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SOTA
Seven Oaks Teachers' Association

Publication of the Seven Oaks Teachers' Association

The Acorn

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From the President

Welcome back everyone. I hope each of you had a chance to relax and recharge for the start of September.

This school year, teachers of Seven Oaks will be faced with new challenges as a profession both locally and provincially. In the area of bargaining, the letter of understanding between the Seven Oaks School Division and the Association that allowed for continued participation in the cost shared extended health plan with Equitable Life will expire on August 31, 2026. SOTA members are then scheduled to move to the Manitoba Teachers' Society Blue Cross plan on September 1, 2026. The SOTA office will continue to communicate with the local membership on any updates regarding the change, including our third information session with Dan Turner, MTS Benefits Plan and Program Officer, being held at 4:30 at SOPAC on Monday, October 27th, 2025 (see page 6 for more information). Dan will compare premiums/benefits between Equitable Life and MTS Blue Cross and answer member questions.

Provincially, we have had one year of experience with the first ever provincial wide collective agreement. There have been several challenges with the implementation and interpretation of the new agreement. Work on this continues as MTS prepares for the next round of provincial bargaining.

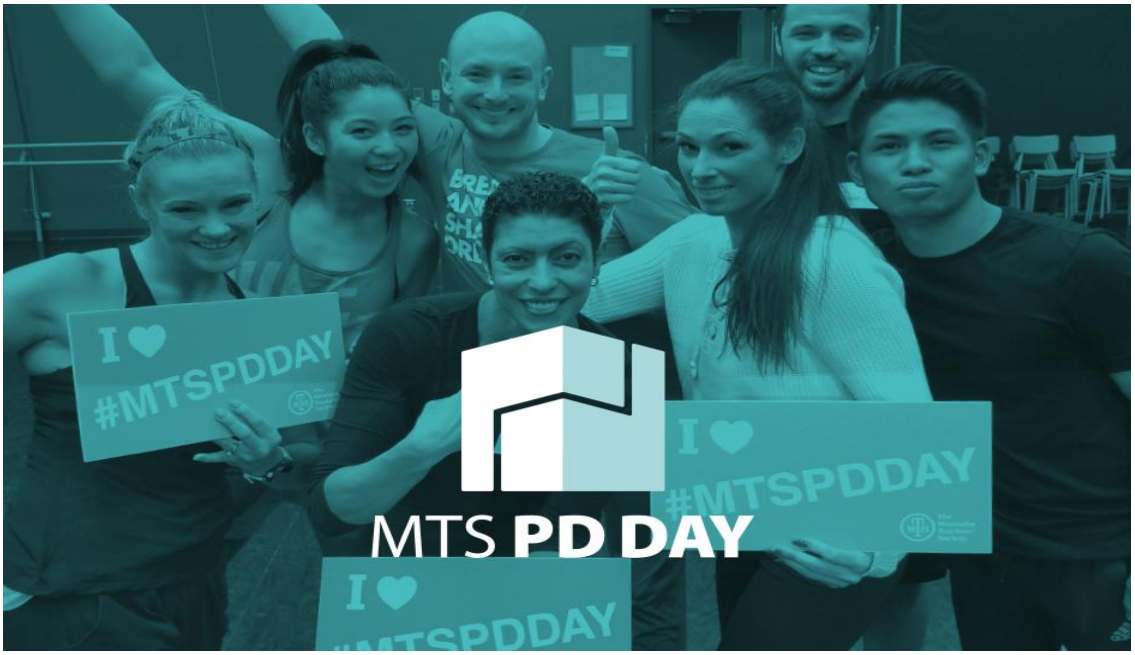
As part of the MTS Provincial Bargaining Protocol, a contingent of SOTA representatives (see page 7) led by Karen Vaarmeyer, your SOTA Vice President and Local Bargaining Representative, will be attending MTS Provincial Bargaining Seminar 1 on October 3rd and 4th. This group will bring the voice and concerns of SOTA members as The Society begins to create the next opening package.

All MTS members are also faced with navigating the new Teacher Registry that was put into place in January 2025, and the Teacher Competencies Regulation that was rolled out earlier this month. MTS continues to have conversations with the provincial government regarding the language used in the competency regulation. SOTA members are encouraged to reach out to the SOTA President if they have any questions regarding this topic.

As the new school year unfolds, it is vital for all SOTA members to stay informed and get involved with your union. One of the best ways to do that is become a SOTA Council rep for your school, attend SOTA Council meetings, and watch for emails and posters from the SOTA Office. And anytime you have a question, please reach out to the SOTA Office.

In Solidarity,
Jeff Cieszecki

SOTA/Board Professional Development Fund



MTS PD DAY

MTS PD Day is October 24, 2025. Registration for MTS PD Day is now open. For more information see the MTS website at: https://www.mbteach.org/mtscms/index.php/mts-pd-day-2025-oct-24-2025/

The Board/SOTA Professional Development Fund will reimburse teachers and clinicians up to $100.00 towards the registration fee for MTS PD Day. Save your registration receipt and be sure to complete your entry in Employee Connect **by Friday, November 7th, 2025**, to receive your reimbursement.

SOTA/Board PD Fund Q&A

What should I include in the rationale?

The PD application must have a rationale that includes:
i) How does attending this PD inform your practice?
ii) How does attending this PD impact your work in Seven Oaks?

How many members from the same school can attend an Out of Province PD?

There is a limit of 4 approved applications per school/site for the same conference or workshop.

How much tuition is covered by the fund?

Eligible tuition fees will be reimbursed at 1/3 of the tuition amount to a maximum of $500.00 Canadian per 3 credit hours.

How do I get reimbursed for a Professional Development activity?

The expense claim form must be submitted with your INDIVIDUAL conference receipts to the SOBO within **30 days** of your PD Activity. If you attended an OUT-OF-PROVINCE conference, a conference report must be submitted along with the expense claim form.

Applications for In Province must be submitted a minimum of 10 days prior to the activity.

For more info visit the SOTA website.

SOTA Communications

SPOT the ERROR!

If you spot an error in the ACORN, email the SOTA office. You could win a gift card and your very own, Oakley, the SOTA phone holder!

Staying up to date with information about your union is essential for understanding your rights, benefits, and any changes that may affect your workplace. SOTA has a variety of ways to help our members be connected:

SOTA Website:

Our website has up to date information on current SOTA events. The website also has important information about:

- SOTA Executive
- Joint Board/SOTA PD Fund
- Workplace Safety & Health
- Provincial Collective Agreement
- Health Benefits
- New Teacher Information

SOTA on Instagram: Follow us using the QR code below.

SEVENOAKSTEACHERSASSOCIATION

SOTA on Blue Sky: Follow us using the link below.

https://bsky.app/profile/7oaksteachers.bsky.social

MTS Updates

UNDERSTANDING THE NEW COMPETENCY STANDARDS FOR TEACHERS

Q: What are the new competency standards for teachers in Manitoba?

A: The Manitoba government has introduced new competency standards to assess teacher performance. These standards are:
1. The teacher has professional knowledge and implements professional instructional methods and practices.
2. The teacher is committed to student success, well-being and learning.
3. The teacher fosters a safe and inclusive environment.
4. The teacher is engaged with Indigenous students, families and communities
5. The teacher fosters professional relationships in ways that are consistent with principles of equity, fairness and respect for others.

Q: Why are these standards being introduced?

A: Bill 35 – The Education Administration Amendment came into effect in the fall of 2023. One of the final steps in the legislation's rollout is the development of competence standards that teachers must meet to both obtain and maintain their teaching certification. These standards are being introduced as part of a broader framework for evaluating teacher performance.

Q: How will these standards affect me as a teacher?

A: There should be no immediate changes to the way you are evaluated. The most significant change is that the public can now file complaints with the Commissioner of Teacher Professional Conduct if they believe you are not meeting the standards

Q: What should I do if a complaint is filed against me?

A: If a complaint is filed against you, MTS is here to support you. You should immediately contact an MTS staff officer in the Teacher Welfare Dept at 204-831-3055.

For more Q & A information:
https://www.mbteach.org/mtscms/index.php/2025/09/02/new-teacher-competency-standards-now-in-effect/

Check the MTS Website (www.mbteach.org) for more on the following:

Indigenous Language Gathering

Date: October 3, 2025, 9:00 am – 3:30 pm
https://www.mbteach.org/mtscms/index.php/portfolio/indigenous-language-gathering/

Register now for "Strengthening the Status Queer: A Leadership Symposium for and by Queer People." Friday Oct. 24, 2025 (all day) at Red River College

https://www.mbteach.org/mtscms/index.php/portfolio/strengthening-the-status-queer/

FAB5

A conference for teachers in their first ***five*** years

BEGINNING TEACHERS' CONFERENCE

WEDNESDAY	OCTOBER 22 2025	5:00 PM	Registration & Supper
		6:15 PM	Welcome
		6:30 PM	Panel - Voices of Teaching: A Journey Through The First Five Years
		7:30 PM	Wall of Advice and Networking
THURSDAY	OCTOBER 23 2025	8:00 AM	Breakfast - Smudge (voluntary)
		8:45 AM	FYI
		9:00 AM	Navigating the First Years - Wayne Davies
		10:15 AM	Break
		10:30 AM	Workshops
		11:45 AM	Lunch
		12:45 PM	Mentorship Sessions "A"
		2:00 PM	Break
		2:15 PM	Mentorship Sessions "B"
		3:30 PM	Exit slips and goodbyes

PRELIMINARY PROGRAM

Designed for teachers in their first five years of teaching

Best Western Plus Airport
1715 Wellington Avenue
(Winnipeg)

Keynote & various breakout sessions

Registration fee: $65

THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY

Register Online

SOTA
Seven Oaks Teachers' Association

THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY

Equitable

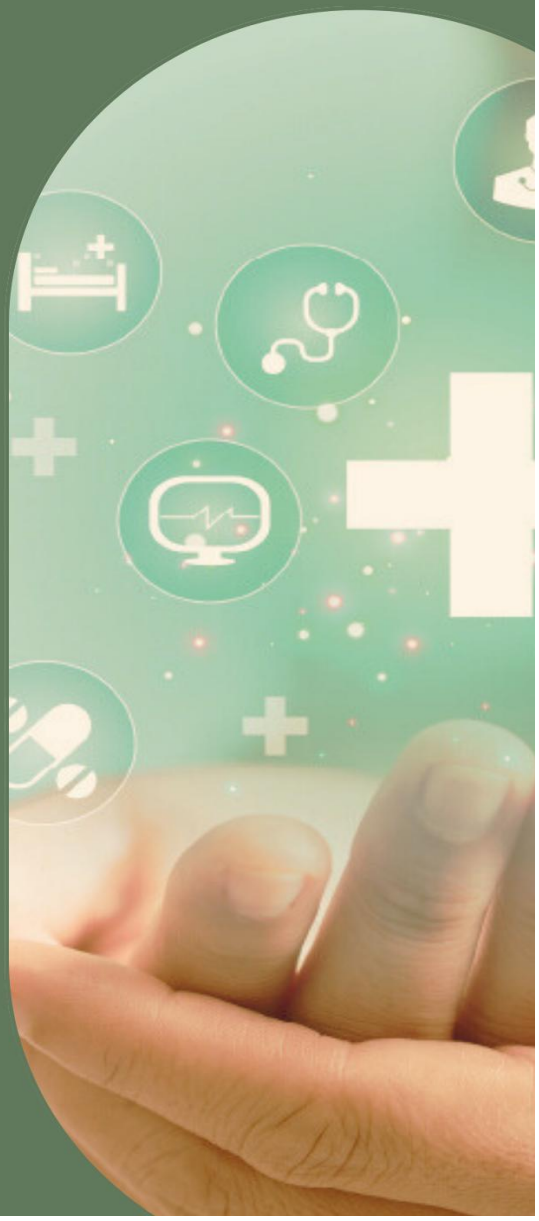
MANITOBA SCHOOL EMPLOYEES BENEFIT PLANS

EXTENDED HEALTH BENEFITS MEETING

Information on SOTA Extended Health Benefits under the Provincial Agreement
Presented by:
Dan Turner, MTS staff

October 27, 2025
SOPAC Theatre
711 Jefferson Ave
4:30 pm

To Register
Scan QR Code
or Email
office@sota.mbteach.org



SOTA Committees

SOTA Committees are a way for members to be involved with their union in areas of their interest. As Committee Chairs, SOTA Executive Members, have put out a call from the general membership to join committees.

If you are interested in joining a committee or would like more information, contact your SOTA VP at vicepresident@sota.mbteach.org

Equity & Social Justice

Steven Sprange

Scholarship

Renata Gawlik

Women & Leadership

Lina Arruda

Resolutions

Ben Nein

Wellness

Renata Gawlik

Education Finance

Gary Jackson

Employee Benefits

Ben Nein

Indigenous Voice

Jeff Cieszecki

Constitution & Policy Review

Jeff Cieszecki

Board/SOTA Advisory

Karen Vaarmeyer

SOTA Provincial Bargaining Representatives

Karen Vaarmeyer- Chair
Mark Behrendt- EY
Michelle Janzic- MY
Saundra Lubkey- SY
Gary Jackson- Admin

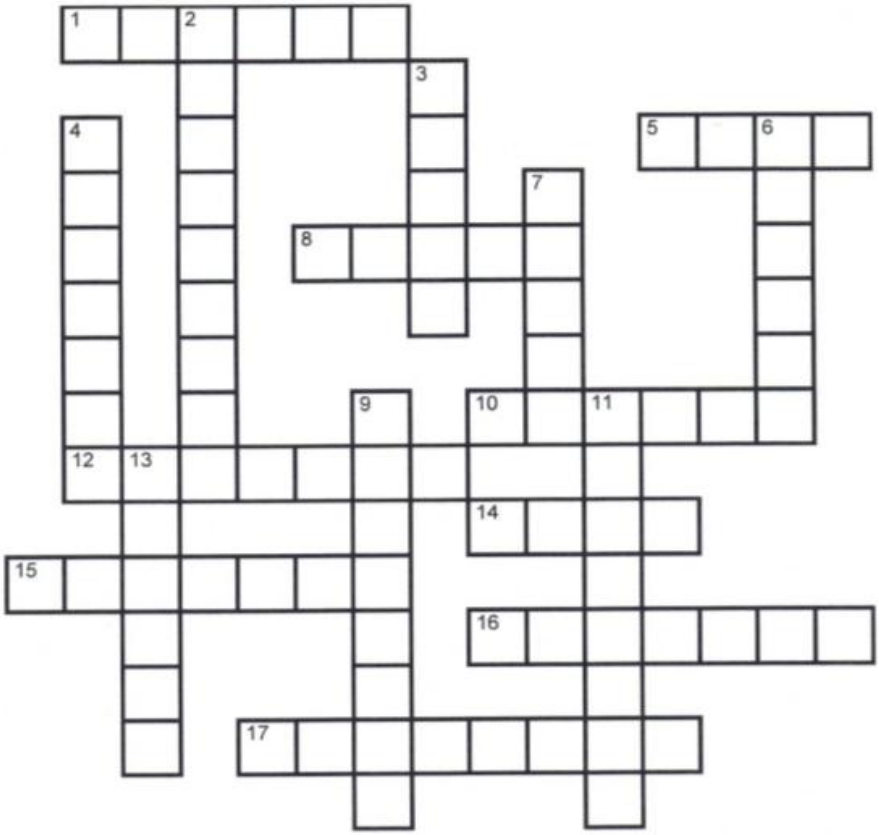
Board/SOTA PD

Karen Vaarmeyer

SOTA Contest Corner

Send your name and a picture of the completed crossword by **October 14th, 2025,** to vicepresident@sota.mbteach.org to enter to win one of three SOTA prize bundles!

Back to School



Across

1. Time to play outside during a break in the school day.
5. A place to sit and study in your room or at school.
8. It helps you measure and draw straight lines.
10. Writing utensil made of wood.
12. The person who guides and helps you in class.
14. A subject that involves numbers.
15. Use this to stick things together.
16. Where you go to enjoy stories and explore new worlds.
17. A colorful container to keep your sandwiches and snacks.

Down

2. Place where you might eat your lunch at school.
3. Present for the teacher.
4. Someone who goes to school.
6. A place where you learn and have fun.
7. Mark on an exam or in a class.
9. What school is all about.
11. A pad made of bound sheets of paper for taking notes.
13. A small tool to undo mistakes.

WORDBANK: Apple, Cafeteria, Desk, Eraser, Grade, Learning, Library, Lunchbox, Math, Notebook, Pencil, Recess, Ruler, School, Stapler, Student, Teacher

2025-2026 SOTA Dates

September 2025

25th- SOTA Council Meeting- Collège Garden City Collegiate Library

October 2025

7th- SOTA Executive & Executive Training

21st - SOTA Council Meeting- Collège Garden City Collegiate Library

November 2025

4th - SOTA Executive

25th - SOTA Council Meeting- Virtual

December 2025

1st - SOTA Executive

16th - SOTA Council Meeting- Virtual

January 2026

6th - SOTA Executive

20th - SOTA Council Meeting- Virtual

February 2026

3rd - SOTA Executive

17th - SOTA Council Meeting- Virtual

March 2026

3rd - SOTA Executive

24th - SOTA Council Meeting- Collège Garden City Collegiate Library

April 2026

7th - SOTA Executive

21st - SOTA Council Meeting- Collège Garden City Collegiate Library

May 2026

5th - SOTA Executive

12th - SOTA Council Meeting- Collège Garden City Collegiate Library

June 2026

2nd - SOTA Executive

16th - SOTA Council Meeting- Collège Garden City Collegiate Library

SOTA Council

Each school or workplace is allowed one councillor for each ten members and at least one alternate for every two councillors. One councillor shall be designated the Head Councillor.

Join us at Council, typically the third Tuesday of each month.

Contact Us

SOTA office
204-985-6120

President
Jeff Cieszecki
president@sota.mbteach.org

Vice President
Karen Vaarmeyer
vicepresident@sota.mbteach.org

All matters will be dealt with in confidence.

Manitoba Teachers' Society general switchboard:
204-888-7961