



## RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION OF MANITOBA

### MEMBER REPORT

2022

#### Mission Statement

The mission of RTAM is to serve and advocate for all retired teachers.

#### Vision Statement

The vision of RTAM is the economic well-being of retired teachers through appropriate member services and strong partner relationships.

#### Values and Principles

RTAM values belief in mutual respect, diversity of opinion, tolerance of different viewpoints, integrity and transparency while working collaboratively towards a common goal.

At the present time, RTAM serves a membership of over 10,000 retired teachers. The RTAM Board of Directors presently consists of fifteen members and our full-time Executive Director, Office Administrator and Member Services Coordinator all provide direction and assistance from the RTAM office.

We continue to be guided by the six pillar Strategic Plan initiated to organize operations and to establish short and long-term goals. With this and the expanded office support, we are also continuing the process to move from a working board to a governance model. Within the parameter of our strategic plan and with the recognition of emergent issues related to the pandemic, in addition to government position developments that affect our membership, the focus and activities of RTAM for the 2021/2022 year have been as follows:

### 1. ADVOCACY

In this 2021/2022 year, RTAM has developed five primary goals for the advancement of our organization which have been shared with the provincial politicians of the day. They are:

- i. Agreement to the formation of an action plan that will ensure a fair income adjustment-COLA-in the face of growing inflation.
- ii. Recognition in legislation of the role of the Retired Teachers' Association of Manitoba as the organization which speaks and acts on behalf of all retired teachers of this province.
- iii. Designation of a seat for an RTAM member on the Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund—TRAF—Board.
- iv. Establishment of a seat on the Minister's Council of Education Stakeholders.
- v. Placement of a RTAM member on the Government's Pension Task Force.

These "Five Asks" have been established as RTAM's primary objectives and we are pleased that a Private Member's Bill supporting a seat on the TRAF Board has been introduced to the legislature by the provincial Liberal Party. We are waiting for debate and the vote to occur in the near future.

In advocating for the success of this Private Member's Bill, and to generate contact with and support from our membership, RTAM was pleased to utilize the NEW MODE software in a letter writing

campaign. With the push of a button, the information was sent to thousands of our members who could simply forward a standard form letter or a personal one to their local MLA.

In our effort to successfully fulfill the five goals, RTAM has engaged Prairie Sky—a lobby firm—to provide us with strategies to more effectively communicate with government in order to achieve attention and serious consideration.

The topics of social and financial concern to retired teachers such as income disparity, gender income inequality, educational reform, climate change and indigenous issues continue to be studied and tabulated.

The goal to strengthen our relations with active teachers through The Manitoba Teachers Society has continued to be successful throughout this past year. The President and Vice President have bimonthly liaison meetings with their MTS counterparts and this has proven to be beneficial and productive in many ways. To ensure the continuation of this practice, a formal RTAM-MTS agreement has been put into place with a signing ceremony and commemorative pictures on March 18, 2022.

Again, due to the Covid19 restrictions, it was necessary to forgo the annual Meet and Greet with the MLAs at the provincial Legislature. However, thanks to ZOOM the RTAM executive have met with the provincial Leaders and critics from the NDP and the Liberals. We were also pleased to have had a very positive and satisfying ZOOM meeting with the new Minister of Education and Early Childhood learning, Wayne Ewasko.

## **2. COMMUNICATION**

We continue to support the delivery of relevant RTAM and Seniors' information and items of interest through our Keep In Touch (KIT) magazine which is published quarterly and which is done through a contractor.

We keep working towards improving the RTAM website with the goals of updating the material and making navigation easier. We are happy to expand our social media platform to include a Facebook and Instagram presence. Modernizing our membership database to establish effective, relevant, and up-to-date electronic communication with our members is also ongoing.

We continue to establish a link with the Seniors Coalition for discussion and pro-activity in terms of furthering awareness of relevant Senior's issues. Two RTAM Directors regularly attend and contribute to these meetings.

RTAM was also pleased to have received an invitation to President Cann from the Government to attend the Budget Speech at the Manitoba Legislature. We await a report!

## **3 GOVERNANCE**

With our increasing adeptness using ZOOM, we continue to have monthly Board, Executive, committee and emergent meetings using this capability. In addition, meetings with our educational stakeholders including Chapter Presidents and outside agencies are also ongoing. Therefore, for the 2022/2023 year, COVID protocol notwithstanding, RTAM intends to hold two Board meetings in person with the remainder to be designated as virtual. All committee meetings will be held virtually, with the exception of a team-building September meeting. This allows for advantages in terms of cost saving, scheduling and convenience to members and staff and will be the practice going forward.

To improve our meeting and committee effectiveness, the Bylaws and Policies committee continues to review and update our manuals.

In our journey to become a Governance Board, we have extended our office personnel --the Executive Director, the Membership Services Coordinator and our Office Administrator--- to full-time employment. We are also in the process of settling into new office premises. And we have embarked on the journey of searching for a new Executive Director. To this end, we have engaged Pinnacle --a head hunter firm-which has been extremely helpful. We hope to have a person in place by April 11, 2022.

#### **4 MEMBER SERVICES**

Developing improvement and modernization under the communications pillar, as well as office efficiency through the effectiveness of the Executive Director, Office Administrator and Member Services Coordinator continue to contribute to membership support.

We continue to work on member recruitment through various strategies including offering free RTAM membership for the initial year and we appreciate TRAF's help in facilitating this. Special grant support for new chapter creation and special projects are available. The RTAM president regularly liaises with the MTS President as well as having bimonthly Zoom meetings with RTAM Chapter Presidents.

President Cann has initiated a process by which Chapters agreed to a six year rotating responsibility to nominate volunteers to RTAM committees and the Board of Directors. The Membership and Chapters committee effectively supply ongoing communication and support.

President Cann has also recruited the sufficient number of members who have agreed to contribute to the continuity of RTAM's work by allowing their names to stand for RTAM directorship.

As well, RTAM holds several pre-retirement seminars throughout the year which have been continuing through ZOOM and are extremely well attended.

The Benefits Committee works to update our organization on developments and changes provided by Johnson in terms of the programs provided by them to our members, including the Benefits at a Glance comparative analysis chart.

TRIP MERCHANT, as part of our member services, is hosting two RTAM group tours to Haida Gwaii in May/June, which has been very well received.

In collaboration with The Winnipeg Foundation, a \$50,000 endowment fund was established in October 2013 to fund the RTAM Student Award Program. Four \$1000 awards were given to Grade 12 students sponsored by an RTAM relative. Criteria includes scholarship, school involvement and community volunteerism. The Student Awards Committee received a New Horizons grant in support of RTAM's Student Success Portfolio project. The portfolio project continues to grow and is being extended to include more high school participation in the lower grades.

We are working on the necessary plans for our AGM the first week in May. At this point we are preparing for an in person meeting and are REALLY hoping this will be possible this year.

It should be mentioned here that RTAM and TRAF have formalized their relationship in a joint letter of agreement so that the services they provide our members will be ongoing or, if there is a change in TRAF's status, timely notification will be given.

A timely and pertinent ZOOM experience invited retired teachers who substitute, to share working conditions concerns with James Bedford, the sitting President of the Manitoba Teachers society. Retired teachers supply 85% of the substitute teacher supply chain in the rural areas and are in huge demand, especially in these COVID days. From this worthwhile and beneficial experience, much information was gained in terms of remuneration and working conditions issues. So these concerns may be addressed, RTAM plans to establish an Ad Hoc committee to monitor future concerns.

## **5 WELLNESS**

Relevant and timely workshops that provide information on topics of interest to seniors continue to be designed and offered by RTAM's Wellness Committee. These are proceeding through webinars and deal with pertinent items like scams, frauds, estate plans, health care directives etc. These are very well attended thanks to ZOOM participation.

Photography workshops prove to be a continuing popular offering. Again—hope for an in person experience abides. Also, many members take part in the photo contests available in the KIT magazine.

While our December Board meeting was a hybrid one, it was followed by a scaled down Christmas dinner gathering with some Directors attending in person.

## **6 COMMUNITY**

We continue to partner with the University College of the North in acknowledging their recommendation of an indigenous student who satisfies the criteria and so is eligible for one of four \$1000 bursaries that RTAM provides annually.

We have plans in the works with the objective to expand this initiative to support truth and reconciliation by offering increased bursary opportunities to several indigenous students enrolled in other postgraduate facilities in Manitoba.

As we watch the events of the day as they occur; the COVID situation, the Climate Change concern and the war devastating Ukraine with the real fear of expansion- we, as citizens of the wider community, consider these to be our issues. So, for example, RTAM has released a position statement deploring the destruction of life and security in Ukraine and encouraging members to contribute to a relevant charity to support Ukrainian people wherever they may be. So, to this end RTAM is exploring the possibility of contributing a voluntary basic ESL program for any refugees who may come to Manitoba and require emergency English.

In conclusion, this is a condensed view of the ongoing work undertaken by RTAM on behalf of the retired teachers of Manitoba in 2021/2022.

May I extend personal good wishes to my ACER CART colleagues personally and the organization specifically, as you carry on in the future.

Be safe. Be well.

Respectfully Submitted by,

JoAnne Hoyak  
RTAM Vice President  
ACER-CART Director