**MVTA INFORMATION HANDOUT**

**For Staff Meeting Visits in 2014-15 (as of May 15, 2015)**

**(this information is under the third tab of mountainviewteachersassociation.weebly.com)**

Some jobs for you

* 1. Follow #6 in the Code of Professional Practice FAITHFULLY.
  2. Take care of yourself – what does that look like for you? See tab 2 for ideas.
  3. Decide how you are going to handle difficult situations you face in your professional life and stand up for yourself. Learn to say “no” when you need to - there is an article about this on our website.
  4. Read this handout (which is divided into the various areas in which we work) at your leisure. Ask questions about it. Become involved in your local association. We always have opportunities for those interested.
  5. REMEMBER that you get TWO personal leave days this year – NEW THIS YEAR. Plan now how you are going to use these days as it will be impossible for everyone to take both of their days in May and June – when most teachers have traditionally taken personal leave days. See article 22 of our collective agreement for the restrictions on taking these days. Plus, the availability of subs is another factor so a principal may have to deny your request. NOTE THAT YOU CANNOT CARRY OVER UNUSED PERSONAL LEAVE DAYS (new this year)
  6. Remember to confirm with your principal in advance which activities qualify for claiming your extra-curricular leave day. See article 23 in our collective agreement for information on this. You can only string 3 leave days together at one time, regardless of whether you qualify for more.
  7. Check your pay cheque to ensure that you are being paid the correct amount (refer to your collective agreement – on our website)
  8. **Further to a. above - Remember to review the Code of Professional Practice periodically. Pay special attention to the protocol to follow when you have a concern about the actions of a colleague. By doing so, you protect yourself professionally, plus you contribute to the growth of your colleagues and good school morale. There are serious consequences (both financial and professional) when the Code is not followed. Also, what some people think passes for humour in this area may not be interpreted the same way by others. Be careful!**

**NEW IDEA – CONSIDER INVITING ONE, TWO OR MORE SCHOOL TRUSTEES TO YOUR SCHOOL TO CHECK OUT WHAT YOU DO. THEY CANNOT DROP IN; THEY MUST BE INVITED OFFICIALLY. WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SHOWCASE? WHAT DO YOU WANT THEM TO SEE? WORKING WITH TRUSTEES IS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF YOUR STUDENTS AND YOUR WORKING CONDITIONS.**

**IMPORTANT DATES during 2014-15**

**May 31 -** Resignation/Retirement date for those hired before the 2004 school

year on a Form 2 contract

1. MONEY – Part 1 COLLECTIVE BARGAINING
   1. Currently underway. We will update you when we can. The agreement we are currently working under, even though it expired at the end of June, is on-line on mbteach.org and our association website.
   2. Collective Agreement between MVTA and MVSD – KEY points –
      1. A reminder that a collective agreement is just that - an agreement that a **collection of people - all of us teachers in Mountain View - have agreed to** by signing our contract with the division (plus our Code of Professional Practice says we must follow it). Thus, we need to read our agreement **and ensure that we follow it consistently. We need to be aware of precedents that we set by doing something that is different from before, so it is wise to seek advice from MTS to understand the ramifications of doing so.**
      2. Our agreement now gives high school teachers preparation time year round. If this is not happening, please contact me.
      3. A reminder that your lunch hours are to be 55 minutes duty free plus you are required to be in your classroom 5 minutes (outlined by Department of Education) = 60 minutes long.
      4. A reminder that **noon hours are to be duty free**. Please don’t pressure or ridicule your colleagues to have a meeting or participate in a noon hour event. That is disrespecting the collective agreement and a grievance can be filed. At the very least, it creates ill will amongst your colleagues. For those being pressured - SEE THE TOP OF THIS HANDOUT.
2. MONEY – Part 2 PENSIONS

While our plan is currently 95% funded, it is wise to consult a financial consultant NOW to ensure you are saving appropriately for your future. There are LOTS of changes occurring to pension plans in Canada. In the latest edition of RTAM (Retired Teachers Association of Manitoba), retirees mentioned their concern about the province’s ability to fund their pension into the future due to our province’s current financial situation. Just like for all things, it is your job to keep yourself informed and plan accordingly.

**NEW – CHECK OUT THE VOLUNTARY PENSION CONTRIBUTIONS SECTION ON TRAF (pension website). It could be a very beneficial way for you to increase your pension savings through deductions from your pay cheque.**

1. EMPLOYEE BENEFITS- We have many great benefits!!!!
   1. Blue Cross Extended Health and Dental – premiums for 2014-15 as the same as last year. They come off of our pay grid in pre-tax dollars and are no longer a post-tax dollar deduction. This means less money coming out of your pocket to pay for this benefit. Also we have several pay scales in our collective agreement as, even though these plans are mandatory, some people opt out as they have coverage through a spouse.
   2. Remember to contact the Board Office re your insurance coverage when something key happens in your life such as a marriage or a new child in your family. You have 90 days to change your coverage.
   3. We have a great long term disability plan should you need it.
   4. MTS is also offering a great short term disability plan starting this fall. MVTA Members voted strongly in favour of it a short time ago and our plan is to bargain for it in the upcoming session.
2. POLITICAL STUFF – Do you like your current pension plan? Your current sick leave plan? Your current middle class job with all the trimmings? There are all sorts of scary changes occurring in the Canadian (and American) job markets. The climate is changing and anti-union action is increasing. Changes in one area often impact others. Teachers hired in the last 10 years are being referred to as peace time teachers as they have not experienced some of the labour issues that other teachers have.

At presidents’ training in August we heard from a labour lawyer and a university professor/Canadian ambassador to Italy/Clerk of the Privy Council who both scared us and depressed us with their observations about what is happening in the Canadian work world.

I can give you many examples as they are in the news frequently.

There was big news in **Ontario in January 2013.** When the government **took away the right to bargain collectively**, **imposed a contract on teachers** that eliminated sick day payouts and a salary increase, and then rescinded the special legislation they used to impose that contract. Yes – Ontario in 2013.

Then of course the BCTF strike in 2014 – the BC government was ignoring a Supreme Court ruling which caused teachers to go on strike over class size and composition clauses.

Both Alberta and New Brunswick have proposed big changes to the pension plans for their civil servants.

Conditions will likely change during your career and during the careers of your children.

**Please keep yourself informed and ensure that your voice is heard.**

Check out Union Watch – a new feature on mbteach.org. **This site describes** some

really troubling events/changes are occurring out there that will impact on our lives

and the lives of our children. The middle class as we know it is changing! Good

middle class jobs have been lost in Parks Canada, CBC, Canada Post, Kelloggs,

etc. etc. and are not being replaced.

1. WORKPLACE, SAFETY AND HEALTH
   1. **Remember to report incidents when a student has been physically aggressive towards you** – spitting, biting, pinching, kicking, etc. The Division has a WSH form on the Division website for this purpose. These reports need to be filled out so this information can be tracked and addressed. If it isn't reported, it is the same as if nothing happened. The division and the Minister of Education won’t work on improving these areas if they don’t know that there is a need for improvement.
2. EQUALITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE – If you are interested in accessing a grant to do a project in this area, contact Dawn Dutchak (WES) for more information.
3. WELLNESS – There are great wellness resources listed on our website for you. We have two new people filling this role this year so watch for new ideas. Thanks to our local association, MTS now does an annual training session for Wellness Chairpersons across the province.
4. COMMUNICATION
   1. **Our local website is mountainviewteachersassociation.weebly.com.** Please check it out on a regular basis as I keep updating it. If you want to know what I am doing to assist you, check out the presidents’ reports that I post monthly. You are paying my wages so you need to know what I am doing on your behalf.
   2. **MVTA HAS A TWITTER ACCOUNT!! @presidentmvta**. I post articles about education plus some things I am doing as your president.
   3. **Sign up for the iPad app** for The Manitoba Teacher magazine– the app is being developed so you can receive it electronically. Eventually you will be able to stop the hard copy from arriving in your school mailbox.
5. TEACHER CERTIFICATION
6. If you are a vocational teacher, ensure you have spoken to Teacher Certification in Russell to ensure you are being paid the correct salary amount.
7. If you did your training in Ontario, ensure that you have met the requirements set out by the Dept. of Ed. And that your teaching certificate is current (and hasn’t expired – there are limitations on some these). It is the job of both the teacher and the school administrator to ensure that this certificate is current.
8. TAKING CARE OF YOU
   1. Learn how to handle difficult situations – read about or take courses on conflict management and dealing with difficult people through Resolution Skills Centre, Mediation Services or other groups. This is a great way to take care of yourself and your career.
   2. Document – a reminder to all members, regardless of how long you have taught, to write notes and **keep personal documentation of significant events** involving parents/students/teachers/ administration. Remember to use factual, not opinionated, statements. This is a great way to take care of yourself and your career.
   3. Ask your administrator to do a written evaluation of you from time to time, to have evidence of your teaching strengths. If the administrator wins big in the lottery, they may be unavailable to provide this down the road. :-)
   4. Keep a professional portfolio of your teaching career. Include all those items that show positives about the work you have done. Also include PD request forms and conference reports.
   5. MTS Member cards – If there are problems, contact MTS directly at [mts-im@mbteach.org](mailto:mts-im@mbteach.org). Use them for the following:
      1. for member discounts - huge on-line list of businesses
      2. to register for MTS PD sessions
      3. to access a Staff Officer (1 800 262 8803)
   6. Need help? Call me (see below) - I am available to assist you.
      1. Or contact MTS in Winnipeg (1 800 262 8803). You will need your member number from your MTS card to talk with a staff officer.
      2. For the Employee Assistance Program (EAP - Brandon office) call 1 800 555 9336. The counselor comes to Dauphin plus she takes appointments in Brandon, does phone consultations and uses Skype.
      3. EAP is also available out of the Winnipeg office 1 800 262 8803 and ask for EAP.
   7. **Last - but not least – A reminder to take care of yourself and your career by considering the optics *anywhere* that Joe Q. Public may be (this includes trustees and administration); remember that a cell phone could be recording you at any time and you could be the star featured on YouTube.**

**Be very cautious about ALL ASPECTS of social media, including what you post on Facebook and what you tweet.**

**A teacher is a teacher 24/7.**

**What would the parents of your children or the superintendent think about what you have posted? Ensure that you make career enhancing decisions before you post!**

**Be careful what you say on line and in real life as well. None of us really has a private life anymore.**

***REMEMBER TO SUPPORT EACH OTHER***.

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