

From the President of
the RPSTA
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UPDATE

VOLUME 3 ISSUE 4

March 1, 2013

RPSTA Executive

Your elected Executive is comprised of the following teachers:

Patrick Maze
(President)

Sejal Pilatzke
(Vice-President)

Launel DeWitt
Melissa Gerlach
Chris Keyes
Wendy Lazarou
Mike Markesteyn
Andrew Pelling
Joanna Sanders
Jeff Perry

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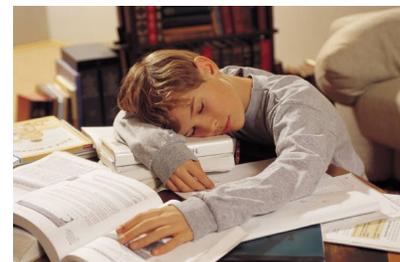
New Instructional Hours Regulation Causing Concerns

In 2012 the Provincial Government changed the Regulations to the Education Act, creating a requirement of 950 instructional hours per year for students. Due to various articles in our local agreement which stipulate amounts of professional development and preparation time, this new regulation potentially increases the school year for Regina Public teachers by approximately 35-45 hours, or 7-9 days. The RPSTA has responded by recommending that our Division hire additional teachers, or hire substitute teachers to part-time contracts for the 35-45 hours per teacher as required. Unfortunately, the Ministry has not indicated any additional funding for these types of creative alternatives, which forces the Division to create a school calendar for 2013-14 that causes an increase in teachers' assigned time without any promise of compensation. The RPSTA has already passed a resolution and sent it to be voted on at STF Spring Council re-

questing the STF bargaining team negotiate compensation for any hours a teacher is required to work beyond their traditional 985 hours of assigned time.

“...no research indicates that lengthening the school day for students will improve achievement.”

It is important to note that no research indicates that lengthening the school day for students will improve student achievement. Research does indicate improving instructional practices and classroom management techniques does show a benefit to student achievement. This would support the STF's contention that the Ministry should be focusing on quality of instructional time rather than quantity.



Calendar 2013: Can we Vote on it?

Several teachers have asked if the Calendar Committee will be surveying the membership on various calendar options for the 2013/14 school year. They have explained that both Regina Catholic and Prairie Valley school divisions have surveyed their members.

There are a couple of points that our Calendar Committee considered in deciding to not survey teachers this year.

First, the 2013-2014 school year should be a year in which both a full Christmas break and a winter break in February are able to be offered.

Last year our survey indicated our membership was almost evenly split between those wanting a full Christmas break and those wanting a winter break in February. An option of more long

weekends throughout the year came a distant third to the first two options.

The likelihood of being able to offer both Christmas and a winter break next year make a survey less needed this year.

The second point is around the use of a survey to gain implicit approval for an extension of your assigned hours with no guarantee of compensation for that increase. All three of the options given to teachers in the Regina Catholic survey involved increasing their school day beyond what would be needed to create the holidays that are offered in each option. In fact, one of the "options" involves having a Christmas break and a spring (Easter) break, and the survey states that to do so would require an additional 10

minutes onto every school day. This seems odd considering both Christmas and Easter breaks are guaranteed in the Education Act. If we didn't have to add time to have them both this year, why should we need to work longer to get them next year? Voting on any of the options could give implied consent to adding minutes to your school day due to the Ministry requiring 950 minutes of instructional time without compensation for working those extra assigned minutes.



**Elementary Teachers: Job share meeting
Tuesday March 5th, 4:00 in the Classroom at
Division Office**

RPSTA/RBE Counseling Services Changes

The RPSTA and Regina Public Schools offer counseling services to RPSTA members on a cost-shared 50/50 basis. The services provide up to 6 sessions at no cost to members.

This year, Homewood Human Solutions has been contracted to offer

these counseling services.

Homewood Human Solutions is a large counseling service provider, allowing them to retain counseling staff who have expertise and specific training in a variety of areas including stress, family/

relationships, and addictions. If you require counseling services please give Homewood Human Solutions a call at **1-800-663-1142**



The new RPSTA/RBE Counseling service provider is Homewood Human Solutions. To book an appointment, call 1-800-663-1142

Government moving to standardized testing

The Saskatchewan government recently announced that by 2016 it would be mandating standardized assessments for all students from grades 4-12 in the areas of science, math, and English.

The RPSTA has concerns with this move, as there is weak evidence linking standardized testing to improved student outcomes.

Generally standardized assessments used elsewhere have given indication that students

from lower socioeconomic areas of our communities score lower than students from higher socioeconomic areas. This would indicate that the money spent to create, conduct, and evaluate the scores from the assessments would be better spent on directly supporting students in our lower socioeconomic neighbourhoods.

At the Saskatoon Teachers Convention on Friday February 22nd, and in an interview afterwards, Minister Marchuk

indicated that these tests are "...not about ranking individual schools or teachers, and it's certainly not about tying funding to performance."

However, once the information has been accumulated it is tough to guarantee that this won't happen in some form.

Marchuk also stated that some of the results will count towards student's final grades, but didn't speculate on how that would work.



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find information and articles of
interest to teachers and the
educational community.



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Regina Teachers Conven-
tion will be held on
Friday, March 8th,
2013. For information
about speakers, breakout
sessions and more, please
visit www.rpsta.com and
click on Convention.

School Visits:

RPSTA President Patrick Maze is continu-
ing school visits. These are informal dis-
cussions regarding the services of the
RPSTA/STF and any member issues/
concerns.

Recent Visits:

| | |
|---------------|-------------------|
| February 25th | George Lee School |
| February 26th | Lakeview School |
| February 27th | Winston Knoll |
| February 28th | Thom Collegiate |

Please contact Patrick Maze at the RPSTA
office if your school would prefer a visit
during a staff meeting or a time other than
noon-hour. Thanks!