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President's Report



Those of you who did not receive the October issue of THE VOICE, I sincerely apologize. It seems that the box of newsletters that had to be mailed out has mysteriously disappeared. However, the original is linked to the FTA webpage, which has recently undergone some improvements and updates. Take some time to view and explore the FTA website at www.frontierteachers.ca for all the current and back issues of **THE VOICE** as well as other important documents. One of the features of our October issue was a detailed list of Blue Cross benefits that may of interest to many of you.

While you're there, check out some of the links. We are updating the constitution and will have the new one posted soon. All the new changes are posted there for you to review. Two of the changes revolve around the FTA elections in May. Last year we ran into difficulties with the nomination deadline and having the election on Friday. These changes will eliminate the problem by designating the first Wednesday after Spring Break as nomination deadline and the first Wednesday in May as our election day.

As we are in a bargaining year, we are still operating under the old contract, which is also linked to the site. Bargaining updates will be posted on the site as well as in THE VOICE.

Something else new on the site is a link to the division housing page. Here you can access the Frontier Housing Handbook. Review the tenant's responsibilities and those that the division is responsible for.

Check the handbook before contacting us, as many of your questions may be answered there. If you still need help, I encourage you to contact any executive member. Contact information is on the webpage and on the last page of **THE VOICE** newsletter.



Season's Greetings

To all our members

From

The Frontier Teachers Association

Those teachers who have joined us later in the year and did not attend the orientation seminar in August may also want to check out past issues of THE VOICE. There are more links to FTA and MTS information on our website that may be of assistance to you.

In closing, I wish all of you the greetings of the season and I hope you enjoy a wonderful Christmas and New Year.



Bargaining Update

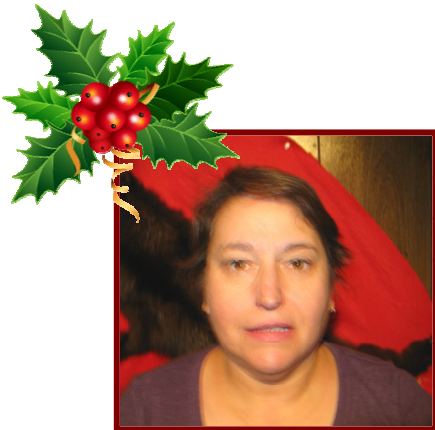
Dean Elliott reports that the bargaining committee has had only one meeting since presenting the opening package to Frontier. There has been no movement on either side at this point. The committee will meet with Frontier representatives again on December 9th and 10th, and hopefully some progress will be made.



Workplace Safety and Health

Mrs. Marilyn Randall

I attended a workshop for Workplace Safety and Health in Thompson on October 14. It was a very informative session. Here are a few things important things you should be aware of.



1. Every school must have a Workplace Safety and Health Committee and it must consist of an equal number of representatives for the employer and employees.
2. Committees are required to meet 4 times a year.
3. The committee must keep notes and post all minutes.
4. All schools must provide a bulletin board for Workplace Safety and Health.
5. Every bulletin board must contain:
 - a.) minutes
 - b.) harassment policy
 - c.) violence prevention policy
 - d.) working alone policy
 - e.) any relevant safety policy in effect at workplace
6. Any serious injury must be reported. Please call the new toll free number 1-866-888-8186.

If you have any concerns or problems contact me. My contact information is posted on the Frontier website as well as the back of THE VOICE newsletter.

Special Leave: Regulation E.3.N-R

By Dean Elliott (formerly GKAA) Reprinted from 2008 newsletter

REMEMBER!

Applications for special leave are due no later than December 15th.

Make sure you use the appropriate application form included in the policy. Forward one copy to Gordon Shead and another copy to the FTA.

This is one of the policies of the Frontier School Division Board that is near and dear to the hearts of many veteran Frontier teachers. This policy, in its many various amended forms, has been around for many, many years.

This policy essentially indicates that if you have been working with Frontier School Division for ten years or more you are eligible to take a leave of absence from Frontier School Division for a period of one year and the Division will pay you the difference between your base salary and that of a class 4 zero years experience teacher. According to the current collective agreement if you were a class 5 teacher, at the top of the pay scale, you would receive **\$29,594.00 less necessary deductions** while on special leave. This sum of money would be paid to you over 26 equal instalments starting September 1st.

There are no strings attached to this leave. You can use it to further your education, go on an extended vacation, pursue another line of work, or even obtain a teaching position from another Division in Manitoba. You do not have to return to Frontier, however, you do have to abide by the timelines to resign your position.

When and if you return to Frontier every reasonable effort will be made by the division to return teachers to their position held at their originating school at the time of the leave. Specific teaching assignments may change. (You can take Special leave after 8 years of working with the Division provided that you commit to returning to work for the Division for an additional two years. Should you fail to do so, the special leave payment received would need to be returned to the Division. (See policy GKAA for further details.)

During this last round of revisions, clarification has been made for those teachers that elect to take Special Leave as a bridge to retirement. Those teachers who retire at the end of the school year, prior to the commencement of the special leave, may elect to receive the special leave allowance as a retirement allowance. In this case, the allowance will be paid out in a single payment (interest discounted) by July 1.

What this effectively means is that a teacher can retire, collect the special leave allowance and deposit it into an RRSP account (assuming you have contribution room). In this way the teacher can defer paying income tax on the allowance while at the same time collecting their TRAF pension. This is definitely a bonus to retiring teachers.



Not sure who to ask?

Just call, write or email any of the FTA Executive. We're here to help with issues that concern Frontier teachers



Reprinted from Professional Development Reflections
Volume 1, Number 2 – November 2009

The Professional Development One Dayer The Speaker Came, We Went, Now What?

It is a common practice across the province for divisions to attempt to provide high quality professional development for their teachers through the one day keynote speaker format. Research has shown that in order for this to be effective, it is necessary that there be some preplanning of activities prior to the day and follow-up activities when the session is done. This preplanning is key to promoting change in classroom practices.

Once a speaker has been booked, there are a number of activities which teachers can participate in prior to the PD day in order to become better acquainted with the topic and goals of the day. Once the PD day is over, the learning and desired outcomes can be solidified through various follow-up activities.

	Preplanning or Follow-up	Follow-up
INDIVIDUAL: <i>Expanding one's learning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading author's book(s)/journal articles; • Visiting related website(s); • Personally reflecting through journaling; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arranging inter-school visitations; • Collaborating with peers; • Applying the new knowledge in the classroom; • Co-teaching with a colleague; • Incorporating into one's Professional Growth Plan
SCHOOL: <i>Supporting staff time to collaborate and study the content</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participating in book study groups; • Posting related materials on staff bulletin board; • Viewing of related videos; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussing learning and plans at staff meetings; • Sharing through a staff Ning • Reviewing at Professional Learning Community meetings; • Incorporating into School Action Plan; Co-teaching among staff
DIVISION: <i>Promoting the conditions that foster peer collaboration and action planning across the division.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking the speaker to suggest questions to spark discussion before and after the presentation; • Purchasing and distributing speaker's books and resources; Addressing the speaker's content through divisional mentorship programs; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing time at the end of the keynote address for groups to reflect and plan future actions; • Developing a divisional committee or focus groups to promote further follow-up activities or plans; • Sharing with other divisional colleagues through intranet; • Supporting grade group meetings that choose to do further follow-up

A high quality one day professional development experience can have a significant effect on teacher's learning and instructional practices, only if follow-up options for continued learning opportunities are available.

Effective professional development is an ongoing process and needs to be embraced by leadership and financial support both at the school and divisional level.



Archives: Dedication to FTA History

By Byron Apetagon, Area 5 Norway House, MB

As an active FA member, I advocate all kinds of Teacher memberships concerns, issues and recommendations on working conditions, policies, guidelines, fees, and much more.

At the FTA/MTS levels, I receive and file information into the Archives files which are centred and stored in Norway House.

I research information as requested by proper personnel which are distributed through proper channels at the FTA executive and MTS.

At the present time, the archives are kept in Norway House, MB. Files before 1997 are at the Area 5 Office and files from 1998 to the present are kept at Jack River School where I presently work.

The archives is set on a yearly file according to important subjects such as collective bargaining, Ad Hoc, Professional Development, employee Benefits, Housing, Equity and Social Justice, Workplace Safety and Health, Grievances and Disputes, and of course, Archival Resources.

For over ten years I have represented all teachers within Frontier School Division to voice their concerns, issues and listened to their suggestions. I have attended FTA/MTS meetings in all those years. To be part of the FTA meetings and the executive level is always challenging and exciting. It is a position and duty I enjoy and am happy to be a part of the teachers' voice.

Olympic Torch Bearer

Joanne Stover, Area 3 Churchill, MB

On November 8, 2009, the Olympic Torch relay happened in Churchill. It was carried by 6 people - 3 from out of town and 3 local people, including one of our students, Dylan Burton, who carried it on a Polar Rover vehicle and Dylan's favourite teacher ... me (I'm sure I'm his favourite teacher)! It was a very humbling experience, to be nominated for this honour to represent our town in the final torch lighting of the cauldron.

After the cauldron was lit, our little choir - Churchill Northern Lights Choir - performed O Canada in Cree, French, Inuktitut and English. After a quick speech (where I was way out of my comfort zone!), I also directed them in two songs - This Land is Your Land, and We Shall Overcome - two songs I felt brought Canada together in what I feel is a peace-gathering of nations, the Olympic Games. It was quite an adventure!

Joanne Stover, Area 3 FTA Representative has her few minutes of fame on November 8th in Churchill as she lights the Olympic flame.



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