincial Bargaining Protocol, in anticipation of Provincial Collective Bargaining. I worked on the Provincial Executive Committee tasked with exploring what Local representation might look like with potential school division amalgamations. I have stayed informed on the impact of underfunding of Education in Manitoba through the Society's Education Finance Standing Committee. By meeting with Local Association Presidents, and members of various SAGE Groups, I have heard the concerns of Manitoba teachers and work to ensure their voices are heard.

As we move towards the release of the Provincial Government's Education Review, the teaching profession as we know it could undergo extreme changes on a number of fronts. With my background at the local, provincial and federal level in teacher unionism, I can provide a strong voice for our membership and carry us into unknown territory with the confidence of experience. This includes my work in the areas of Collective Bargaining, Education Finance, and amalgamations just to name a few. I ask you to consider me for the position of SOTA Vice President.

## **Vice President – Shelley Torz**

I am seeking your support to continue in my current role as Vice President of the Seven Oaks Teachers' Association.

As educators, we have been hearing for several years now that times of change are coming to our profession. In my role as your SOTA Vice President, I have been committed to advocating for our rights, and ensuring that all members have the information they need to advocate for themselves and their students. Teachers have always been the public's most trusted source of information on education. I wish for the opportunity to continue to build strong relationships through dialogue and collaboration.

As your current SOTA Vice President I believe that we need someone with positive, collaborative, forward thinking leadership skills to carry us through these times. I am deeply committed to supporting teachers as we navigate through these changes, and will continue to stand up for the rights of members and students. I believe that my experience and work with SOTA over the past couple of years will best serve our membership with the many challenges ahead.

I have developed a trusting, collegial, and positive relationship with the Superintendents Team, meeting formally through monthly Liaison Meetings, and informally as needed. Through my participation on many SOTA/Board Committees such as Workplace Safety & Health, Advisory, and the Professional Development Committee I have also been able to foster excellent working relationships with all Trustees. These relationships will strengthen the work within our SOTA Executive membership.

As your current Vice President, I have been able to facilitate several advancements for our membership:

Professional Development - guidelines amended for more equitable and better access  
implemented the Member Initiated Project (MIP) grant Out-of-Province personal maximum increased to \$2500

Advisory continues to work on Student Support the working committee supporting members in a new model of the Circle of Student Support Board/SOTA Advisory Committee strengthening in-school support from the Summary Report.

Women in Educational Leadership Ad-hoc Committee (WEL) Established to help nurture the leadership mindset of women in teaching, build capacity in women who are aspiring to assume formal leadership roles, and support women who are currently in formal leadership roles.

Provincially, I have attended and participated in many seminars of the Manitoba Teachers' Society; all of which bring together members from around the province to discuss and designs priorities and preferences for the entire province of Manitoba. I am also a current member of the Disability Benefit Plan Committee which assists all Manitoba teachers in navigating the most difficult times of their careers.

As I advocate for all members of our profession, I am constantly reminded of how extremely proud I am to be a member of Seven Oaks Teachers' Association. I extol my enthusiasm for the great work of you, our Association members, at every occasion. Over the last two years, I have listened, brought forward your concerns and ideas, made adjustments where possible, and continue to work at developing positive changes.

My work within the Seven Oaks Teachers' Association is not complete and I relish the opportunity to continue my work with you, taking care of you and your needs, and listening to your concerns and ideas. The opportunity of continuing to serve our SOTA members as Vice President would be a privilege and honour.

Our current political climate requires strong leadership and a strong voice. I am asking for your support to be that voice as SOTA Vice President.

### **Secretary: Carol Sawka - Acclaimed**

I have been a teacher for 35 years, 31 of them in Seven Oaks. I am currently the Director of Student Services with the Maples Family of Schools. I have had the opportunity to have many roles as an educator including Teacher, Learning Support Teacher, Student Services Coordinator, Vice Principal and Principal.

I have served on SOTA Executive for 19 years. My responsibilities included SOTA President for 2 years, SOTA Vice President, SOTA Past President (twice), EIE Chair, PD Chair, Acorn Editor, Nominations Chair, Policy and Constitution Review Chair, Retirement Committee Co-chair and Resolutions Chair. I am the SOTA Secretary and the Indigenous Liaison Co-Chair with MTS. I am honoured to continue to have the opportunity to work with and for my SOTA colleagues as a member of your SOTA Executive. I look forward to your continued support.

### **Treasurer: Elliot Macdonald - Acclaimed**

I have worked in Seven Oaks for my entire career. I began teaching at Ecole Constable Edward Finney School. I moved on to West Kildonan Collegiate as a Science and Mathematics teacher. While I was at West Kildonan, I wanted to get involved with our local and became head councillor. I have been an active member of the association and I have attended the last five provincial council meetings. Currently, I am the Vice-Principal of Edmund Partridge Community School. I am also the president of the Manitoba Middle Years Association and was previously the treasurer. I am looking forward to attending SOTA executive meetings and lending my experience to support our members.

## **Members at Large (Elect 7 out of 8 candidates)**

### **Lindsay Brown**

It is with excitement that I put my name forward to be considered for a position as Member at Large for the 2020-2021 SOTA Executive.

A little about myself: I have taught at Maples Collegiate since 2007, working primarily with Grade 11 and 12 students in the areas of ELA and Film Studies. I am also the lead facilitator of QUESO: Queering Seven Oaks, a collective of teachers from within the division working to provide PD and support in the area of 2SLGBTQ+ inclusive education.

In my life outside of Seven Oaks, I have taught at the University of Winnipeg in the Faculty of Education as a Contract Academic Staff member, and work for Diversity Essentials as an Equity Trainer. I also sit on the Manitoba Teachers' Society Equity and Social Justice Standing Committee., and have worked on the Ad Hoc Committee for Comprehensive Sex Education.

I am a proud member of the 2SLGBTQ+ community and have committed myself to working together with my colleagues to make our schools and classrooms safe and welcoming for all students. I am looking forward to continuing my work with the Scholarship Committee, learning more about Bargaining, and assisting with the Equity and Social Justice Committee.

### **Daniel Buchanan**

My name is Daniel Buchanan and it has been my pleasure and honour to represent our membership on the SOTA 2019-2020 Executive throughout these challenging times. I look forward to continuing to represent our membership as a Member-at-Large for the 2020-2021 school year and ask for your support on the ballot. This past year, I took on a new responsibility and became the Chair of the Education Finance Committee. I also continued working with the division as a member on the Circle of Support Committee. Previously, I have been the chair of the Equity and Social Justice Committee, as well as a member of the Board/SOTA Advisory Committee. Through all of these opportunities I have drafted resolutions to be presented at the MTS Annual General Meeting, learned and shared information about the Provincial and Education budgets with our membership, helped organize and produce our World Teacher Day Celebration, and been able to participate in growing and evolving our learning support model within the school division, amongst my usual duties and participation at Local and Executive meetings. I look forward to continuing to serve our membership on the executive, especially in this time of uncertainty and change.

I have worked as a SOTA member and School Psychologist with the Seven Oaks School Division since 2011. I have worked in multiple schools in the division including R.F. Morrison, Forest Park, École Seven Oaks Middle School, James Nisbet, Collicutt, A.E. Wright, Riverbend, Belmont, and Garden City Collegiate. I have a Masters of Arts degree from the University of Manitoba in the study of School Psychology. I also work outside the school division in a private practice setting engaging with clients through Child and Family Services, MacDonald Youth Services and The Manitoba Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Clinic. I enjoy working collaboratively with classroom teachers, learning support teachers and school teams to provide all children and teachers of Seven Oaks School Division the supports in the classroom that they need to be successful.

### **Charlene Eckert**

I have been teaching in Seven Oaks School Division since 1999 having taught grades 4, 6, 7 & 8. My career in Seven Oaks spans more time though, having also attended schools in the division and I choose to live here to educate my children.

I was raised by my family to value hard work and dedication as well as to give to my community. I carry these values in my career. I have coached various sports, participated in committees at both the school and divisional level and have collaborated with colleagues in Seven Oaks to continue my education and development as a teacher. I have also worked with the CMEC (Council of Ministers of Education, Canada) and Bureau d'Éducation Français in a similar capacity.

After serving as Head Councillor for my school, I wanted to delve more into this aspect of giving back to the teaching community. I have been on SOTA Executive for 2 years serving as the Chair of Employee Benefits. I involved myself in various projects and committees within SOTA and most recently am interested in Collective Bargaining. I hope to continue my representation in 2020-2021.

### **Joanne Kosheluk**

My name is Joanne Kosheluk and I am seeking re-election on the 2020-2021 SOTA Executive as a Member at Large.

As a band teacher at Ecole Leila North, it is my job to engage and inspire students every day. I bring energy, drive, and creativity to everything that I am a part of and this includes my passion as a SOTA Executive member. I feel that being involved in my Local is important to who I am as both a teacher and a human being. We need to advocate for rights, for change, and for our profession.

My own home is full of talk of the current political issues on a daily basis as my partner is the president of their local and I continue to learn about the challenges that all teachers face,

regardless of where we are in the province. Through these conversations I am also made aware of just how unique we are in each of our locals and that our needs are indeed diverse. Conversations open minds and doors and it's time to get more of them going.

I have been a member of the 18/19 and 19/20 Resolutions Committee for SOTA, am the SOTA Equity and Social Justice Chair (through which I organized the Terracycle Initiative Program and facilitated a MARL workshop on the Triangle of Violence), am on the SOTA Women in Leadership Committee, and will be attending my fifth Provincial Council this May. It is important for us to stand up for what we feel and know is right for ourselves and our association, even if it means that we have to stand up to those who don't agree with us. I am up for the challenge, and have faith that our Local supports of our voices.

If re-elected, I will continue to work diligently at increasing member engagement across our division as well as across MTS through various committee work and conversations. People who are passionate about their jobs create more passion through engagement every day, and I believe that I can be a strong voice for change.

### **Jordan Laidlaw**

Jordan Laidlaw is a music teacher at Forest Park School and hopes to continue his professional growth serving as a Member at Large as a part of SOTA Executive. Jordan holds a M.Ed. in *Curricular Studies* and is a Ph.D. student in *Educational Administration* at the University of Manitoba. Jordan has served as a SOTA Head Councillor, recently joined the SOTA Policy Committee, has presented at local and national education conferences, is a board member of MMEA (an MTS-affiliated SAGE), and was the 2016 recipient of the *New Builders Award* from the *Canadian Music Educators' Association*. Jordan is passionate about ameliorating societal inequalities, fostering community relations and partnerships, teachers' and students' emotional and physical well-being, and organizing professional development experiences. If considered, Jordan would be honoured to serve his fellow colleagues and mentors in SOTA.

### **Lisa Meyers**

I am seeking re-election to SOTA Executive as a member at large. Over the last two years serving on Executive, I have learned a lot about how MTS and our association works. I joined executive to gain this first hand understanding so I can better advocate for our teachers and profession. My passion for advocacy has led to me to chair the SOTA Resolutions Committee for the last two years and to becoming the early year's representative on the table team for this current season of collective bargaining. I have been with the division for 9 years and have worked in both the Maples and West Kildonan areas teaching grade 1 and 2, currently at Riverbend. I am thankful to have gotten to know people throughout our division and create numerous contacts. I hope to be re-elected to continue advocating for us during this uncertain time.

## **Julie Springer**

It has been my absolute pleasure to serve as your SOTA treasurer for the past two years. I began my career with Seven Oaks as an EA in 2006 and then became a teacher in 2012. In 2015 I joined SOTA as a school representative and the following year as head councillor. In 2018 I began the position of treasurer, which I held this school year as well. This year I also had the privilege of co-chairing the Indigenous Liaison Committee, which I have really enjoyed. Being a part of this committee has given me a taste for something that is not easily balanced with the position of treasurer. I have realized committee work is the work I prefer. I would love the opportunity for continued growth in our association by getting more involved in committee work as one of your Members at Large. I look forward to the chance to continue to connect with membership to serve all your needs.

## **Elizabeth Walker**

I began my teaching career in Seven Oaks School Division after graduating in May 1998. I was a substitute teacher and completed three terms and was then hired at Elwick Community School in 2005 where I taught Kindergarten and grade one for six years. I am currently in my ninth year at West St. Paul School, teaching in an early years multi-age classroom.

Between 2011 and 2015 I represented my colleagues as a member-at-large on SOTA Executive. With that experience I felt it was time to get involved once again and take the opportunity to serve the members of SOTA by beginning as a member-at-large in September 2018. I believe in equity and respect for teachers who dedicate countless hours to make a difference in the lives of our students and I will work hard on behalf of my Seven Oaks colleagues.

My motivation in education is the mental health and well-being of all students and teachers. In August of 2018 I completed a two-week certificate course in mental health counselling skills. I feel that it is important to always be curious and continue to learn throughout life.

I believe that it is imperative for members to support SOTA by becoming involved and staying informed. Together we are a stronger voice for all of our colleagues.