

# Educators OK four-year contract

## MB School Boards Association ratifies deal with MB Teachers Society

By Tony Zerucha

Teachers in Manitoba's English public schools will operate under a single collective agreement for the first time after the Manitoba School Boards Association (MSBA) recently ratified a deal with the Manitoba Teachers Society.

Negotiations began in early 2022. It is effective from July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2026. Teachers will see an approximate 12.25 per cent raise over the four years, with a 12.85 per cent compound increase. The general percentage increases are 2.5 per cent for 2022-23, 2.75 for 2023-24, and three for 2024-25 and 2025-26. An additional one per cent teacher retention adjustment begins on Feb. 1, 2026.

Close to 70 per cent of eligible teachers voted 95 per cent in favour of the agreement.

"This agreement is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our teachers," said MTS president Nathan Martindale. "It reflects our commitment to recognizing their invaluable contributions and ensuring they are supported in their ever-changing and demanding roles."

"By addressing issues such as preparation time, workplace safety and leaves, this agreement not only improves the day-to-day experiences of our teachers but also strengthens the overall quality of education our students receive. This is a significant step forward for our pro-

fession and will provide a strong incentive for people to pursue careers as public educators."

"This historic agreement is a testament to a collaborative spirit and shared commitment to our students," said Sandy Nemeth, president of the MSBA. "By working together, we have created a framework that supports teachers, respects the diversity of our school divisions, and ultimately benefits the students of Manitoba."

Additional features of the agreement include allowances for northern regions and Indigenous language teaching, up to three days of personal leave, and up to three days of Indigenous ceremonial, cultural, and spiritual observance leave.

The agreement also requires all school divisions to have a winter storm policy. MSBA director of human resource services and provincial bargaining Justin Rempel said that if a school building is closed due to a winter storm, teachers will not be required to attend the worksite. Teachers contributing at least 150 hours of extra-curricular time during the school year are eligible

for a third paid day off.

Enhanced safety measures are another feature.

"The parties have agreed to an article called Freedom of Violence that says teachers are entitled to a working environment free from violence as defined in the Workplace Safety and Health Act and subject to the Public School Act," Rempel explained. "This type of language previously existed in some teacher collective agreements, but it now covers all teachers. School divisions and their health and safety committees are jointly responsible for ensuring safety in the workplace. When incidents occur, steps are taken to prevent them from happening again in the future."

Sunrise School Division superintendent Trevor Reid said there were no big surprises in the final agreement.

"We're two years into the agreement," Reid said. "Sunrise anticipated agreements and money was set aside for retroactive payments. The board and Sunrise School Division acted responsibly. Nothing else would be a shock in there."

Reid credited negotiators



File photo  
**Sunrise School Division superintendent Trevor Reid said the division anticipated agreements and money was set aside for retroactive payments.**

on both sides with keeping members updated on talks and where key issues appeared headed. He said the agreement largely represents the top numbers from the individual agreements.

Asked if divisions received any indication the province would provide additional funding to cover increases moving forward, Reid said no.

"There has been nothing from the province," he noted. "We haven't heard anything to date."

Salary increases could help attract more students to the profession. Reid said one area that could have received more attention was increases for substitute teachers. Schools, especially in more remote areas, can struggle to attract them.

"There were only modest increases given to substitute teachers," Reid explained, adding he's heard some disappointment about compensation rates. "They may have been left behind a bit."

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