



President's Message - Michael Ferchuk

As the President, I would like to thank Dean Elliott, the Past President, for the hard work he has put in, on behalf of Frontier Teachers. Job well done Dean! I would also like to thank the past Executive for their tireless efforts on behalf of our members.

In the coming year the new Executive and I will continue to advocate for Frontier Teachers. Although this is not a negotiations year, we are already preparing our package for the next round of bargaining.

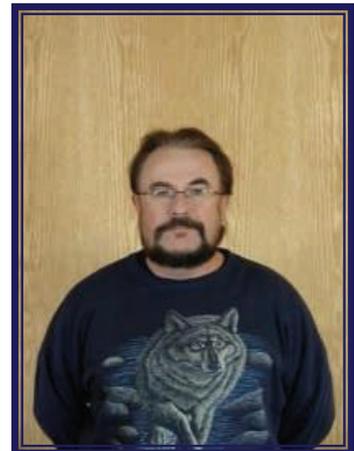
The new school year brings a wide variety of emotions. Teachers will be bouncing from trepida-

tion to elation. As the school year unfolds I hope your experiences in your communities will be positive and full of success.

For long term and returning teachers your commitment and dedication to your students and community does not go unnoticed by the Association. The stability you bring to your schools cannot be understated.

We encourage all of our members to contact their F.T.A. Representatives if they have any questions, or if they are experiencing any difficulties.

- Michael Ferchuk



Michael Ferchuk
FTA President

FTA Has A New Logo!!

As many of you know, last year the FTA Executive held a logo contest in hopes of getting an entry that could be associated with teachers in Frontier. The entry on the left, submitted by Terry Stover of Churchill.

This logo was selected by the executive for its symbolic signifi-

cance. For many, the bear represents wisdom, respect, strength and courage. It is meant to symbolize the outdoors and close links to nature and the environment. Of the entries submitted, none were better matches for what teaching in Frontier is all about.



Winning FTA Logo Submitted By
Terry Stover

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ANNOUNCEMENT

Teaching Should Never Be A Lousy Job

Wendell Head



Wendell Head
FTA Vice-President

Have you ever had to stop and think to yourself “Teaching has officially become a lousy job?” How do you know when you’ve reached this point? Well, it’s simple really - when you can see them crawling on the heads and in the hair of your students.

That’s right, I’m talking about head lice.

Some teachers are fortunate enough to never have to deal with this problem, but many teachers, sooner or later, will see students constantly scratching their heads. One way or another - either through a school nurse or from your own investigation, you confirm your fears - head lice.

What do you do? First and foremost, remember that you are dealing with children - screaming “Get them away from me!” or exclamations of “Eeww! Gross!” or “That’s disgusting!” are probably not going to boost the self-esteem of those children.

Remember, head lice are very easily transferred from one person to another, and finding them on any given student is in no way a reflection of that student’s hygiene or cleanliness. So in dealing

with the matter, be sure not to blame the victim.

So now that we’ve established how we should (or shouldn’t) react, we’re back to the question of what to do about this.

Well, interestingly enough, this is not a decision you have to make. Nor is it a decision that your administrator has to make. Fortunately, the Public Schools Act makes it very clear that the student cannot be at school. Section 232(1) states that “No person suffering from a contagious or infectious disease, or who is affected with vermin ... is entitled to attend or enter a public school.” (Just to be clear, head lice are considered “vermin.”) Furthermore, they cannot return until “...there is no longer any danger to the other pupils of the school of ... being affected with vermin.”

Well, that seems pretty straightforward doesn’t it? So why the confusion on this issue? Does Frontier policy say something different? No. In fact, the Division has a good protocol for dealing with head lice that states “students with head lice should be sent home with a letter informing parents of the

treatment required.” There are other steps in the protocol of course, but nothing that contravenes the Public Schools Act.

Perhaps there is confusion over *when* the student should be sent home. Well, if we combine policy and law, we get three basic principles: first, a student with head lice is not legally entitled to be at school; second, they should be sent home; and third, they cannot return if there is risk of further infestation. It is perhaps safe to assume that they must go home right away. They should certainly **NEVER** be sent back into a classroom with others to potentially make the problem worse and have still more students “affected with vermin.”

What if there are several students with head lice? What if it’s half the class? Half the school? Well, that’s what is sometimes referred to as an **outbreak**. That is precisely what the law and policy try to prevent. It is also precisely what policy and law are designed to deal with if it occurs. And the last I checked, neither the policy nor the law were up for debate.

Public Schools Act - 232(1)

“No person suffering from a contagious or infectious disease, or who is affected with vermin, or who resides in a house in which any contagious or infectious disease or vermin exists, is entitled to attend or enter a public school during the existence of the contagious or infectious disease or vermin or at any time thereafter, until he presents to the principal of the school a certificate of a duly qualified medical practitioner* that there is no longer any danger to the other pupils of the school of contagion or infection or of being affected with vermin.”

* Section 232(2) allows the school board, in the absence of a duly qualified medical practitioner, to allow a person to enter the school as long as it is satisfied that there is no longer any danger of further infestation.

What Do We Want In Our Next Collective Agreement?

Scott Miller

A simple question, but one that must be answered by the new collective bargaining team. Being a member of the old collective bargaining team, I feel that I can now offer my 2 cents worth. Of course the problem with this is that it makes the old collective bargaining committee and the chairperson (myself) look really bad. So with the complete knowledge of making myself look bad, and teachers going around saying, "why didn't this guy do this the last time?," here are my opinions for the next collective agreement:

1) For those of us who have read the Manitoba Teacher, the Turtle River Teachers' Association have just received 150 minutes per six day cycle of Prep Time in arbitration. This makes two associations in the province to have Prep Time in their Collective Agreement (Thompson and now Turtle River). So collective bargaining team; a new proposal for **Prep Time**. I recommend the article from the Thompson Collective Agreement.

2) Now for something new. MTS, the FTA and the Frontier Board are going to hate me for this one. I believe that teachers, upon retirement, should receive a percentage of pay for unused sick time. I can hear

the remarks now; they range from verbal abuse to "what a wonderful idea." MTS and the FTA do not like the idea, because it forces teachers to come to work when they are sick. The flip side being those people that get sick will not be able to receive the benefits for accumulated sick days because they will have none. Neither argument holds much water for me, because a teacher who has taught for 30 years and still has 124 sick days can either upon retirement take 120 sick days or get nothing. Neither idea sounds fair to either the Division or the teacher. No one made me come to work when I was sick; I just found it easier to work than write up lesson plans. And really is it my fault I happen to have good DNA and an eighteen century work ethic. In either case blame my parents, not me. Really, what is wrong with receiving 12 days pay for 120 sick days? The number just came from the top of my head (and also it was easy math). Nevertheless it is something to think about.

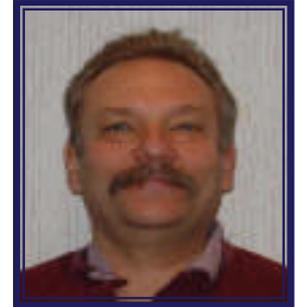
So let the debate start. What should be in the new Collective Agreement? Write in with your ideas. We will either agree or not agree.

A few things to remember, the Collective Agree-

ment cannot supersede legislation. Government legislation is top dog; Collective Agreements are second place finishers. We cannot legislate holidays or new holiday times for teachers. Yes, having a two week spring break to go to Mexico to relax and frolic is a great idea, however, the government gives one week, that's legislation.

Religious holidays are open however. If we go in that direction I think I will practice the ancient worship of Thor so that I could get every Thursday (Thor's day) off. Or maybe Druidism, to get every Monday (Moon Day) off? Man this keeps getting better and better. If I keep working at this I should never have to work a day for the rest of my life.

Regardless of what you think of my ideas it is



Scott Miller
President-Designate

time you start thinking of the new proposals you want in the new Collective Agreement. I do not want to hear teachers say they did not have input. Scurvies are difficult to make because proposals take a great deal of time to write up, and scurvies deal with yes and no answers. So write and tell me your ideas.

Do You Have Ideas for Our Next Collective Agreement?

Send them to:

Wendell Head
Chair, Collective Bargaining
whead@frontierteachers.ca

The FTA Bids Farewell To Judy Balabas

There isn't a teacher in our Association who hasn't benefited from the tireless efforts of Judy Balabas.

Through the years Judy has been an integral part of our team, and a strong support when needed, whether that need was in negotiating a Collective Agreement, or in settling a grievance or dispute. She knew very well the unique circumstances that Frontier teachers experienced, and never failed to display this knowledge and expertise no matter what situation she was faced with.

As a staff officer she has worked directly with many of our members, and

there are probably no words to express the gratitude and thanks that those members have for her support and assistance, as they dealt with obstacles in both their personal and professional lives.

In September, Judy embarked in a new direction as she retired from her position with the Manitoba Teachers' Society. We have no doubt that we will see her again in a new role - and wouldn't be surprised if that role was supporting our teachers from a different angle.

Meanwhile, she will be missed, and we wish her all the best in her new endeavors.



FTA President Michael Ferchuk presents Judy Balabas with a Retirement Gift on behalf of the Association.

Need Help? Accused of Something? Need to Contact MTS?

Bobbi Éthier is the Staff Officer Assigned to Frontier Teachers

Toll Free: 1-800-262-8803

Direct Line: (204)831-3065

Email: bethier@mbteach.org

Freedom From Violence: Is The Horrible Truth Out There?

Scott Miller

Frontier School Division has a policy that protects teachers from violence from students, parents and administrators. Negotiations after negotiations we try to get a clause in the Collective Agreement that would protect teachers from violence. Time after time the board says no because there has never been written documentation of violence against teachers. In my 25 years in Frontier I have never gone to an area in-service were

I have not heard "horror" stories about some of the violence teachers and administrators have experienced, yet there is no documentation. Do people tell stories but never fill out reports? Are they just stories? Are teachers told to keep it quiet? What is the answer?

During our last round of negotiations, the board did agree to place Freedom from Violence on every agenda of the Liaison Committee. So teachers

and administrators, if you have experienced violence, please write me and tell me about it and give me permission to bring it forward during liaison meetings.

The only way to solve this problem (I believe it is a problem) is to come forward with the information. So please write down your situations, and send a confidential E-mail to your FTA Representative.

Housing Allowance

Dean Elliott

As you are aware, those Frontier teachers that provide their own accommodations in the Frontier community (within 40 kilometres) are eligible for a housing allowance. In order to receive this allowance, the "Frontier School Division Housing Allowance Eligibility Claim Form" must be completed each year. Below I have enclosed a reduced copy of the form to be used. If you have not already submitted yours, please do so as soon as possible. This form must be completed each September in order to receive this allowance.

If you are in Frontier School Division housing then you will be paying rent to the Division and will not be eligible for this benefit (you are having your rent subsidized by the Division). If you provide your own home, but live beyond the definition of community (i.e. 40 Km) then you would not be eligible for this allowance either. If you have any questions related to this policy or any other housing issue, please bring it up with the housing representative on FTA, Shawn Hafenbrak.



If you are providing your own accommodations and have not yet filled out your Housing Allowance form, then it's time to do so!

FRONTIER SCHOOL DIVISION

HOUSING ALLOWANCE - TEACHERS

ELIGIBILITY CLAIM FORM

****Must be submitted annually each September****
Send completed form to the Payroll Department, Division Office

 Name Address

I declare that according to the Housing Allowance Policy I am:

a) Eligible for the Single Housing Allowance.

b) Eligible for the Dependent's Housing Allowance.
 (Claiming spouse and/or dependents)
Payment to be distributed as follows: (circle one)

i) Pay the full amount of housing allowance to me.

ii) My marital partner is/is not employed by Frontier School Division:
 He/She will not be claiming Housing Allowance from Frontier School Division.
 Please divide the Housing Allowance equally between my partner _____ and I.
 (Name)

I undertake to notify the Payroll Department of any changes that will affect the above declaration, and agree to any adjustments to the amount of Housing Allowance payable arising therefrom.

I declare that the foregoing eligibility claim for Housing Allowance is an accurate account of my status.

 Date Signature

Representatives and Their Jobs: A Rant and a Rave

Scott Miller

The representatives that the Frontier Teachers' Association have in each of the schools of Frontier School Division have a very important job. These people must pass out the paperwork that the FTA (Frontier Teacher's Association) and the Manitoba Teachers' Society (MTS) send to the different schools (including the FTA VOICE, MTS correspondence, the Manitoba Teacher, and all the other correspondence that must be attended to all year.

Besides this paperwork, there are even more important jobs - elections, ratification of the Collective Agreement (which is a vote), and compiling the list of teachers that attend SAG from all the different schools within the FTA.

First, let's look at the elections. These are the FTA elections, and from time to time the MTS elections as well. As in all democratic bodies, elections are very important, and must be handled in a very clear and transparent manner. There can be no appearance of elections being anything but above board. I know that people have lived in democracies for such a long period of time that elections seem like "*old hat*" and nothing can go wrong. The problem is that things do go wrong. The person that was supposed to make the ballot

box does not, or the vote cannot take place at the stated date and time, and so on. Because we view elections as common place we think nothing of changing times and location. The problem is by law we cannot. Elections must take place at a specified time and place. Any change may be grounds for calling an election out of order and it may have to be done all over again.

The ratification of the Collective Agreement must be done in the same open and transparent manner as all ELECTIONS. If not, the vote on the collective agreement may be declared invalid, and the vote on the Collective Agreement would be held again at a different time and place. Which means we would all receive our back pay at a later date. Of course there is even a worse case scenario. The ratification could be called invalid, the Collective Agreement called invalid and we would have to return to the bargaining table.

If creating a ballot box is a problem, just call Elections Canada - they will send you an official ballot box free of charge. You are always notified of elections months in advance so this should be no problem in even the smallest and most isolated of communities. Ballots

are faxed to the different communities, so this should be no problem. Rules are also sent well in advance of elections. Please do not view elections as commonplace...they are important to all of us and they must be held in an open and transparent manner.

While on the topic of elections I have another "bone" to pick. For the "love of god", vote. Elections do matter, and your vote does count. I know there are a great many people that tell you the direct opposite, and that your vote doesn't really matter, but who should you believe? The person that stands for elections, that helps write Collective Agreements that must be ratified, or the pessimist who tells you that votes do not matter and that elections do not matter. The problem is that most people see the voting process as an inconvenience, and many really do believe that their one vote won't really make a difference. Well, the vote DOES count! Each vote means a great deal! Each vote tells a story, whether the Collective Agreement was excellent or it had holes that must be patched. Of the last three Collective Agreements I have worked on, the most discontented people with the Collective Agreement were from Gilham School, my own school.

Why? Is it because they dislike me? No. Is it because they are telling me I should have done better and tried harder? Yes. I understand this and I will continue to work harder so that teachers are treated as the professionals they are. But you have to do YOUR part too—VOTE, so that I and the rest of the FTA know what you are thinking. We are not telepathic, and have not learned how to read tea leaves or how to read peoples' minds, but we do know how to read voting patterns and election results. So VOTE!!

Now that I am finished with elections, I will turn my attention to the issue of collecting the names of teachers that go to SAG. Special Area Groups (SAG) are held in Winnipeg every year. Teachers from Frontier Schools attend these sessions. MTS sets money aside to offset some of the costs of travel teachers from outside of Winnipeg incur. For teachers of Frontier, this means that teachers that are representatives of the FTA must collect the names of these teachers and send the names to the Professional Development Chairperson (This is David Milley for the 2007-08 school year). Dave Milley must gather these names and send them to MTS. These names have to be submitted to MTS

within the month after SAG at the latest. The financial people at MTS are like me...they can read, but they aren't telepathic, and haven't learned how to read minds. So if the names are not sent into Dave in a timely fashion, the result will be that some teachers may not receive their money.

After the names are sent to MTS, they use a formula to work out how much money each different teacher in each isolated community receives. The money is then sent to the FTA, and Dodie Johnston, our Treasurer, sends cheques to the different schools. The schools then write the individual cheques for teachers.

On another topic, from time to time these FTA representatives from the different schools will have to pass out surveys to fellow teachers on a number of topics. A survey on teacher Work Load from MTS, for example. Or

Recognize that your Area representatives are doing their best to serve you. We are also trying to keep the communication between FTA, MTS and Teachers strong.

Support your local representatives...the next person who requires their assistance may be YOU!

the Collective Bargaining Committee may conduct a survey on what teachers would like to see in a new Collective Agreement. I know a survey like this was circulated by the Collective Bargaining Committee for the last three Collective Agreements.

As you can see, the representatives of the FTA in the different schools within Frontier have a great many tasks. Some are easy, like the delivering of mail, and some are very important, like elections. But all of these tasks are necessary for the smooth running of the FTA and MTS. Without these reps, the FTA and MTS may function, but they will not function very well. So to all the teacher representatives in all the schools of the FTA, I would like to say THANK YOU! You are important and your jobs are important as well.

In case some of you may be offended by my words, drop me a line and let me know. I call the world the way I see it, this is not to say my perception is correct. I can also relearn or change perceptions. I very seldom change my mind, I see nothing wrong with the one I have.

Thank you for giving me the chance to **rant and a rave**.

Let YOUR Voice be Heard!

The Voice

c/o Krista Kristjanson
P.O. Box 686
Gillam, MB.
R0B 0L0
Email: krista@frontierteachers.ca

FTA Executive Meeting Schedule

The members of the FTA Executive will be meeting on the following dates:

October 27, 2007	May 3, 2008
December 8, 2007	June 7, 2008
February 23, 2008	

www.frontierteachers.ca

Check it out!!

FTA Executive - Contact Information

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