



January 2025



Presidents Message

And just like that, here we are in 2025. Happy New Year to everyone. I hope you all had a chance for a bit of rest and relaxation over the winter break. It can be hard to get back into routine especially in the dread of the long winter months. January has also been known to be a depressing month with its lack of sunlight and bitter windchills. It can be hard to find joy around us. I will take this time as an opportunity to remind everyone of the Kii program that the Division is now offering to all MANTE members. Everyone would have received an email with the log-in information. If you are having trouble logging in, please contact the HR department for assistance. If you haven't had a chance to log in and look at everything that is available, I would highly suggest you do. There are so many services being provided to help in all aspects of our lives. This program is completely confidential, nothing is being sent to the Division regarding usage. We all need to look after ourselves and this program is another tool in the toolbox.

Jennifer Monaster

Income Verification

If you have ever gone to apply for a loan, a mortgage, rent an apartment, they always require some form of income verification. For the majority of MANTE members, our pay stubs show a prorated amount which is not a true indication of how much you make per week or how many hours you work per week. In some instances, you may be denied because of these prorated numbers. If you are looking for a true income verification, please reach out to the HR department and ask for a letter that states your true income and hours worked per week. This letter will truly reflect your hours and income per week.



Keep in Touch

Even during the postal strike, if a member at your work location is off for an extended illness or has had a bereavement in the family, or if a member has a reason to celebrate, please advise Maggi Sawchuk at maggi.sawchuk@sjasd.ca so that MANTE can send out an appropriate card.

Professional Development

Reminder. When applying for PD funding, fill out the PD application form available through the portal and scan the application or send through division mail to Connie Lowe at Lincoln Middle School. There are still PD funds available for the 24/25 school year.

MANTE Professional Development Committee

EA Rep – Maggi Sawchuk
Admin Asst. Rep – Rachel Novakowski
Library Tech Rep – Jocelyn Oliver
MANTE President – Jennifer Monaster
Human Resources – Joanne Johnston
Administrator – Connie Lowe
Financial – Monika Kananowicz

January Retirees

Vicki K. 22 years

Cell Phone Usage

Recently I have had a few questions surrounding cell phone usage by MANTE staff during the workday. Many staff members use their cell phones to check their work emails or to communicate with other staff members regarding break coverage, when assistance is needed, changes to the daily schedule etc. You do not need to use your personal cell phone for work related matters and it should never be required of you. Ex: Many schools use a WhatsApp group to send out information. You are not required to always have your cell phone on you, to download this app, or to sign up to be part of this group. The Division has recently approved an addition to policy GBEF-R Employee Use of Technology and Electronic Communication. The policy states: *Use of Personal Devices - Staff may use cell phones for instructional purposes or as directed by administration to support the overall operation of the school. Personal cell phone use is limited to breaks and lunch periods. Staff with medical needs or emergencies that require cell phone use are required to inform administration to ensure exceptions are handled appropriately while maintaining overall cellphone guideline consistency.*

What that means is, unless your administrator has specifically said that you may use your phone during the day or for a specific day in case of an emergency, you should not be using your cell phone.

If your school is not allowing you to use your cell phone for work purposes, there are measures they need to ensure are in place. In every school there should be one or more computers accessible to MANTE staff for them to be able to log in and check their emails. Now this should not be done during your lunch or on breaks but should occur during your scheduled work time. If there is not time during your workday to check your emails, then there can be no expectation that you are checking and reading your emails. You are under no obligation to check emails during your daily breaks or outside of your workday. If your admin has information that needs to be shared to all staff in a prompt manner, it is up to them to ensure you have time scheduled in your day to check your emails.

Another common time that members may have used their cell phones is during instructional time to assist students.

Again, unless you have been advised that this is allowed in your building, you should not have your phone out during instructional periods.

If you have been told that you can use your cell phone throughout the day for the above-mentioned scenarios, that does not mean that you can use your phone for personal use during the workday.

The addition to the policy also speaks to privacy: *Employees should not have any expectation of privacy with respect to any equipment or technology that the Division provides. This would also include employee use of personal devices accessing the Division WiFi network.*

No MANTE staff should be using their personal cell phone during their workday for non-work-related purposes. I understand that there can be down time during the day, but you must refrain from going on your phone.

The policy can and will be enforced. It states: *The Division reserves the right to: - Monitor staff use of Division technologies and access staff user and email accounts in cases where there is reasonable cause to suspect misuse of the system or violation of Division policy. Violations of this policy will result in appropriate discipline, which may include temporary or permanent loss of access, suspension or termination of employment, and/or legal action.*

The Division is taking cell phone usage in the workplace seriously. While our phone gives us easy access to our emails and allows us to quickly reach out when we need, you need to really consider if using your phone at work is worth the risk of breaking policy.

Bottom line is, there are no requirements for you to own a cell phone, bring a cell phone to work, have it on you at all times or to use it for work related issues. Do with this information what you wish, just be aware that there are policies surrounding this. As always, if you feel your rights surrounding this issue are being violated in any way or the expectations are unclear, please reach out to me.



Meet the Executive

President – Jennifer Monaster
Treasurer – Robyn King
Board Office Rep – Rosemary Koltalo
EA Rep and Health and Welfare Rep – Maggi Sawchuk
Secretary Rep – Kerry Fraser

President – Jennifer Monaster

Hello. My name is Jennifer Monaster, and I am your current MANTE President. In the summer of 2007, I saw an advertisement for the Educational Assistant course through SJASD Continuing Education. For the next 10 months I attended evening and weekend classes and completed my certificate program the following June. In September of 2008, I was hired on a term as an Educational Assistant at Bruce Middle School. A year later I was hired full time at John Taylor Collegiate and had been an EAC at that location till my move into the MANTE office this year. Like many of us in the division, I do have a second job as well. After working for four years at Lakewood Daycare in the evenings, I moved over to the evening Secretarial Assistant position in Continuing Education in August of 2012. Prior to joining the SJASD, I was a supervisor at a credit union. I had always wanted to be a teacher, but life had other priorities for me to focus on and I never completed my university training. When I saw the Con Ed brochure, that was the first time I had heard the term Educational Assistant. I took a leap and enrolled, and I am so glad that I did. Helping students with special needs truly brought a joy into my work life that had been missing for a long time.

Secretary – Cerys Hooper

My journey in Continuing Education began in the fall of 1995 while I was pursuing my university studies, working part-time as a night secretary. Transitioning to the secretarial casual list in 1999, I primarily worked across Sturgeon Creek Collegiate and various elementary schools. On February 14, 2000, I commenced as a Sasi Operator at John Taylor Collegiate in a casual capacity, later securing a permanent role there on April 4, 2000, after the previous secretary on leave moved to a different school. I ended my position with Continuing Education in May of that year. In 2005, I ventured into MANTE as a school liaison and webpage manager. However, by 2007, I decided to depart due to feeling unheard. The year 2008 brought a shift as I embraced the Head Secretary role at Hedges Middle School. Within six weeks, an opportunity arose once again at John Taylor Collegiate for the Head Secretary position, which I readily accepted.

Vice President – Open
Secretary and Pension rep – Cerys Hooper
EA Rep – Jenn Plesh
Library Tech rep – Jocelyn Oliver
Secretary Rep – Wanda Prychitko

As the years went by, I grew upset by the politics of the job, yet I still loved the work I was doing. I decided I wanted to try and improve things, and the first step was to get into a position where I could do that. I joined the Association in 2021 as an EA rep, became the Vice president in 2022 and the President in 2023.

On a more personal level, I love gardening. I find growing my own vegetables to be such a rewarding process. I also enjoy long walks and sitting outside by a fire. I grew up in Lac du Bonnet and all my family still resides out there. You will rarely find me in the city on a weekend or during the summer as being out in Lac du Bonnet is where I consider home to be.

I am an honest, genuine, by the book type of person. Anyone who chooses to work in education has a big heart or none of us would be doing the work that we do. I may not be in an EA role at the moment, but I can relate to what is happening in our schools. I joined the Association to help, and I honestly mean that.

I hope this has given you a little more insight into your Association President.

Come fall 2020, amid the pandemic, I joined the MANTE Executive Committee as the Secretary. Initially, meetings held on Teams were manageable, lasting around an hour. However, as we transitioned back to in-person gatherings, the meetings grew longer, demanding more time for minute-taking. Despite the increased workload, I find joy in collaborating with a group committed to impartial and equitable representation, placing the members' interests above personal biases.

In 2021, I departed from John Taylor Collegiate and embraced a new role at InformNet leveraging my expertise in school information systems, Department of Education student records, and accounting, I tailored a distinct Head Secretary position for the online high school, effectively utilizing my skill set.

